ABSTRACT
The study investigated Trade Unions and Industrial Relations Best Practices; Emerging Trends in Workers Welfare and Productivity. A Survey-based descriptive research design was used. The study adopted total quality Management theory (TQM) and was carried on senior employees working in two selected public institutions such as Michael Imodu National Institute of Labour Studies (MINILS) and National Social Insurance Trust Fund (NSITF) in Nigeria. To achieve this, a sample of 675 union members were selected and distributed same number of copies of questionnaire out of which 642 were received upon which the data analyses were based. In addition to the questionnaire survey, a total of 6 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 6 In-Depth Interviews (IDI) were conducted to complement the use of the questionnaire, while secondary data were consulted by review of empirical literature. After a detailed analysis, the study found that though the deployment of technology in industrial setting increased productivity and opened a window for more employment opportunities in some cases, at the same time, anti union/unfair labour practices and obsolete policies, including trends such as outsourcing and contract staffing adversely affected industrial relations best practices, workers welfare and in some cases ushered people out of mainstream company employment, replacing them with cheap labour. The study therefore recommends that there is need for key players to forge common ground to deal with issues that affect work conditions to ensure Free and fair industrial relations climate that will guarantee decent and productive work in Nigeria.

Keywords: Trade Unions, Workers Welfare, Organizational Productivity

INTRODUCTION
The impact of welfare packages on employees performance and the overall productivity of any organization depends on varying trends that either improve their working conditions and ginger them to pick performance or demoralizes and reduces their performance, as well as their quality work-life. In unionized organizations however, the workers depends on the union to ensure their welfare packages and overall quality work-life improvement is guaranteed. While the unions mount pressure on employers to improve welfare packages, organizations view workers welfare as one of the areas to explore in order to contain operational cost, consequently, organizations are taking critical look at their employees benefits structure to identify areas that unduly exposes the organization to escalating cost. Over all, the typical organization is constitutive of stake holders with varying competing interest all of which touches on the work relations. In the case where, the Government is joined as a third party to the
scheme of event within the competing group interests the Industrial relations system becomes more complex, for instance, it becomes worrisome if the government which ideally ought to regulate the excess actions and interest of the employers and the employees sometimes turns out to be a powerful and over bearing party, especially when it adopts outdated and unfair labour policies in the midst of growing impact of globalization with its attendant innovations in production technological and Management trends, these adversely affect workers welfare and also creates unplanned interruptions and conflicts to occur especially in government own organizations.

Also, While the Management saddled with the responsibility of managing the firm unilaterally decides to organizes, coordinates, and distributes the proceeds from the production efforts in a manner that will ensure maximum profit, the Union ensures that labour is given as much share of the proceeds which will guarantee decent living standard and also ensures that the physical conditions of work are not dehumanizing to especially the workers.

Industrial relations is about the people in the world of work in relation to all matters that arises in the day to day association between employers, managers and workers and includes all relations between managers and individual worker, collectively relations between managers and labour or trade unions, sen (2015).

A sound industrial relations system is to moderate the excess pursuit of the divergent group interest that creates disturbance and disruptions in the workflow by ensuring that all stake holders interest are adequately covered with the production output.

It is the aim of promoting and realizing the objective of decent and productive work in organizations be it public or private, that the International Labour Organization (ILO) was established to promote proper minimum standards of labour legislations for adoption by members state for which Nigeria has adopted and ratified its major conventions which respect core human rights and improvement of quality work life conditions. One of the cardinal objectives is to promote opportunities for men and women to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity.

Workers are very essential to the means of production (Druker 2010) cited in Odeku and Odeku (2014) they deserve to be treated with respect, dignity, and given proper welfare packages and incentives (Noguera 2005) these would improve their sense of worth, boost their self esteem, financial status and act as, a sort of motivation to be pursued by employers who look beyond instant profit making as oppose to enduring sustainable business earning of profit in perpetuity (Deeprose 2006). This means that in any industrial situation, in which the workers represented by the union perceives that its interest are being opposed or negatively affected by the Management, conflict will be experienced in one form or the other vis-a-vis the desire of the management and unions to find mutual means of sharing the responsibility to achieve and maintain the right atmosphere for enhanced decent and productive work. Therefore, it is important for workplace conflict to be effectively apprehended, managed and nipped in the bud, since it has the ability of frustrating organizational goals to the detriment of all the stakeholders. In other words, there is need to renew effort towards revisiting the industrial relations system, reward policies and trends which unduly exposes workers to poor remuneration and overall quality work-life, thus, since the employer and the employee constitute the key players in the industrial relations setting, it is ideally imperative for them to jointly confront and deal with the underlying issues and problems that adversely affect work relationships and advance further to build partnership that will lead to a better understanding of organization operation cost optimization to ensure productivity.

The Problem

Socio-Economic activities and institutions that guarantees quality work-life and influence gross domestic growth (GDP) thrives in societies where industrial peace and harmony exist, hence, the initial motivation for the establishment of the International Labour Organization which Nigeria is a member was poorly ‘humanitarian’ due to the exploitation that workers suffer with no considerations for their health, family lives and advancement which was unacceptable. The second motivation was ‘political’ without an improvement in their conditions, the workers, whose numbers were increasing as a result of industrialization, would create social unrest, even revolution. The third was ‘Economic’ because of the inevitable effect of social unrest on the cost of production. The fourth motivation was ‘social justice’ a situation where workers have contributed significantly both on the battlefield and in industry, but end up
receiving inadequate compensation or remuneration. The motivation further states clearly, ‘that failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions workers in their own countries Okoronkwo (2008) According Obipi (2018) productivity has been hopelessly turned upside down in the public service; while Emuchay (2018) observed that the Nigeria government hires the right people but never prepare them for their role and equally fail to provide work and basic tools in the midst of poor work conditions and worst form of unfair labour practices. These are practices that stand against decent and quality productive work-life as encapsulated in the ILO Conventions No. 87 and 98) and other extant labour laws, this implies that even though the Nigerian government has adopted and ratified the relevant ILO conventions including the crafting of the Nigerian labour laws aimed to promote decent work for the social protection of workers who are essential to the means of production, the objectives of the ILO are yet to be realized in the Nigerian industrial relations system, hence, According to Fashoyin (2014) despite major advancement in labour and management, relations in the past decade, there persist considerable distrust and antagonism among the participants, a situation which put to question the extent to which the major labour reforms have been internalized by industrial relations actors and other participants in Nigeria. As a consequence, the average Nigerian worker becomes poorly remunerated even as his effort to deliver public services increase. Needless to point out that this is likely to undermine the level of motivation and productivity of workers who find themselves in such workplace conditions. In this study we examined the role of trade unions, Karl Marx saw trade unions as revolutionary agents for changing the social order, he believed that improvement in the conditions of the working class could be achieved through antagonizing role of the unions, where as the functionalist views trade unions as agencies for discharging special responsibility Sen, (2015) hence, trade unions constitute the heart of democracy TBM,(2013) thus, unionized workplace are more productive than non unionized organization Williamson, (2016) literatures cited in Okoronkwo (2008) shows that the international labour organization (ILO) and extant labour regulations were established to ensure industrial peace and harmony through industrial relations best practices, unfortunately, Eme et al (2012), study on industrial relations practices in the public sector lack participatory structures and effective industrial democracy. Eme et al (2012) studies carried out by (Shahid, 2013. Mackenzie, 2015. Gill and Meyer, 2013, Moses,2014, Cook,2012, and Deery et al 2013) on conceptual issues in employees commitment and productivity showed that organizational productivity increases when employees are well remunerated, motivated and committed to their job, sadly studies carried out by (CIPM,2011. Omar,2011. Olanrewaju, 201. Ahiuma-young,2018, Singh, 2008 and Singh, 2013) showed that there are emerging work environmental trends such as; outsourcing and contract staffing, privatization of public assets, public sector reforms, structural adjustments, technological advancement, anti union/unfair labour practices and policies that adversely affect workers welfare and job security. also available literatures on industrial democracy and job performance indicate that industrial development and economic self reliant are two major goals that every country is committed to accomplish, hence unionized workplaces generally know the problems related to work that can defeat such goals more accurately Singh (2013) unfortunately workers participation in management is probably the most misunderstood and misused concept in labour-management relations Sen (2015) yet, industrial democracy and employee job performance are still intricately linked due to the positive effect of joint decision making between union and management Anele (2015) rewarding administration and compensation generally is a major determinant of how workers perceive their jobs and how they perform, Njoku et al (2011) cited in TBM (2013) while Vroom observed that workers seem to perform better and more effective if their wages are related to productivity, this implies that employees motivation is key to productivity (HBR 2011, Keijer 2010) it is important to find out if the ASCSN is impressing on the ministry to deal with workers issues and adopt motivational approaches that can turn around the deteriorating downward trend of the role to a possible viable and productive ministry so its impact is felt in the national economy through the restoration of industrial peace and harmony in all workplace in Nigeria, it appears labour unionism is one activity that most organizations today fail to recognize and understand as a significant contribution towards organizational productivity, hence, there exist a gap in
knowledge as there was no clear direct link in the studies cited above between trade unions, industrial relations best practice and emerging trends in workers welfare and this is the crux of the paper.

Theoretical Framework

Total Quality Management Theory (TQM): TQM as a management approach views quality result principles as a non-negotiable requirement for success and achievement of organizational goals. It gained acceptance fast and soon became a time-tested management tool after others existing before it have expired. In the early 1980s, there was a widespread shift to quality control and quality improvement. This became the focus of organizations. It still is.

TQM consists of organization-wide efforts to provide a consistently conducive industrial climate in which an organization can continue to grow and improve on its services and products delivery. Businesses use quality management systems to improve the efficiency of their processes to increase profitability. TQM systems use a variety of tools and theories to empower employees, build a team atmosphere and focus on the voice of the customers to deliver quality products timely. Joseph Jablonski (1992) identified the following characteristics as necessary for TQM to succeed in an organization. They are:

- **Continuous Improvement:** Organizations using a TQM system engage in incremental improvements continuously to affect the quality of the business’s processes and products. A continuous improvement approach requires employees to strive for zero defects and efficiency in all processes. Continuous improvement activities seek areas requiring improvement in a proactive manner.

- **Customer Focus:** External and internal customers are the focus of TQM. External customers are businesses or individuals who place orders for products from the organization. Internal customers are co-workers or departments that accept work as it moves through the company. In a business that practice TQM, each employee must identify his customers and determine the best way to satisfy their quality needs. Employees must identify their supplier and communicate their quality needs to the supplier.

- **Team Involvement:** TQM systems rely on the people working in an organization to improve quality and processes. Every individual from top level management to the lowest level employee is involved in the continuous improvement process in organizations using the system. Companies provide training in tools, concepts and techniques of the quality management system to all employees. TQM companies create an atmosphere of teamwork and empower workers to take the initiative to improve processes and quality. These systems cannot function without the involvement and encouragement of upper management.

- **Data Driven:** TQM organizations use measurable data to make decisions for the company’s improvement efforts. Tools such as statistical process control, process mapping, and bar graphs help employees and management identify quality issues and provide a method to measure the success of a quality initiative. Flow charts help quality improvement teams to understand a process and identify weaknesses such as duplications of steps in the workflow. Businesses use data to track quality defects and find areas that need improvement.

The rationale for adopting TQM is, it places a very high premium on quality of the work process, which in turn refers to the quality of the workers which is not reflecting in Nigerian public sector workers. Thus, TQM cardinal assumption is anchored on a transformational management approach where the organization is centered on quality based on the participation of all its members and benefits to all members of the organization and society.

This is against the background that the selected agencies are public sector organizations, and therefore highly influenced by government decisions and policies per time. Unfortunately, the experience in Nigerian public sector organizations operates with bureaucratic principles and autocratic rules (civil service rules and financial regulations) these rule do not give room for recognition of employees initiatives and lack participatory structure for Unions to share decision making, beside public sector organizations also lack adequate welfare packages for its employees.

TQM assumes that the quality of a product/service is determined by the quality of inputs, that is the say, the terms and conditions in which employees are engaged in rendering such services determines the quantity and quality output. This means, if the terms and conditions of employment are poor employees
performance will be poor, thus, TQM assumed that if the quality of terms and condition of work is high, employees will be willing to put in their best to ensure best performance and best service delivery. There is need for dramatic changes in the public sector hence the adoption of TQM as the guiding theory of this paper.

**METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out in selected public sector institutions namely, MINILS and NSITF. These institutions are parastatals of Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment which is in the exclusive list of government, thus, most of the employees carry out statutory functions which sets labour standards and is generally responsible for labour administration in Nigeria. These include preparation, formulation, coordination, monitoring, review, implementation and enforcement of all government policies which relate to employment matters such as; workers protection, workers Training and education, occupational safety and health, productivity improvement and social security for all Nigeria workers.

The study employed the mixed method research design involving the cross-sectional survey and analytical approach. In doing this, we relied on the triangulation of qualitative (use of questionnaire, FGD and IDI) approaches of data collection and analysis. We used Structured Questionnaire for Quantitative Study

In-depth Interviews (IDIs) & Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for qualitative study. In the content analysis for Qualitative Data, we used Simple Percentages with the aid of descriptive tools such as graphs and charts for quantitative data.

The universe for the study covers all senior employees of the two agencies (MINILS and NSITF) numbering 1718 according to the agencies current human capital record of senior employees 2017/2018.

**Distribution of Senior Employees in the Agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION FOR MINILS</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PORT HARCOURT</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAGOS</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABUJA</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KANO</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILORIN (HEADQUARTERS)</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>251</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION FOR NSITF</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH-SOUTH</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH-EAST</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH-WEST</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH-CENTRAL</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH-EAST</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH-WEST</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABUJA</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>1467</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| CUMULATIVE TOTAL FOR MINILS AND NSITF | 1718 |

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Sample Size Determination
MINILS ---------------------------- 251
NSITF ---------------------------- 1467
TOTAL --------------------------- 1718
Sample size ---------------------- 675

To determine the sample, we adopted the Taro Yamane’s formula as shown below:
Where, \( n = \) sample size sought
\( e = \) margin error (3%)
\( N = \) study population

\[
n = \frac{1718}{1 + 1718(0.03)^2}
\]
\[
n = \frac{1718}{1 + 1718(0.0009)}
\]
\[
n = \frac{1718}{1 + 1.5462}
\]
\[
n = \frac{1718}{2.5462} = 674.7 = 675
\]

In obtaining the data, we relied on primary and secondary sources. Secondary data were sourced from published articles, journals, and conference notes that are related to the subject of study. For primary data, the study ensured a triangulation of techniques as both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were utilized. For quantitative data collection, the structured questionnaire was utilized. The questionnaire consists of 30 questions designed to address the research objectives; it also took account of the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. More so, for qualitative data, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were employed. Interview guide designed with open-ended questions that allowed interviewers to pursue other lines of inquiry that emerged during interviews was also employed. Also, the study relied on consultations with project supervisors and other experts to ensure research instruments measured the specific study objectives, while we established the reliability of the instrument using test-retest technique to produce a reliability coefficient of 0.6.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
Research Objective
The research objective was to investigate trade unions and industrial relations best practices and emerging trends in workers welfare and productivity in selected organizations in Nigeria.

In addressing this objective, a specific research question was put forward to respondents: What is the role of unions and what are the emerging trends in workers welfare that adversely affect Industrial Relations Best Practice and organizational productivity?

In view of the foregoing research question, several issues were identified by the respondents and their perceptions on each of these issues were recorded and analyzed as presented in the figure below: Firstly, on the issue of the contributions of unions to organizational productivity. Evidence from the data provided revealed that 10.1% of the respondents strongly disagree with the assertion that unions has no important role to play in organizational productivity, 5.9% while 3% remained uncertain. More so, 32% of the respondents agreed to the assertion and 49% of them strongly agreed with the assertion that unions has very important role to play in organizational productivity. This result indicates that most respondents are of the opinion that even though today unions are perceived by management as a group of the devil advocate and trouble makers those not delete the importance and traditional role of unions to pursue workers’ welfare improvement and organizational productivity.
Secondly, on the issue of emerging trends affecting workers welfare and organizational productivity, evidence from the data provided revealed that only 10.1% of the respondents strongly disagree with the assertion that the identified trends namely: outsourcing and contract staffing, anti union and unfair labour practices and policies and technological advancement has no adverse impact on workers welfare and organizational productivity, while 3% remained uncertain. 32% of the respondents agreed to the assertion and 49% of them strongly agreed with the assertion that: outsourcing and contract staffing, anti union and unfair labour practices and policies and technological advancement affects workers welfare adversely while organizational productivity adversely only in the case of anti union and unfair labour practices and policies. This result indicates that most respondents are of the opinion that even though technological advancement increases organization productivity, at the same time, the increased trend in the adoption and deployment of technology in organizations is causing job losses and reduced welfare packages.

![Figure 1: Issues affecting workers Welfare & Organizational productivity in MINILS and NSITF](source: Fieldwork, 2019)

On the issue of lack of trust for management as a factor that adversely affect workers Welfare and organizational Productivity, 3% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, 5.1% disagreed with the assertion while 2.7% were uncertain. More so, while 36.1% of the respondents agreed to the assertion, 53.1% of the respondents strongly agreed to the assertion that lack of trust for management adversely affects workers Welfare & organizational productivity. Though opinion gathered from indebt interview (IDI) with one of the State controller showed that government is doing its best to ensure better remunerations for public workers, he noted however that, workers and especially union officials are just noise makers who seek attention for selfish reasons. In addition, on the issue of whether perception of public organizations exclusively as government organization by workers undermines workers Welfare and organizational productivity, 0.7% strongly disagreed with the assertion while 0.9% disagreed with the assertion. More so, whereas 1.3% of the respondents remained uncertain with their response, 26.7% agreed to the assertion, while 70.4% strongly agreed with the assertion. Furthermore, on the issue of whether hard line disposition of management during negotiation adversely affect workers Welfare and organizational productivity, 2.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, 4.4% disagreed with the assertion while 2.7% remained uncertain with their response.
On the other hand, 26.6% agreed with the assertion, 63.9% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion that hard line disposition of management adversely affect workers Welfare and over all organizational Productivity.

On the issue of whether undue disposition of management prerogative adversely affect workers Welfare and organizational productivity, results show that 2.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, 5.3% disagreed with the assertion, while 1.5% were uncertain. In addition, while 21.6% agreed with the assertion, 68.9% of the respondents strongly agreed that undue disposition of management prerogative adversely affect workers welfare and organizational productivity.

Lastly, on the issue of whether prevailing poor welfare packages and conditions of work adversely affect workers Welfare and organizational productivity, results from the study indicate that only 1.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion, 1.5% disagreed with the assertion, while 0.7% of them were uncertain. In addition, while 39.9% of the respondents agreed with the assertion, 56.8% of them strongly agreed with the assertion that prevailing poor welfare packages and conditions of work largely affect workers Welfare and organizational productivity adversely.

**FGD and IDI Outcome**

- Majority respondents opinion revealed that existing anti union/unfair labour practices and policies including emerging trends such as outsourcing and contract staffing and technology in the Nigerian industrial relations system adversely affect industrial relations best practices, workers welfare and organizational productivity.

- Almost all respondents’ opinion agreed with the view that forging common ground between management and unions in the process of collective bargaining/industrial democracy would lead to decent and productive work in all organizations, especially the public sector in Nigeria.

- Majority opinion on how to address the problem of poor welfare packages and organizational productivity improvement includes: understanding the importance and the complementing role of union in organizational management in the workplace by way of forging common ground in the process of social dialogue and effective mechanism to implement and enforce both international and Nigerian labour laws will lead to decent and productive work.

**FINDINGS**

The study found that though the emergence and deployment of technology in industrial setting increased productivity and opened a window for more employment opportunities in some cases, at the same time, anti union/unfair labour practices and policies including trends such as outsourcing and contract staffing adversely affect industrial relations best practices, workers welfare and in some cases ushered people out of mainstream company employment and replacing them with cheap labour.

**CONCLUSION**

In this paper an attempt has been made to identify and explain the Challenges which adversely affect workers welfare and organizational productivity as basically built around resolvable human relations issues, hence, there is no organization that is so unified and excellent that is immune from human relations problems, however, trade union leaders primary responsibility is the protection and defense of their members, they can however only succeed in doing that in cooperation with (rather than in opposition to) Management, and also by carrying the rank and file along discussion/decisions on all the issues and emerging trends that adversely affect industrial relations best practices in the workplace especially the Nigerian public sector.

Furthermore, There are a number of ways required to effectively manage workplace relationship issues that adversely affect workers welfare and organizational productivity, however, all of the measures and options revolve around; Good problem solving skills with organizational goal oriented achieving mindset, Adequate knowledge of international and Nigerian labour regulations including the provisions for dispute resolution mechanism. Good negotiating skills, and excellent communication skills among the key players.
It must be made clear that effective organization and people management also requires strategic collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders as a method of operation and as a form for collective support that goes beyond mere cooperation, a collaborative and partnering approach to management runs on values such as: transformational leadership, integrity, teamwork, respect and caring for people, ownership, accountability, consensus and recognition.

Logic dictates and findings from the study have shown that the best management ideas can only be generated when management and union are focused on winning together and achieving the same goal for the good of all.

Ideally, when trade unions engage management in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity between, or among, representatives of government and employers to discuss issues of common interest, the unions ultimately shows commitment to the course of protecting workers’ rights and ensuring better conditions of work that enhances productivity. Regrettably, this is not the case in Nigeria, hence, the need for collaboration through partnering and alliances with unions as key players is highly expected in the public sector.

RECOMMENDATION

1) The problems associated with Outsourcing and contract staffing trends including technological advancement in the workplace are not likely to go away soon, in fact the dramatic trends will continue, therefore, all key players in the industrial relations system should work together to ‘negotiate’ and defined acceptable ‘terms and conditions’ of outsourced employees.

2) Technology advancement, it appears researchers, journalist and expert commentators are simply overstating the extent at which technology is substituting humans and how it is fast ushering people out of the employment doors. It is important for efficiency minded HR practitioners and organizations to start figuring out on greater use of emerging technology and to see smart machines as partners and collaborators in creative workplace problem solving with an augmentation mindset.

3) There is need to strengthen relevant institutions to ensure Swift resolution of trade disputes and workplace complaints.

4) There is need for freedom of Association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining leading to Free and fare industrial relations climate through effective mechanism for implementation and enforcement of both international and Nigerian labour regulations.

5) Management and Unions need to forge common ground and move towards collaborations/partnerships that will lead to deep robust and constructive social dialogue.

6) Training and retraining of workers, HR managers and trade union officials.

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