

Dynamism of Labour Union, Social Order and Good Governance in Nigeria

Dinamisme Serikat Buruh, Ketertiban Sosial dan Tata Pemerintahan yang Baik di Nigeria

Aramide Arinola Kuforiji¹, Gabriel Izokpu Oikhala²,

¹Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

²Department of Public Administration, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

*Corresponding author: oikhala.gabriel@oouagoiwoye.edu.ng

Abstract

Nigerians have historically utilized the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) as a platform to challenge government policies, actions, and inactions, not only on behalf of the working class but for the broader Nigerian populace. Consequently, this study examines the collaborative efforts between Nigerian labour unions and the government in fostering social order and promoting good governance. A cross-sectional study was conducted in Nigeria's South West geopolitical zone, selected due to the region's history of industrial unrest. The research employed a quantitative methodology, utilizing a survey approach. A sample of 200 participants was drawn from the study area, with union leaders selected through purposive sampling. The selection criteria included willingness to engage, current employment status, active membership in recognized labour unions, and at least one year of involvement in union activities. The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in the concept of Governance and Social Order, which posits that societies are composed of various economic, political, cultural, religious, and professional groups. The operations of these groups are typically regulated by an institutionalized system involving the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. According to the survey, 95% of respondents believed that labour union members should participate in the policy-making process within their respective sectors. Furthermore, the study highlighted strong support for collaboration between labour unions and the government, with respondents indicating that such cooperation would enhance accountability, governance, and public trust in government activities. These findings significantly contribute to academic discussions surrounding government policy formulation and implementation.

Keywords: labour union; social order; social stability; governance; good governance.



Abstrak

Secara historis, masyarakat Nigeria telah memanfaatkan Kongres Buruh Nigeria (NLC) sebagai platform untuk mempertanyakan kebijakan, tindakan, dan kelalaian pemerintah, tidak hanya untuk kelas pekerja, tetapi juga untuk seluruh masyarakat Nigeria. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menganalisis upaya kolaboratif antara serikat pekerja Nigeria dan pemerintah dalam membangun tatanan sosial dan mempromosikan pemerintahan yang baik. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan cross-sectional di zona geopolitik Nigeria bagian Barat Daya, yang dipilih karena sejarah ketegangan industri di wilayah tersebut. Metodologi yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kuantitatif dengan pendekatan survei. Sampel terdiri dari 200 peserta yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling, dengan memilih pemimpin serikat pekerja sebagai responden. Kriteria pemilihan mencakup kesiapan untuk berpartisipasi, status pekerjaan saat ini, keanggotaan aktif dalam serikat pekerja yang diakui, dan keterlibatan setidaknya selama satu tahun dalam kegiatan serikat. Kerangka teori dalam penelitian ini berlandaskan pada konsep Tata Kelola dan Tatanan Sosial, yang mengemukakan bahwa masyarakat terdiri dari berbagai kelompok ekonomi, politik, budaya, agama, dan profesi. Operasional kelompok-kelompok ini biasanya diatur oleh sistem yang terinstitusionalisasi yang mencakup cabang legislatif, eksekutif, dan yudikatif. Berdasarkan hasil survei, 95% responden berpendapat bahwa anggota serikat pekerja seharusnya dilibatkan dalam proses pembuatan kebijakan di sektor masing-masing. Lebih lanjut, penelitian ini menunjukkan dukungan kuat terhadap kolaborasi antara serikat pekerja dan pemerintah, dengan responden menunjukkan bahwa kerja sama semacam itu dapat meningkatkan akuntabilitas, tata kelola, dan kepercayaan publik terhadap kegiatan pemerintah. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap diskursus akademis mengenai perumusan dan pelaksanaan kebijakan pemerintah.

Kata kunci: serikat pekerja; tatanan sosial; stabilisasi sosial; tata kelola; tata kelola yang baik.

Introduction

Labour unions are organized associations of workers within a specific trade, group of trades, or profession, formed to safeguard and advance the rights and interests of their members (Fashoyin, 2005). The origins of labour unions can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution in 18th-century Great Britain. As industrialization expanded, individuals, including men, women, and children, both skilled and unskilled, migrated from rural to urban areas in search of paid employment. In response to their increasingly exploitative working conditions, workers began to organize into various associations aimed at reducing the coercive power of their employers (Fashoyin, 2005). Therefore, the rise of labour unions is closely linked to the Industrial Revolution, which provided

the foundational context for workers to establish unions as a means of collective action (Austin-Egole, 2023).

Britain is often regarded as the birthplace of labour unionism due to the profound impact of the Industrial Revolution. Prior to this era, small, indigenous communities of craftsmen, such as shoemakers and tailors, existed but were dispersed across various regions (Sunmonu, 1996). The development of industries powered by electricity, water, and steam engines facilitated the creation of modern labour unions and the employment of workers in factories (Austin-Egole, 2023). This trend was also observed among employees in newly established coal mines and steelworks. Consequently, these small, local trading groups—previously limited to specific indigenous occupations or commerce—gradually expanded in size and scope. Sunmonu (1996) notes that the central issues discussed at these early workers' meetings included working hours, wages, and conditions. In addition, members contributed funds to support those facing illness or funeral expenses. Over time, these small “trade clubs” evolved into larger federations. This expansion culminated in the formation of a national federation by the Hatters in 1771. However, as these federations grew in strength, both the government and employers became increasingly concerned. In response, the British Parliament enacted the Combination Laws of 1779, which prohibited the formation of labour unions and made it illegal for workers to meet or organize around work-related issues. Moreover, employers were also prohibited from giving the impression that these actions were legally justified (Sunmonu, 1996).

According to Peetz et al. (2015), despite the restrictions imposed on employers, they were able to convene in small groups of two or three to discuss workers' wages and negotiate agreements without facing significant challenges, as worker organizations had already been made illegal. Consequently, companies were able to raise their employees' wages without encountering penalties. This situation led to protests among workers and widespread civic unrest, which ultimately resulted in the detention, demotion, wage reductions, and other forms of exploitative working conditions. However, the 1779 Act in Great Britain was repealed in 1824, 25 years after its enactment, marking the beginning of the rise of labor unions in Britain and other parts of the world (Brian,

2019). As a result, labor unions and the phenomenon of labor unionism in Nigeria are often regarded as legacies of British colonial rule (NLC, 2005). Initially, British business magnates established enterprises that incorporated a distinctive public service framework, facilitating administrative oversight across the nation.

On a global scale, labor unions have emerged as crucial entities advocating for workers' rights in opposition to capitalist exploitation (Nwoko, 2009). In Nigeria, labor unions were established to protect the rights and interests of workers against the detrimental effects of capitalist exploitation and the ensuing conflicts with the colonial administration (Fashoyin, 2005). As noted by George et al. (2018), Nigerian wage laborers endured poor working conditions and meager wages, underscoring the intersection of capitalist exploitation and the colonial bias against Nigerian workers within the colonial framework. The first labor union in Nigeria was founded in August 1912, with the primary goal of addressing capitalist exploitation and improving working conditions for Nigerian laborers (NLC, 2005).

The Labour Union Act of Nigeria, enacted in 1973 and effective from November 1 of that year, established regulations regarding the creation, registration, and structuring of labour unions, as well as the federation of such unions and the Central Labour Organization (Onyeonoru et al., 2021). Nonetheless, the Act contravened several provisions of ILO Convention No. 87, which Nigeria ratified on October 17, 1960: The amended Labour Unions Act of 1973, particularly sections 3(1) and (2) and 33(1) and (2), legally instituted a single-trade-union framework, delineating a legislated roster of unions eligible for affiliation with the central labour organization and imposing an onerously high minimum threshold of workers required to establish a labour union, thereby infringing upon Article 2, which stipulates that: “workers and employers, without any distinction, shall possess the right to form and, subject solely to the regulations of the concerned organization, to join organizations of their choosing without prior authorization.” Consequently, labour unions, exemplified by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), have emerged as pivotal subjects of modern scholarly inquiry and discourse regarding labour relations and governance in Nigeria, particularly concerning their characteristics, roles, functionalities, and efficacy in safeguarding the

welfare of Nigerian workers and protecting their rights in industrial conflicts with both public and private sector employers (Aiyede, 2004).

The primary objective of this research is to explore the interactions and relationships among governance frameworks, social order dynamics, and labour union activities within Nigeria. The study specifically aims to: (1) analyze the relationship between labour unionism, governance, and social stability in the Nigerian context; and (2) propose strategies to enhance governance through active and effective participation of labour unions to promote national development. Achieving a balance among these elements is essential for societal stability and progress. The insights and recommendations derived from this research are intended to enrich academic discourse and influence policy development in the realms of governance and labour relations. Additionally, the findings aim to assist Nigerian policymakers in fostering social inclusion and strengthening governance structures. While the primary role of labour unions is to serve their members, ensuring social order remains a temporary responsibility, as societal chaos would hinder workers' participation, jeopardizing employment security and other statutory obligations of labour unions.

In scholarly discussions concerning governance and social order, both traditional and contemporary perspectives underscore the presence of sociopolitical institutions and mechanisms that influence the distribution of societal values (Easton, 1953). According to Easton's framework of Governance and Social Order, virtually every society comprises various groups categorized as economic, political, cultural, religious, and professional entities. The activities of these groups are often regulated within an institutional framework that encompasses three primary branches: the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. These branches remain operational in most modern societies, where they are responsible for policy development and execution, offering advice and relevant recommendations, as well as adjudicating disputes and interpreting laws to resolve conflicts. While the specific functioning of these key organs may differ across societies, it is a common feature, particularly within democratic systems, for each to operate within separate domains of authority to prevent the

concentration of power in a single institution or individual (Yagboyaju and Akinola, 2019).

Good governance follows logically from the notion of governance; that is, governance becomes good when it is conducted in accordance with the legal framework and ethical values for the collective good of Nigerians (Oikhala & Tobi, 2023). In this light, good governance is viewed as a purely normative concept in which people endeavour to provide guidance and direction through acceptable standards and norms incorporated in the governance concept. Adopted in this way, Oikhala (2022) asserted that the governing system in Nigeria should be guided by the spirit of transparency, accountability, and service-oriented principles which are preconditions for social order and stability. Over the years, there has been an on-going and sustained debate suggesting that the Nigerian state, similar to its counterparts across Africa and other developing nations, has fallen short of expectations due to its insufficient capacity to address the modern complexities of governance (Yagboyaju & Akinola, 2019). According to Yagboyaju and Akinola (2019), building on Easton's theory of Governance and Social Order, the government (public sector), private sector, and civil society are the three sectors that interact to crystallize nations' productivity and competitiveness while also improving people's living conditions. Among the three sectors, the public sector bears the greatest responsibility for the nation's overall performance. Since Nigeria's transition back to democratic rule in 1999, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has functioned as a platform for Nigerians to scrutinize government policies, actions, and omissions, thereby benefiting not only the Nigerian workforce but the entire population. While the government holds the primary authority over governance, development, and the maintenance of social order, labour unions such as the NLC serve as vital watchdogs, providing oversight on governmental performance (Umar et al., 2024). Nwoko (2009) asserts that the NLC has consistently acted as a credible opposition, challenging the government's fulfillment of its responsibilities towards worker welfare, a role that, if neglected, can contribute to social instability.

Building upon the observation made by Umar et al. (2024), Nigerian labour management practices that regulate the employer-employee relationship within workplaces are influenced by cultural factors, legal frameworks, economic conditions,

and organizational structures. Since 1990, the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) have been engaged in ongoing industrial disputes concerning low remuneration, inadequate working conditions, insufficient funding, infrastructural deficiencies, lack of university autonomy, and restrictions on academic freedom. These issues have significantly altered students' perceptions of the educational standards they aspire to. Unemployed individuals increasingly turn to platforms such as Yahoo Plus and other social media channels, a consequence of the ruling class's ineffective governance and the frequent strikes by labour unions. Recognizing that effective governance underpins social order, this study aims to examine the role of labour unions in mobilizing Nigerians towards achieving good governance. The paper explores the complex interplay between governance, social stability, youth participation, and labour unionism by analyzing how governance structures influence social order and youth engagement, and conversely, how labour unions affect governance and social cohesion within the national framework.

Despite notable advancements in labour unionism and workers' rights within Nigeria, significant challenges persist concerning effective governance, social stability, and the functioning of labour organizations. These challenges encompass pervasive corruption among public officials, deteriorating living conditions for workers, rising unemployment rates, and the proliferation of informal employment sectors where labour regulations are frequently violated, leaving workers vulnerable and unprotected. For instance, the Nigerian government's failure to honour agreements with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has led to recurrent strikes, during which students are compelled to suspend their studies. Such industrial actions have resulted in students spending extended periods beyond the standard duration of their programmes—some taking up to six years for a four-year course—thereby disrupting their academic progress. Many students concurrently engage in side businesses, which, while contributing to social mobility, also foster a growing disillusionment with formal education, with some students perceiving it as futile.

In the broader African context, particularly in Nigeria, the issues stemming from ineffective governance, social disorder, and weak labour unionism have intensified.

Moreover, the disparity between political elites and the general populace—whom they purportedly serve—has widened significantly. This growing disconnect has rendered the ruling class increasingly indifferent to the plight of ordinary citizens, who are burdened by the repercussions of economic policies, inflation, and insecurity (Tella, 2016). Consequently, economic inequality has deepened, with the impoverished becoming more marginalized and excluded, while the political elite continue to amass greater wealth. On this basis, citizens resort to self-help in protests, strikes, and riots, which frequently result in the breakdown of social order, particularly when people are dissatisfied. Self-help is a prescription for anarchy, a collapse of law and social order, and a threat to the protection of people's lives and property if left untreated for an extended period of time. Every country on the planet faces some type of challenge. One of the most significant challenges is the insecurity of life and property. Despite the Nigerian government's initiatives to establish legal and social stability, insurgency and insecurity continue to be widespread issues. In Nigeria, the problem of internet scammers, also known as *Yahoo Yahoo* and *Yahoo Plus*, targeting jobless people has persisted for a long time and is not going away. According to Yagboyaju and Akinola (2019), Nigeria's chaotic treatment of its citizens has caused Nigerian teenagers to become diverted from their studies and lose focus. Even though the government has made numerous attempts to involve Nigerians, there are still a number of issues that need to be resolved in order to establish social order with the cooperation of Nigeria's trade unions. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to analyze the relationship between Nigerian labour unionism, governance, and social order as well as to pinpoint methods for enhancing governance through productive labour union involvement for the advancement of the country.

Research Methods

The research employed a quantitative methodology, collecting data via a survey conducted from July to October 2024. The study concentrated on governance frameworks, the dynamics of social order, and the activities of labour unions. A structured questionnaire was utilised, comprising multiple sections designed to assess respondents' demographic characteristics, the efficacy of governance, indicators of social stability, and union performance. The instrument was administered to union

leaders selected through purposive sampling, resulting in a sample of 200 labour union members from Nigeria's South West geopolitical zone. The choice of this region was motivated by its significant industrial disturbances. Participants were selected based on criteria including active membership in recognised labour unions, a minimum of one year of engagement, current employment status, and willingness to participate.

Results And Discussion

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The table below shows the respondents demographic distribution.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-24	0	0
	25-34	0	0
	35-44	60	30
	45 and above	140	70
Gender	Male	170	85
	Female	30	15
Educational Background	Senior Secondary school	20	10
	Bachelor's degree	50	25
	Master's degree	50	25
	Doctorate	70	35
	Other (please specify)	10	5
Employment Status	Employed (full-time)	140	70
	Employed (part-time)	60	30
Labour Union Affiliation			
Are you a member of a labour union?	Yes	200	100
	No	0	0.00
If yes, which union(s) are you affiliated with?	Private Telecommunications and Communications Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PTECSSAN)	10	5
	Congress of Nigerian University Academics (CONUA)	10	5

Amalgamated Union of App- Based Transporters of Nigeria (AUATON)	40	20
Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC)	20	10
Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC)	50	25
Nigeria Civil Service Union (NCSU)	10	5
Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU)	10	5
National Union of Air Transport Employees (NUATE)	20	10
National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG)	10	5
Food, Beverages and Tobacco Senior Staff Association (FOBTOB)	10	5
Steel and Engineering Workers' Union of Nigeria (SEWUN)	10	5

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Data showed that 60 (30%) of respondents are between the ages of 35 and 44, and the remainder 140 (70%) are over 45. The gender breakdown shows that only 30 (15%) of responders are female, while 170 (85%) are male. According to the data, the respondents had a rather high level of education: 100 (50%) have a bachelor's degree, 70 (35%) have a master's degree, 20 (10%) have finished senior secondary school, and 10 (5%) have a doctorate. According to the respondents' employment status, 60 (30%) work part-time, and 140 (70%) work full-time.

The research indicated that the majority of participants (70%) are aged 45 years or older, with no respondents in the younger 18-34 age group. The gender composition is predominantly male (85%), which may reflect the male-dominated nature of the work environments within the unions surveyed. Additionally, all participants are members of various unions, exhibiting diverse affiliations, and possess a high level of educational attainment, with 85% holding at least a bachelor's degree. According to the report,

economic changes and the allure of less unionized informal job sectors are two reasons why younger workers exhibit low union engagement. Additionally, this study examined the gender gap in union membership and found that women encounter obstacles because there are less unionized employment prospects. The results of this study are also supported by Breetzke and Hedding (2018), who discovered that a higher level of education is frequently associated with union membership because of a heightened understanding of workers' rights and the advantages that unions offer. Additionally, full-time unionized workers in Nigeria had higher job security and income equity, especially in industries with a male preponderance, according to Casale and Posel (2009).

Examining the nexus between Labour Unionism, Social Order and Good Governance

The table below shows the respondents' opinions regarding the relationship between social order, governance, and labour unions.

Table 2: Nexus between Labour Unionism, Social Order and Good Governance

S/N	Items	CA (%)	MA (%)	SA (%)	NAD (%)	SD (%)	MD (%)	CD (%)
1	Labour unions play a significant role in shaping government policies aimed at promoting social stability and order.	50 (25)	90 (45)	60 (30)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
2	Labour unions are essential in sustaining social stability within communities.	60 (30)	60 (30)	40 (20)	40 (20)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
3	Government responsiveness to labour unions has a beneficial effect on the overall social welfare.	80 (40)	50 (25)	50 (25)	20 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
4	Labour unions contribute to	70 (35)	40 (20)	40 (20)	20 (10)	30 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)

	transparency and accountability in governance							
5	Labour unions' advocacy for workers' rights enhances social cohesion	40 (20)	80 (40)	60 (30)	10 (5)	0 (0)	10 (5)	0 (0)
6	Government policies embody the priorities of labour unions and contribute to the enhancement of social stability.	50 (25)	50 (25)	60 (30)	20 (10)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)
7	Labour unions actively engage in resolving labour disputes, preventing social unrest	90 (45)	60 (30)	30 (15)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)
8	Labour unions' influence on governance policies contributes to community trust	100 (50)	50 (25)	30 (15)	0 (0)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)
9	Government responsiveness to labour unions positively impacts social justice.	80 (40)	60 (30)	40 (20)	10 (5)	0 (0)	10(5)	0 (0)
10	The function of labour unions in governance contributes to the improvement of social welfare for the entire population.	90 (45)	30 (15)	50 (25)	20 (10)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)
11	Government transparency ensures equitable distribution of resources and opportunities	100 (50)	60 (30)	20 (10)	0 (0)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)
12	Labour unions contribute to social stability by advocating for fair wages and working conditions	80 (40)	70 (35)	30 (15)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)

13	Government policies embody the varied perspectives of citizens and serve to foster social cohesion.	90 (45%)	60 (30%)	20 (10%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)	10 (%)	0 (0)
14	The influence of labour unions on governance has a beneficial effect on the overall well-being of the community.	90 (45)	50 (25)	40 (20)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)
15	When the government responds to labour unions, social justice and order are improved.	80 (40)	60 (30)	30 (15)	20 (10)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Note: **CA=completely agree, MA=Mostly agree, SA=Somewhat agree, NAB=neither agree nor disagree, SD=Somewhat disagree, MD=Mostly disagree, CD=Completely disagree.**

From the table above, five respondents (25%) completely agreed (CA), nine respondents (45%) mostly agreed (MA), and six respondents (30%) somewhat agreed (SA) that labour unions have an impact on government policies that improve social order. No respondents disagreed. 60 (30%) of the respondents completely agree with the assertion that labour unions contribute to social stability in communities, 60 (30%) mostly agree, 40 (20%) somewhat agree, and 40 (20%) neither agree nor disagree. Regarding the assertion that government responsiveness to labour unions has a beneficial effect on overall social welfare, 80 respondents (40%) completely agree, 50 (25%) mostly agree, 50 (25%) somewhat agree, and 20 (10%) remain neutral. Concerning the role of labour unions in enhancing government transparency and accountability, 70 respondents (35%) fully agree, 40 (20%) largely agree, 40 (20%) somewhat agree, 20 (10%) are neutral, and 30 (15%) somewhat disagree. Regarding the assertion that the support of labour unions for workers' rights promotes social cohesion, 40 respondents (20%) completely agree, 80 (40%) predominantly agree, 60 (30%) somewhat agree, 1 (5%) neither agree nor disagree, and 10 (5%) somewhat disagree. Concerning whether government policies favour labour unions and positively influence

social stability, 50 respondents (25%) completely agree, 50 (25%) mostly agree, 60 (30%) somewhat agree, 20 (10%) neither agree nor disagree, and 10 (5%) somewhat disagree..

The data regarding the role of labour unions in addressing labour disputes and preventing social unrest indicates that 90 respondents (45%) completely agree, while 60 respondents (30%) largely agree. An additional 30 respondents (15%) express moderate agreement, whereas 10 respondents (5%) remain neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Concerning the assertion that labour unions influence governance policies in a manner that fosters community trust, 100 respondents (50%) completely agree, with 50 respondents (25%) mostly in agreement. A further 30 respondents (15%) somewhat agree, and 10 respondents (5%) somewhat disagree, while another 10 respondents (5%) mostly disagree. Regarding the proposition that the government's responsiveness to the needs of labour unions enhances social equality and order, 80 respondents (40%) fully agree, 60 respondents (30%) mostly agree, and 30 respondents (15%) somewhat agree. Conversely, 20 respondents (10%) are neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and 10 respondents (5%) mostly disagree.

Regarding the assertion concerning the significance of labour unions in enhancing social well-being for all citizens, 90 respondents (45%) completely agree, 30 (15%) mostly concur, 50 (25%) somewhat agree, 20 (10%) remain neutral, and 10 (5%) somewhat dissent. Concerning government transparency in fostering equitable resource and opportunity distribution, 100 respondents (50%) mostly agree, 60 (30%) completely agree, 20 (10%) partially agree, 10 (5%) express some disagreement, and 10 (5%) predominantly disagree. With regard to the role of labour unions in promoting social stability through fair remuneration and working conditions, 80 respondents (40%) completely agree, 70 (35%) mostly agree, 30 (15%) somewhat agree, 10 (5%) slightly disagree, and 10 (5%) moderately disagree. On the proposition that public policies support social cohesion and reflect diverse citizen opinions, 90 respondents (45%) fully agree, 60 (30%) mostly agree, 20 (10%) somewhat agree, 10 (5%) remain neutral, and 10 (5%) somewhat disagree. Concerning the influence of labour unions on community welfare and governance, 90 respondents (45%) entirely agree, 50 (25%) mostly agree, 40 (20%) somewhat agree, 10 (5%) remain neutral, and 10 (5%)

somewhat disagree. Lastly, regarding whether social justice and order are enhanced when the government responds to labour unions, 80 respondents (40%) fully agree, 60 (30%) largely agree, 30 (15%) somewhat agree, 20 (10%) remain neutral, and 10 (5%) somewhat disagree.

According to the report, every respondent concurs that unions have a good influence on social order through their fight for fair working conditions and influence on policy. A collaborative form of governance is supported by the majority of respondents (75%) who agree that government responsiveness to unions improves social fairness and that labour unions contribute to transparency and accountability in governance. The findings of the study align with those of Masiya (2014), which demonstrate that labour unions function as social movement organizations that advocate for policy reforms alongside addressing issues within the workplace. According to Kraus (2007), African labour unions have historically aided in democratic revolutions by organizing against authoritarian governments, which is consistent with the study's findings that highlight the significance that unions play in promoting societal stability. It was also noted that political meddling and restrictive rules that limit collective bargaining power frequently make it difficult for Nigerian unions to maintain their impact on government.

Strategies to Enhance Governance by Engaging Labour Unions

The table below shows the respondents' opinions regarding strategies for strengthening governance through effective engagement with labour unions

Table 3: Strategies to Enhance Governance by Engaging Labour Unions

S/N	Items	CA (%)	MA (%)	SA (%)	NAD (%)	SD (%)	MD (%)	CD (%)
1	Labour unions ought to engage proactively in the development and execution of policies, as this involvement would contribute to the promotion of effective governance.	110 (55)	60 (30)	20 (10)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

2	Labour unions' collaboration with government agencies would positively impacts overall governance outcomes	90 (45)	90 (45)	10(5)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
3	Labour unions' input in labour-related legislation contributes to better social order	100 (50)	70 (35)	30 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
4	Government responsiveness to labour union concerns enhances transparency and accountability	80 (40)	70 (35)	20 (10)	10 (5)	20 (10)	0 (0)	0 (0)
5	Labour unions' involvement in anti-corruption efforts positively impacts governance integrity	70 (35)	50 (25)	60 (30)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)
6	Labour unions' advocacy for workers' rights aligns with good governance principles	90 (45)	50 (25)	50 (25)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
7	Government responsiveness to labour unions fosters trust and cooperation within society	80 (40)	60 (30)	40(5)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)
8	Labour unions' role in labour dispute resolution positively impacts social stability	80 (40)	70 (35)	30 (15)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)
9	Government policies that incorporate input from labour unions contribute to the improvement of overall community welfare.	50 (25)	50 (25)	50 (25)	20 (10)	30 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)
10	Labour unions' collaboration with civil society organizations strengthens governance accountability	100 (50)	50 (25)	30 (15)	10 (5)	10(5)	0(0)	0 (0)
11	Government responsiveness to labour unions positively impacts social justice outcomes	50 (25)	80 (40)	30 (15)	20 (10)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)

12	The impact of labour unions on government policy formulation plays a significant role in promoting the fair allocation of resources.	40 (20)	50 (25)	50 (25)	30 (15)	20 (20)	10 (5)	0 (0)
13	Government transparency ensures fair representation of labour union interests	30 (15)	60 (30)	40 (20)	30 (15)	0 (0)	20 (10)	0 (0)
14	Labour unions' engagement with governance positively impacts overall community resilience	90 (45)	50 (25)	40 (20)	10 (5)	10 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)
15	The government's ability to respond to trade unions improves social justice and order.	50 (25)	70 (35)	60 (30)	0	10 (5)	10 (5)	0(0)

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Note: CA=completely agree, MA=Mostly agree, SA=Somewhat agree, NAB=neither agree nor disagree, SD=Somewhat disagree, MD=Mostly disagree, CD=Completely disagree.

In the above table 3, concerning the proposition that enhancing governance necessitates active participation by labour unions in policy formulation and implementation, 110 respondents (55%) completely agree, 60 (30%) predominantly agree, 20 (10%) somewhat agree, and 10 (5%) remain neutral. In relation to the assertion that collaboration between government agencies and labour unions leads to improved governance outcomes, 9 respondents (45%) completely agree, 90 (45%) largely concur, 10 (5%) somewhat agree, and 10 (5%) are neutral. Regarding the influence of labour unions in fostering social order via labour-related legislation, 100 respondents (50%) fully agree, 70 (35%) mostly agree, and 30 (15%) somewhat agree, with no respondents expressing disagreement. Concerning the view that government responsiveness to trade union concerns can enhance accountability and transparency, 80 respondents (40%) fully agree, 70 (35%) mostly agree, 20 (10%) somewhat agree, 10 (5%) are neutral, and 20 (10%) somewhat disagree. Lastly, regarding the idea that labour union participation in anti-corruption efforts bolsters governance integrity, 70 respondents (35%) fully

agree, 50 (25%) mostly agree, 60 (30%) somewhat agree, and 10 (5%) each neither agree nor disagree and somewhat disagree.

The data indicates that 90 respondents (45%) completely with the assertion that principles of good governance are aligned with labour union advocacy for workers' rights, while 50 respondents (25%) predominantly agree, another 50 (25%) somewhat agree, and 10 (5%) remain neutral. Concerning the proposition that government responsiveness to trade unions enhances social trust and fosters collaboration, 8 respondents (40%) entirely agree, 60 (30%) mostly agree, 40 (20%) somewhat agree, and 10 (5%) neither agree nor disagree, with an additional 10 (5%) expressing slight disagreement. Regarding the role of labour unions in resolving employment disputes and their contribution to societal stability, 80 respondents (40%) fully agree, 70 (35%) mostly agree, 30 (15%) somewhat agree, and 10 (5%) are neutral or somewhat disagree. In relation to the claim that government policies that incorporate labour union participation improve community well-being, 50 respondents (25%) completely agree, 50 (25%) mostly agree, 50 (25%) somewhat agree, 20 (10%) are neutral, and 30 (15%) somewhat disagree. Concerning the potential for civic society organizations and labour unions to collaborate in enhancing governance accountability, 100 respondents (50%) fully agree, 50 (25%) mostly agree, 30 (15%) somewhat agree, and 10 (5%) each remain neutral or somewhat disagree. Lastly, in relation to the assertion that government responsiveness to labour unions positively influences social justice outcomes, 50 respondents (25%) completely agree, 80 (40%) mostly agree, 30 (15%) somewhat agree, 20 (10%) remain neutral, and 10 (5%) each express slight disagreement or mostly disagreement.

Concerning the assertion that government initiatives aimed at promoting equitable resource distribution are influenced by labour unions, 40 respondents (20%) completely agree, 50 (25%) predominantly agree, 50 (25%) somewhat agree, 30 (15%) remain neutral, 20 (10%) somewhat disagree, and 10 (5%) predominantly disagree. Regarding the proposition that the government demonstrates transparency and adequately represents the interests of labour unions, 30 respondents (15%) completely agree, 60 (30%) largely agree, 40 (20%) somewhat agree, 30 (15%) are neutral, and 20 (10%) mostly disagree. With respect to the claim that community resilience is bolstered

through labour union participation in governance, 90 respondents (45%) completely agree, 50 (25%) mostly agree, 40 (20%) somewhat agree, 10 (5%) neither agree nor disagree, and 10 (5%) somewhat disagree. Finally, in relation to the assertion that social justice and social order are enhanced by government responsiveness to labour unions, 50 respondents (25%) completely agree, 70 (35%) mostly agree, 60 (30%) somewhat agree, and 10 (5%) each somewhat disagree and mostly disagree.

The study's results indicate that 95% of respondents consider the involvement of labour unions in policy development to be essential. Additionally, a substantial 90% support collaboration between unions and the government, which has the potential to enhance governance outcomes, accountability, and public trust. Furthermore, all respondents (100%) emphasise the importance of union participation in labour legislation, viewing it as crucial for maintaining social order and reinforcing the perspective that incorporating labour rights into policies fosters societal cohesion. The study also came to the conclusion that labour unions should collaborate with civil society organizations and take part in anti-corruption initiatives in order to improve government accountability. Accordingly, Krawczyk and Sweet-Cushman (2017) found that local governments' direct citizen engagement significantly improves good governance efforts in West Africa. This outcome corroborates the study's focus on the significance of collaborations between unions and civil society organizations in advancing government transparency and fostering democratic engagement. In a similar vein, Ayodeji et al. (2023) found that anti-corruption initiatives and democratic frameworks are becoming increasingly crucial to successful governance in Africa. This finding corroborates the study's conclusions that collaboration between trade unions and civil society is essential for effectively promoting enhancements in governance. Mayanja (2015) asserts that in order to have a strong democratic environment, government leadership, civil society, and unions must collaborate. According to this conclusion, unions may enhance governance by forming strategic partnerships and actively participating in the formulation of public policy.

Conclusion

The paper examines the relationship between labor unionism, governance, and social order in Nigeria, proposing strategies to strengthen governance through effective engagement with labor unions to foster national development. It concludes that labor unions play a significant role in advocating for policies and practices that benefit the broader community, not merely their members. By addressing issues that impact daily social harmony, labor unions act as influential advocates, shaping legislation that contributes to a more orderly society. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of transparent governance in ensuring equitable resource distribution, which promotes a sense of justice and opportunity within society. It also underscores how government responsiveness to union concerns can enhance accountability and transparency, arguing that strong collaborations with labor unions are vital for advancing good governance and addressing societal challenges. Future research could further investigate these cooperative dynamics to improve governance and labor relations.

Several key recommendations should be implemented to enhance governance through labor union participation. In addition to fostering cooperation via joint workshops and training sessions to improve communication with government agencies, institutional mechanisms for labor union involvement in policy-making must be established. Prioritizing union input in labor laws is crucial for upholding workers' rights and promoting social stability. To improve transparency, governments should also strengthen their ability to address labor union complaints through efficient feedback systems. Additionally, empowering labor unions to actively participate in anti-corruption campaigns will promote ethical behavior and strengthen governance integrity.

Future research should focus on determining effective practices by examining the long-term impacts of labor union participation through comparative analyses across different regions and longitudinal studies. Evaluating the success of specific labor union activities, particularly through successful case studies, can provide valuable insights into governance outcomes. Expanding stakeholder engagement to include perspectives from employers and civil society will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of governance dynamics. Lastly, labor union leaders can enhance their

ability to advocate for better social outcomes and stronger governance by receiving targeted training to improve their advocacy skills.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed to the final manuscript. The contribution of all authors: conceptualization, methodology, formal analysis, writing original draft preparation, writing review and editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

All authors have no conflict of interest related to this study.

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