



Moderating Effect of Participatory Management on the Relationship between Power Relations of Parties to Collective Bargaining Process in Public Universities in Kenya

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Abstract: *The study examined the influence of Power Relations of Parties (PRP) on the collective bargaining process (CBP) and the moderating effect of participatory management in public universities in Kenya. Anchored on Dunlop's Systems Theory of Industrial Relations, it adopted a pragmatic paradigm, mixed methods approach, and sequential explanatory research design. The target population comprised 1,462 Kenya Universities Staff Union (KUSU) members from Moi University and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, with a sample of 314 respondents determined using Yamane's formula. Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires, while qualitative data were gathered via interviews with eight key informants. Data analysis utilized descriptive and inferential statistics, including correlation and hierarchical regression. Findings revealed that PRP positively and significantly influences CBP ($\beta=0.228, p<0.05$), while participatory management negatively and insignificantly moderates this relationship ($\beta=-0.205, p>0.05$). PRP and participatory management accounted for 58.5% of the variation in CBP. The study concludes that PRP enhances CBP, but participatory management does not significantly moderate this effect. The study recommends promotion of cooperation between unions and management and integrating participatory management practices in CBP. Future studies should consider additional factors such as technology, economic conditions, and market context to provide further understandings into CBP in Kenya and beyond.*

Keywords: *Power Relations of Parties (PRP), Collective Bargaining Process (CBP), Participatory Management, Public Universities, Kenya Universities Staff Union (KUSU), Labour Dispute Resolution*

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1. Introduction

The collective bargaining process in public universities is a critical mechanism for negotiating employment terms, resolving labor disputes, and fostering industrial harmony. However, the effectiveness of this process is often influenced by power relations among the parties

involved, including university management, faculty unions, and government agencies (Kochan et al., 2019). The power dynamics in collective bargaining determine the outcomes of negotiations and the overall labor relations climate in higher education institutions (Budd, 2021). Participatory management, characterized by the inclusion of various stakeholders in decision-making processes, has been recognized as a potential moderating

factor that can balance power asymmetries and enhance the efficiency of collective bargaining (Freeman & Medoff, 2018). Globally, the collective bargaining landscape varies significantly due to differences in labor laws, institutional structures, and political contexts. In the United States, collective bargaining in public universities is shaped by state-specific labor laws, with faculty unions playing a crucial role in advocating for better working conditions and academic freedom (Kleiner, 2021). In Canada, a well-established tradition of collective bargaining exists in higher education, with strong faculty associations ensuring effective representation (Dobbie & Robinson, 2020). Similarly, Australia has a highly regulated industrial relations framework, where enterprise bargaining agreements define the terms of employment in universities (Forsyth, 2019). In the United Kingdom, collective bargaining in universities is primarily coordinated by national negotiating bodies, such as the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) and the University and College Union (UCU), which influence employment policies (Marginson, 2021). In Brazil, faculty unions have historically played a significant role in shaping labor policies, but power struggles between government authorities and academic institutions have led to periodic conflicts (Silva & Amaral, 2020). In India, collective bargaining in public universities remains a contested space, with faculty associations often struggling against government-imposed regulations that limit their bargaining power (Chakrabarti, 2019).

In Africa, collective bargaining in higher education faces additional challenges related to funding constraints, political interference, and institutional autonomy. In South Africa, collective bargaining is shaped by a strong legal framework, but tensions between university management and labor unions persist, particularly over wage negotiations and working conditions (Webster & Masikane, 2022). In Ghana, public universities have witnessed frequent labor disputes due to disagreements over salary structures and employment terms (Asiedu & Osei, 2021). In Tanzania, power imbalances between faculty unions and university administration have limited the effectiveness of collective bargaining, with government policies often favoring institutional management (Mkumbo, 2020).

Kenya's public universities have experienced significant labor unrest due to power struggles between faculty unions, university administrations, and government agencies. The Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) has been at the forefront of advocating for better employment terms, often engaging in industrial action to push for salary reviews and improved working conditions (Odhong' & Omolo, 2021). However, the power relations in collective bargaining have often favored university management and government bodies, leading to prolonged disputes and disruptions in the higher education sector. Participatory management, which encourages inclusive decision-making and

stakeholder engagement, has been suggested as a possible mechanism to mitigate these conflicts and promote more equitable bargaining outcomes (Munyua & Nyambegeera, 2022).

Despite the recognition of participatory management as a potential solution, limited empirical research has been conducted to examine its moderating effect on power relations in the collective bargaining process within Kenya's public universities. This gap in knowledge necessitates a deeper exploration of how participatory management influences the negotiation dynamics and dispute resolution mechanisms in higher education labor relations. Addressing this issue is crucial for fostering industrial harmony and enhancing the effectiveness of collective bargaining agreements in Kenya's public universities. Hence, this study sought to determine the moderating effect of participatory management on the relationship between Power Relations of Parties (PRP) and Collective Bargaining Process (CBP), in public universities in Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the problem

A cordial and trusting relationship between trade unions and management fostered industrial harmony, creating an enabling environment for an effective collective bargaining process (CBP). However, the industrial relations environment in public universities in Kenya had been characterized by hostility, conflict, and frequent disputes, as evidenced by recurring strikes and standoffs over salaries, wages, allowances, and other terms and conditions of service. The failure to implement Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) had further deepened mistrust between university management and labor unions. Notably, in 2012, a nationwide strike by university staff—including teaching staff represented by the Universities Academic Staff Union (UASU) and non-teaching staff under the Kenya University Staff Union (KUSU)—paralyzed learning in public universities. Similar strikes followed in 2014 and 2017, with the latter concluding in December 2017 after both parties agreed to finalize negotiations by February 28, 2018. However, industrial unrest persisted, with additional strikes occurring in 2022, 2023 and 2024 over salary reviews, delayed promotions, and the non-implementation of agreed CBAs. The persistent conflicts created a state of rivalry and antagonism that undermined the effectiveness of CBP in public universities. While power relations among the parties to CBP significantly influenced the negotiation process and its outcomes, the extent to which participatory management (PM) moderated this relationship had not been adequately explored. Participatory management—characterized by inclusive decision-making, shared governance, and consultative leadership—had the potential to balance power dynamics, enhance trust, and create a more collaborative industrial relations environment. However, in many Kenyan public universities, decision-making remained largely hierarchical, limiting the involvement of unions

and employees in shaping policies that affected their welfare. This study aimed to determine the influence of power relations of parties (PRP) to collective bargaining (CB) on the CBP, while also examining the moderating effect of participatory management on this relationship.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the effect of Power Relations of Parties (PRP) on the Collective Bargaining Process (CBP) in public universities in Kenya.
2. To analyze the moderating effect of Participatory Management on the relationship between Power Relations of Parties and the Collective Bargaining Process in public universities in Kenya.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

- H₀₁: Power Relations of Parties (PRP) have no significant influence on the Collective Bargaining Process (CBP) in public universities in Kenya.
- H₀₂: Participatory Management does not significantly moderate the relationship between Power Relations of Parties (PRP) and the Collective Bargaining Process (CBP) in public universities in Kenya.

2. Literature Review

The dynamics of industrial relations within public universities have been a focal point of scholarly inquiry, particularly concerning the interplay between participatory management and collective bargaining processes. Globally, studies have examined how these elements influence labor relations, organizational performance, and employee satisfaction. In the United States, research has highlighted a shift towards neoliberal managerial practices in public universities, often leading to the marginalization of faculty in decision-making processes. A case study of Public Midwestern University revealed that the adoption of shared governance models, facilitated by faculty unions, enhanced participatory management and improved labor relations (Berghahn Journals, 2023). This underscores the potential of participatory frameworks in mitigating conflicts inherent in collective bargaining.

In Russia, the structure of wage bargaining has been scrutinized to understand its impact on labor market outcomes. A study analyzing ten sectors found that the degree of centralization in wage bargaining among trade unions significantly affected wage formation and unemployment rates. The findings suggested that a balanced approach in bargaining structures could lead to more favorable economic outcomes (Borgnäs, 2020). Finland's labor relations landscape offers insights into

the role of statutory bargaining extensions. Research comparing Finland with Germany and the Netherlands examined unions' preferences for extensions, revealing tensions between institutional power and membership dynamics. The study concluded that while extensions serve as a central institutional power resource, they might impede collective action if workers are covered without contributing (Schulten & Böhlke, 2021). In Canada, the evolution of labor interests has been explored concerning corporate power and governance. A comprehensive analysis discussed the effects of labor interests on labor, employment, and corporate law and policy. The study emphasized the potential role of unions in reshaping the economic landscape to provide workers with greater voice and power within corporate governance (Bodie, 2019).

The Philippines has witnessed significant developments in collective bargaining within the public sector. Studies have evaluated the effectiveness of participative management practices, highlighting the challenges and successes in implementing such frameworks. The research indicated that while participative management can enhance labor relations, its success largely depends on the commitment of both management and unions to genuine collaboration (Snyder, 2022). In Nigeria, the collective bargaining process has faced numerous challenges. An evaluation of conflict management strategies at the University of Lagos revealed that the undermining of collective bargaining in the public sector has led to frequent industrial conflicts. The study emphasized the need for effective wage determination mechanisms and genuine engagement between unions and management to foster industrial harmony (Fashoyin, 2014). Ivory Coast's industrial relations environment has been less documented in academic literature. However, available studies suggest that the country faces challenges similar to other developing nations, including power imbalances between management and unions, which hinder effective collective bargaining. Further research is needed to explore the specific dynamics within Ivorian public universities.

Uganda's public universities have grappled with industrial unrest, often stemming from disputes over remuneration and working conditions. Research indicates that the lack of participatory management practices exacerbates these conflicts. Implementing inclusive decision-making processes could potentially mitigate disputes and enhance the effectiveness of collective bargaining (Mulongo, 2020). In Rwanda, the industrial relations framework is evolving, with increasing recognition of the importance of participatory management. Studies have shown that fostering a culture of inclusivity and shared governance in public institutions can lead to improved labor relations and organizational performance. However, challenges remain in fully integrating these practices into the existing administrative structures (Kagaba, 2021). Kenya's public universities have experienced a

tumultuous industrial relations environment, characterized by frequent strikes and disputes over employment terms. A study focusing on the influence of union-management relations on the collective bargaining process found that adversarial relationships hinder effective negotiations. The research highlighted the moderating effect of participatory management, suggesting that inclusive decision-making can improve the collective bargaining process (Mulongo, 2020). Further research in Kenya examined the aspects of collective bargaining agreements and their impact on the performance of academic staff. The findings indicated that well-structured agreements, developed through participatory processes, positively influence staff performance and job satisfaction (Mbuthia, 2023).

Globally, the decline in union membership and collective bargaining coverage has raised concerns about wage disparities and labor rights. A recent assessment of the economics literature on collective bargaining emphasized the need for modern research designs and administrative datasets to better understand these trends and inform policy decisions (OECD, 2023). In the context of public sector collective bargaining, traditional bilateral negotiations have often been deemed inadequate. A study proposed pluralist models that reflect the diverse interests of the many publics affected by such negotiations, arguing for more inclusive approaches to decision-making in the public sector (Kochan & Lipsky, 1979). The concept of participative management has been explored extensively, with literature reflecting a wide and diverse research orientation. Studies have examined social philosophy, organizational theory, human development, management practices, small-group processes, and leadership perspectives, all contributing to a comprehensive understanding of participative management (Lawler, 1996).

In the realm of public sector collective bargaining, the possibilities of participative management practices have been investigated. Research in North Dakota state government explored the feasibility of such practices, concluding that participative management can lead to more effective and harmonious labor relations (Snyder, 2022). The relationship between participative management, collective bargaining, and professionalism has been a subject of scholarly interest. An analysis highlighted that while participative management involves management permitting employees to share in decision-making, collective bargaining represents a power relationship where employees assert their rights, underscoring the fundamental and inescapable power dynamics in industrial relations (Kochan, 1980). From the above studies, there has been little attention given to exploring the relationship between PRP to CB and collective bargaining process with moderating effect of participatory management hence the need to fill this knowledge gap. This raises questions on how participatory management moderates the relationship

between PRP to CB and collective bargaining process. Thus, the study hypothesized that:

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives

This study is supported by Dunlop's Systems Model of Industrial Relations (1958 & 1993) which integrates the whole industrial relations system. Dunlop is credited with the application of the systems approach to Industrial Relations (IR). He visualized IR to be a systematic construct, namely, a sub-system of society. An organization is considered an open system, existing in a context called environment. The organization influences its environment as well as gets influenced by the environment (Singh, 2011). The industrial relations in its operations is regarded as comprising certain actors and a body of rules created to govern the actors at the work place. The actors are employers, employees and the state. The creation of rules according to Dunlop is the output that an IR system seeks to create. Rules govern all forms of compensation, duties and performance expected. They also define the rights and duties of employers and employees and govern the procedures for establishing and application of rules (Sivarethinamohan, 2010).

The three 'actors' interact in the input transformation and feedback process. The 'actors' include managers and their organizations, workers and their organizations, the state and its agencies concerned with workplace issues. The actors do not function in isolation but in an environmental context which influences them as they influence it. There is the technical context of workplace which relates to how work is organized and the state of technology whether it is labour or capital intensive (Singh, 2011). Furthermore, there is the transformation which in an industrial relations context relates to the activities of bargaining, conciliation, arbitration, legislation and judgment, which comprise the industrial relations system in Kenya. Besides, there is the market context or the revenue which comprises product demand, market growth, number of competitors and profit margin. These influence the interaction of the 'actors'. The power context is how power is distributed among the 'actors'. In addition, discussion and bargaining must be the preferred way to solve disputes. In their interaction the state has a clear role as an arbiter in certain matters (Sivarethinamohan, 2010). This study therefore sought to contribute to theory by highlighting the influence of Power Relations of Parties to Collective Bargaining on the Collective Bargaining Process and the moderating effect of participatory management on the relationship between Power Relations of Parties to Collective Bargaining and the Collective Bargaining Process in public universities in Kenya.

3. Methodology

The study utilized pragmatic research paradigm, mixed methods approach and sequential explanatory research design. Pragmatic paradigm examines issues raised in the study by using a method which appears best suited to the research problem without getting caught up in the philosophical debates. Mixed methods design involves sequential data collection, analysis and integration of quantitative and qualitative data to best understand the research problem (Morgan, 2022). The study was conducted at Moi University and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. The target population was 1462 which comprised of the 1087 members of (KUSU) from Moi University and 375 from Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. These were non-teaching from grades 5 to 15 on permanent terms of employment, who are members of Kenya universities staff union (KUSU). They included Registrars in charge of administration and top officials of KUSU from the two universities. A sample size of 314 was obtained using Yamane formula (1973).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where N = population size

n = Sample size

e = Margin error of the study set at $\pm 5\%$

Applying this formula the sample size is calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{1462}{1 + 1462(0.05)^2} = \frac{1462}{1 + 1462 \times 0.0025} = \frac{1462}{4.655} = 314 \text{ or } 21.5\% \text{ of the target population}$$

This is in line with Kothari (2014) who argues that a study sample of between 10% and 30% of the target population is adequate for a study.

Stratified simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. This study employed both probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling techniques. Probabilistic sampling utilized stratified and simple random sampling techniques while non-probabilistic technique employed purposive sampling. Stratified sampling was used to obtain the grades of the non-teaching staff of the two universities who are members of Kenya Universities Staff Union (KUSU). This constitutes registrars, administrators and technicians. Stratified sampling was used since every unit in a stratum/Grade has equal chance of being selected and adequate representation of each group can be ensured by varying proportionate sampling among the strata as required. Staff identification numbers were utilized to select the respondents. This was achieved using proportionate sampling of the non-teaching staff of both universities in each stratum (table 1). Simple random sampling was used in selecting the required respondents from each stratum. This provided an opportunity where all subsets of the sample frame are given an equal probability, and each element of the frame had an equal probability of selection. Purposive sampling was utilized to identify the two universities, Moi University and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology and to identify the eight key informants, four from each university who were not captured using simple random sampling. The study ensured informed consent by clearly explaining the research objectives, procedures, and participants' rights before data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by protecting respondents' identities and securely storing data. Additionally, voluntary participation was upheld, allowing participants to withdraw at any stage without any consequences.

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution by Grades and University

Grade	Moi University		Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology		Total Sample
	Target Population	Sample	Target Population	Sample	
15	4	1	2	1	2
14	23	5	3	1	6
13	48	10	11	2	12
12	113	24	18	4	28
11	4	1	14	3	4
10	69	15	43	9	24
9	137	29	58	13	42
8	94	20	75	16	36
7	239	51	53	11	62
6	105	23	67	14	37
5	250	54	31	7	61
Total	1087	233	375	81	314

Source: KUSU membership records, 2024

Face and content validity of the research instruments were established by presenting the instruments to the supervisors in the school of business and economics, Moi University for verification and judgement. The instrument was modified based on their opinions and suggestions; criterion validity was ascertained using KMO, factor analysis (CFA) and Principal Component Analysis (PCA) while construct validity was confirmed by deriving dimensions of IR and CBP from existing literature. Factor analysis was also used to verify the suitability of the variables for inferential analysis (Hair et al, 2010). Reliability test of the instrument was based on Cronbach's Alpha and an overall reliability of 95.2% was obtained and accepted as it was greater than the laid down threshold of 70%.

Data for the study was collected using closed ended questionnaire and interview schedules constructed by the researcher based on the objectives of the study. The researcher administered the questionnaires personally to the respondents and thereafter, the filled questionnaires were collected immediately for data analysis. Qualitative data was collected using interview schedules from 8 key informants. Descriptive analysis was used to

describe the demographic profile of the target respondents and inferential statistics was used to analyze, interpret and draw conclusions on the hypotheses of the study. Pearson's product moment of correlation was used to test the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. Multiple Regressions was used to test the direct effects of union management relations on collective bargaining process while hierarchical regression was used to test the moderating effect of the moderator, participatory management on the relationship between union management relations and collective bargaining process. Qualitative data from interview schedules was analyzed using content analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Power Relations of Parties to Collective Bargaining

The objective of this study was to determine the effect of Power Relations of Parties to Collective Bargaining on collective bargaining process in public universities. The results are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Power Relation of Parties to CB

	Mean	Std.Dev	Skewness	Kurtosis
The union has support of its members	3.76	1.05	-0.80	0.28
the union bargains as equal partner with the university management	3.67	1.30	-0.68	-0.59
The university management always goes with the decision of the union	3.55	1.17	-0.53	-0.50
The union always goes with the decision of university management	3.87	1.05	-0.92	0.34
The university management is always ready to lockout staff whenever there is a dispute	3.99	1.08	-1.20	1.03
The government supports harmonious union management relations	3.81	1.17	-0.90	-0.01
KUSU always bargains more for its members	3.81	1.08	-0.88	0.31
The university management recognizes the right of the union to organize and assemble	3.24	1.43	-0.22	-1.30
The university management has a negative attitude towards the union	4.34	0.83	-1.72	4.00
KUSU rarely stage a successful strike	3.84	1.04	-0.97	0.62
The government plays its role well in the tripartite industrial relations system	3.47	1.24	-0.59	-0.63
Mean	3.76	0.74	-0.80	0.28

Source: Survey data, 2024

The results in table 2 showed an overall mean of 3.76. This suggested that a majority of the respondents agreed PRP to CB is key to the success of collective bargaining process in public universities in Kenya. Additionally, the highest mean score of 4.34 was from the statement *“The university management has a negative attitude towards the union”*. This suggested that public universities need to emphasize good working relationship between the university management and the union through free communication. On the other hand the lower mean score of 3.47 was in relation to the statement that *“The government plays its role well in the tripartite industrial relations system”*. This suggests that more efforts need to be focused on improving the level of cooperation between the university management and the union. Conceivably, more efforts should also be dedicated to regular meetings between the two parties in order to enhance collective bargaining process.

Similarly, the results depicted that the standard deviation ranges from 0.83 to 1.3 with an overall SD of 0.74. This explained the dispersion in the distribution of data. Hence, the statement in this variable indicated an approximation of a normal distribution. Furthermore, the values for both skewness and kurtosis for PRP to CB were generated and presented in table 2. Evidently, the results indicated that the values of skewness are within the conventional value of <3 whereas the values for kurtosis are less than the recommended value of <10 (Kline, 2011). Consequently, it suggests that the responses with respect to the PRP to CB as an explanatory variable in the study followed a normal distribution, thus, these results connote that there is non-

violation of normality assumption (Groeneveld & Meeden, 1984).

4.2 Participatory Management

The results (table 3) indicated that the overall mean for all the statements in respect to participatory management was 3.90. This suggests that the respondents mostly agreed that participatory management is a vital part of successful collective bargaining process in public universities. It makes employees feel involved in the management of the institution and hence decision making in matters that affect industrial relations environment like collective bargaining process. The higher mean score of 4.07 indicated that participatory management was important in public universities. However, the lower mean of 3.56 denoted that the respondents moderately perceived participatory management as vital to collective bargaining process. Equally, the standard deviations for all the statements on participatory management ranged between 1.162 and 0.85 with an overall standard deviation value of 0.57 as shown in table 3, hence, showed greater dispersion of the responses around the mean. The values for skewness and kurtosis for all the statements with regard to participatory management were within the acceptable value of <3 for skewness and value of <10 for kurtosis (Kline, 2011) and (Groeneveld & Meeden, 1984) respectively with overall skewness value of -0.62 and kurtosis of 1.34. Therefore, the results indicate that there is a normal distribution of the responses in respect to participatory management in public universities in Kenya.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Participatory Management

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
University makes decision that are based on every member idea	4.05	0.85	-1.37	2.76
Union suggest ways the university in improving member job performance	3.80	0.89	-0.92	1.26
University allows members to participate in solving university problems	3.86	1.00	-0.83	0.30
University allows members to participate in university budget making	3.98	0.90	-1.30	2.39
Active participation of the union members in University major decision making	3.92	1.00	-1.31	1.69
Free flow of communication, sharing information and networking	4.05	0.86	-1.16	1.96
All employees are involved in collective bargaining	3.85	1.02	-1.30	1.63
There is a trade union representative in the organization	4.04	0.88	-1.33	2.48
Frequently discuss matters of work welfare with the trade union	4.07	0.86	-1.23	2.38
Visit trade union offices frequently for updates	3.56	1.16	-0.54	-0.49
Trade union representatives call us frequently in open discussion	3.66	0.96	-0.68	0.11
Mean	3.90	0.57	-0.62	0.96

Source: Survey data, 2024

Collective Bargaining Process

According to the results (table 4) collective bargaining process had an aggregate mean of 3.54 indicating that the respondents agreed on most of the items on collective bargaining process while the standard deviation was within the range of 1.30 and 0.95. This revealed a wide spread of the responses around the mean. The highest mean score of 3.84 indicated that the universities emphasized the importance of collective bargaining process as a way of ensuring healthy industrial relations in public universities in terms of encouraging the degree of members' participation. On

the other hand, the lower mean score of 3.20 suggested that the universities should focus on improving collective bargaining process especially with regard to the time taken to reach an agreement and implementation of the same. Furthermore, The value of skewness and kurtosis for all the statements regarding the collective bargaining process in public universities indicated that skewness and kurtosis were within the acceptable values of <3 for skewness and <10 for kurtosis (Kline, 2011; Groeneveld & Meeden, 1984).. This shows that the responses with respect to collective bargaining process in the study followed a normal distribution.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Collective Bargaining Process

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
The fairness of the process	3.76	1.05	-0.80	0.28
The willing of the management to negotiate	3.67	1.30	-0.68	-0.59
The time taken to reach an agreement	3.52	1.13	-0.56	-0.42
The level of concern for other party point of view	3.84	0.95	-0.87	0.86
The willingness for both parties to give and take	3.60	1.23	-0.68	-0.47
The degree of feedback given to members	3.31	1.19	-0.34	-0.76
The degree of members participation	3.20	1.21	-0.25	-0.80
Implementation of agreed terms	3.39	1.10	-0.46	-0.47
Mean	3.54	0.77	-0.42	-0.20

Source: Survey data, 2024

4.5 Discussion

4.5.1 Relationship between PRP to CB and Collective Bargaining Process

The results reported a positive and significant correlation between PRP to CB and collective bargaining process ($r=0.684$, $p<0.01$). This result is confirmed by the regression results which showed that PRP to CB had a positive and significant effect on collective bargaining process ($\beta=0.228$, $p<0.05$). The findings support the hypothesis that PRP to CB has a positive and significant relationship with collective bargaining process in public universities in Kenya. As regards power relations of parties to collective bargaining, key informants in the interview revealed that most power normally rests with the universities. Management power style consists of a mixture of democratic and authoritarian style but lean more towards authoritarian style. Unions it was reported, normally use democratic style. It was further revealed that unions are normally excluded from management meetings except when a disciplinary matter regarding one of their members is to be discussed.

Cognate to the above assertions, Trif (2021) noted that employers have generally more power than unions. Furthermore, often, employers are unwilling to delegate power to employers' associations to negotiate on their behalf and this is detrimental to the development of voluntary collective bargaining. Consistently, Singh and Dannin (2022) found that employees who lack power cannot bargain as an equal party with the employer. Similarly, Freeman et al. (2022) elucidated that lack of power by low-wage workers is common both for workers in industrialized countries and developing countries. The results are also intendem with findings by Cole (2023) which established that collective bargaining is only possible when workers' and employers' organizations are equally strong and are aware of their rights and duties.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that power relations of parties (PRP) to collective bargaining (CB) are a critical determinant of the effectiveness of the collective bargaining process (CBP) in Kenyan public universities. The findings revealed that PRP significantly and positively influence CBP outcomes, indicating that the way power is exercised, shared, and negotiated among stakeholders—university management, labor unions, and government agencies—directly impacts industrial harmony, labor agreements, and dispute resolution mechanisms. Given the persistent adversarial relationships in public universities, it is imperative that PRP to CB be managed under conditions of mutual trust, joint participation, and free exchange of information. Establishing a cooperative and transparent engagement

framework will not only enhance the credibility of CBP but also facilitate sustainable industrial peace. By fostering an environment that prioritizes inclusivity, dialogue, and shared decision-making, universities can transition from confrontational bargaining models to interest-based negotiation strategies, ultimately leading to mutually beneficial agreements, improved working conditions, and stable academic operations. Achieving these goals requires a paradigm shift from rigid hierarchical decision-making to a participatory governance structure that embraces collective problem-solving for the long-term stability of industrial relations in public universities.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study made the following recommendations.

1. Public universities should institutionalize participatory management frameworks that encourage regular consultations between university management and labor unions. This can be achieved through structured dialogue platforms, joint decision-making committees, and inclusive policy formulation processes to foster trust and reduce adversarial relationships during collective bargaining.
2. Universities should adopt transparent communication policies where all parties involved in collective bargaining have equal access to relevant financial, operational, and policy-related information. This will help build confidence among stakeholders, minimize suspicion, and ensure negotiations are based on factual and verifiable data.
3. Training programs should be conducted for both university administrators and union leaders on negotiation skills, conflict resolution, and interest-based bargaining techniques. Equipping stakeholders with these skills will improve the quality of CBP, reduce confrontations, and promote win-win outcomes in labor agreements.
4. The government, through the Ministry of Education, should formulate and enforce clear industrial relations policies specific to public universities. These policies should outline standardized collective bargaining procedures, define roles and responsibilities, and establish conflict resolution mechanisms to ensure consistency and accountability in CBP.
5. Future research should explore the impact of external factors such as economic conditions, technological advancements, and evolving

labor market trends on the collective bargaining process in public universities.

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