

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND

FACULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MAIN EXAMINATION 2006

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TITLE OF PAPER: Industrial Relations

DEGREE AND YEAR: Bachelor of Commerce 1V

COURSE NUMBER: BA 414 /IDE BA414 -1& 2

TIME ALLOWED: Three (3) hours

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. THIS PAPER CONSISTS OF SECTION (A) AND (B)
2. THE CASE STUDY SECTION (A) IS COMPULSORY
3. ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS FROM SECTION B

**NOTE:** You are reminded that in assessing your work, account will be given of the accuracy of language and the general quality of expression, together with the layout and presentation of your final answer.

**THIS PAPER MUST NOT BE OPENED UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR HAS GRANTED PERMISSION.**

**GOOD LUCK!!!**

**SECTION A CASE:**

**Read the case below and answer the questions that follow.**

## **Unionisation in the service sector**

The service sector is one of the fastest growing sectors throughout the world. It employs more than the manufacturing and agricultural sectors combined. To put it in another way: nearly 11 workers in every 20 is based in a service sector. Despite being an important sector that employs the majority of the population it has the most appalling working conditions as often workers complain of stress, management oppression, too much work load, long working hours without commensurate pay. These are a few of the many concerns presented by numerous Labour Research Commissions.

These concerns prompted one of the union organisers, Ndabazwe Mhlongo to engage on a recruitment campaign which also was not well received by the employees. The staff members were so fearful and isolated that they "didn't even trust each other, never mind management". There were huge disparities among the staff such that one of the unions expressed the need to build a sense of solidarity among them.

In one of the hotels that employs about 150 staff, one of the unions' official expressed the view that "trying to recruit them is like dealing with nine different workforces instead of one". This is a common problem in new industries with no union history such as contracted services, catering, construction and consulting firms. Even where there are unionised members, most unions have a fairly sketchy idea of the number of members they have working in the service sector. Generally, this sector is difficult to deal with. When asked about the contributory factors to this problem, the unions gave varied arguments for failure to unionise this sector and for the failure to keep up-to date records.

What one of the Labour Research Commissions found strange was that it is the very oppressive conditions in many of the service industries that make some of the workers to be scared to be associated with the union and is also the main factor that gets people to join. When asked, "what have you found to be the main reasons for staff joining the union?" more than half of the unions referred to the management style and working environment. The Swaziland Financial Services and Allied workers' Union (SUFIAWU), for example, said that the main lure was 'management attitudes, working conditions and poor morale', while the transport union referred to the need for "protection from harsh management/bad working practices". Swaziland Postal and Telecommunication Services Union (SPTSU) cited stress, pressure of targets and bullying/harassment from immediate supervisors'. These are a few of

many reasons. The problems are not only confined to the staff, others are attributed to the unions themselves.

Despite the problems expressed, in some work settings like the hospitals and schools, they have a high level of union membership and have up-to-date records, hence the relatively highly organised union activity in these areas.

Interestingly, the chairperson of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) is very confident that the situation will improve even though it is evident from the highlights presented that still more needs to be done to deal with the situation.

**QUESTION 1**

- a. Discuss the reasons for failure to unionise in this sector. (20 marks)
- b. What strategies would you recommend to the unions to enable them to deal with the situation?

Total

(20 marks)  
40 marks

**SECTION B**

**(Answer any three (3) questions from this section)**

**QUESTION 2**

The Retired Pensioners Association needs to draft an Industrial Relations Policy.

- a. For the policy to be effective what would you expect to find in it?  
(10 marks)
- b. Discuss the role of industrial relations policies to any practicing organisation?  
(10 marks)

**QUESTION 3**

Do you agree with the view that "trade unionism is a foreign ideology to a Swazi"? Support your arguments with concrete examples of the role of trade unions in Swaziland, both in the past and present.

(20 marks)

**QUESTION 4**

The Management team at Conco Ltd. do not believe in third party representation because of numerous reasons.

- a. Which labour relations' perspective do they follow and discuss the rationale behind it? (10 marks)
- b. Under such circumstances, how do management promote a harmonious labour relations climate? (10 marks)

**QUESTION 5**

The newly proposed Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration Commission (CMAC) has contributed greatly to the improvements in disputes resolution. Discuss the current disputes resolution procedures and how they differ from the previous ones (20 marks)

**QUESTION 6**

What are the factors that contribute to the continuation of industrial conflict in Swaziland? (20 marks)