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TRADE UNIONS AND ENHANCEMENT OF CONDITION OF FACTORY WORKERS IN SEVEN-UP BOTTLING COMPANY ILORIN

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Ibrahim, A.K.

Abstract

The importance of working condition in any industrial set-up has been widely acknowledged. This is because of its effects on the work process generally. Based on this observation, researches have shown that working condition could be enhanced by series of factors and the existence of trade union activities has been identified as one of such factors but this has only been academically acknowledged from theoretical perspective only. Therefore, this study empirically investigated if the existence of trade union in a work organization have significant relationship with achieving an improved working conditions of workers in Seven-Up Bottling Company, Ilorin. Survey design was adopted and quantitative data were gathered through the use of structured questionnaire. Frequency tables and percentage were used as descriptive of trade union in a work organization have significant relationship with the attainment of improved working statistical tools while chi-square was used to test if significant relationship exists between the dependent and independent variables of the study. The findings revealed that the existence conditions of employees in the selected organization. The study concluded that the existence of trade union goes a long way in bringing about an

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improved working condition of employees in a work organization. On the basis of this finding, it was recommended that trade union should improve on their role in protecting worker's interests especially those that are related to the improvement of the working condition of employees in work organizations.

Key Words: Trade Union, Working Condition, Organization, Management

Introduction

The very existence of man depends upon the provision of the basic necessities of life in terms of food, clothing, shelter etc. Work is very essential because it is the means of providing man with these basic necessities hence, without work; there would be nothing to live on. In the earliest stages of human civilization, the tempo of life was slow, work was intermittent and flexible offering a variety of simple work tasks and the pace of work relaxed with abundance of leisure. Machines were not used in manufacturing and no huge owner-operated factories but products were produced in businesses operating in a person's home termed 'cottage' industries (Jeff, 2003).

However, the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and early 19th century brought so many changes to the organization of work. The home and craft-based economy was transformed to an industrial manufacturing one and the factory concentrated large number of workers to use different machines in production. Industrial capitalism developed and workers started working in factories using various machines. Work became strictly regulated and monotonous with workers performing the same task over and over again. Factory workers had to face series of work related challenges such as working for long hours, operating in poor working condition, job uncertainties, job instability etc. These new conditions of work proved challenging in contrast to

earlier conditions of work and workers inevitably responded to this malady by developing a consciousness of forming unions to drive home their demands in which improved working conditions was a major strand. This is because, working condition is very important in the life of the workers as well as the organization (Tramatis, 2010).

In line with the above, several studies have been conducted to examine the possible impact of work environment on the general work process. For instance, Elton Mayo and his associates carried out the Hawthorne Experiments with the primary aim of examining working conditions and generally classify the numerous problems arising in the working situation (Gillespie, 1991). In fact, working conditions related issues have been prioritized in labor policy debates throughout the industrialized nations due to its importance in the industrial relation system. Good working conditions enable employees to pleasurable actualize their abilities and also improve their level of job satisfaction and productivity (Roelofsen, 2007).

According to Repley (2003), organizations should pay attention to the working conditions that will be conducive to the employee. This is because in situations where working conditions are sound and deemed to be appropriate, employees are said to be better encouraged to do what is expected of them. Mokaya, Musau, Wagoki, Karanja & Kabare (2013) also found that factors like working conditions, remuneration and promotions play important role for employees' level of job satisfaction and performance. However, despite these observations, improved working condition is not likely to be provided except with the existence of trade unions. Fundamentally, trade unions are formed based on the belief that workers are powerless individually but if they speak collectively with the same voice, their concerns are more likely to be

addressed. In essence, trade unions provide social, economic, political and psychological benefits for their members as they also provide the platform for workers' participation in managerial functions in the industry.

More importantly, trade unions were formed to agitate for an improved working condition and it has been generally conceived that trade unions existence naturally enhance working conditions of people in the workplace. However, it has also been observed and argued that in contemporary time, trade union are not so agile and active in playing this important work role. This debate notwithstanding, little empirical research has been carried out to assert whether they are still a relevant social force active in playing the important role of protecting workers interests and defending their rights. More so, the little available researches have its focus of analysis on large public work organizations with little or no attention on large private organizations. With the intention of covering this palpable gap, this study is an attempt to empirically assess if the existence of trade union has significant effect on improving the working conditions of employees in Seven-Up Bottling Company, Ilorin.

Statement of the Problem

Working conditions of people is so much an important element in the workplace. However, due to the capitalist profit orientation, many at times this factor is often ignored in the general work process. In fact, one problem that attracted the attention of Karl Max to the analysis of capitalism is the poor working conditions of the proletariat. Essentially, researches in industrial sociology have shown that poor working conditions usually lead to poor behavioral dispositions of employees. Although working conditions of laborers have improved significantly in the developed worlds, it is however saddening that the reverse is the case in many work organizations in the developing countries such

as Nigeria. According to Ajakaye (2010), the rapid industrialization in the past millennium, which arose from the global technological advancement, has consistently rendered Nigerian workers, especially those in the factories vulnerable to high risks of work related hazards, injuries, diseases and illness. For instance, work related diseases are put at 160million every year while more than 2.2million occupational deaths and 250million work accidents occur every year worldwide (International Labour Organization ILO (2013). Consequently, an attempt to correct this anomaly has made the establishment of trade unions imperative. According to Omokhodion (2009), trade unions operates for many reason but the major impetus on which they were established on is to improve the welfare of their members especially their working conditions. This fact notwithstanding, some observers have bemoan the efficiency of trade unions in achieving this functions, some seeing them more of a platform for personal advancement and a mere tool in the hands of management in maintain the wrong status-quo and as a result some members of the union do not really believe in their union leaders anymore (Tramatis, 2010). Thus, due to the importance of trade union in maintaining check and balances in the workplace coupled with the fact that these negative claims about unionism is largely un-confirmed empirically, the intention of these authors is empirically ascertain if trade union activities really enhance working conditions of employees using a private work organization as a case in point.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of this study, some questions were asked:

- i What is the pattern of trade union activities in the seven-up bottling company?
- ii What is the state of working conditions of workers in seven-up bottling company?

- iii Could the existence of trade union in seven-up bottling company have significant relationship with the working conditions of employees?

Based on the above questions, the objectives and hypotheses of the study were realized.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are stated thus:

- i to examine the pattern of trade union activities in seven-up bottling company?
- ii to observe state of working conditions of workers in seven-up bottling company?
- iii to ascertain whether the existence of trade union in seven-up bottling company have significant relationship with the working conditions of employees?

Research Hypotheses

In order to achieve the main objectives of this study, the following hypotheses were raised:

- H₀: There is no significant relationship between the existence of trade union and the provision of conducive work environment.
- H₁: There is a significant relationship between the existence of trade union and the provision of conducive work environment.

Conceptualization of Terms

It is essential to give the detailed explanations of important concepts relevant to the study in order to avoid ambiguity and ensure proper understanding.

What is Trade Union?

Trade union has been subjected to different definitions by diverse scholars. Sidney Beatrice & Webb in Nchuchuwe & Ajalor (2008) defined trade union as association of wage earners, the primary purpose of which is the maintenance and improvement of their working situation and general live dynamics. Fajana (2005) defines trade union as an association of wage/salary earners formed with the objective of safeguarding and improving the wage and employment conditions of its members and to raise members' standard of living generally.

According to Adewunmi (2007), trade unions arose to address the enormous problems faced at work, which include job insecurity, injustice, dependence and the inhuman conditions under which work is carried out. The Trade Union Act Cap 437 laws of the Federation of Nigeria, (1990) defines a trade union as 'any combination of workers or employers, whether temporary or permanent, the purpose of which is to regulate the terms and conditions of employment of workers'. Trade union can also be defined as an organization of workers formed by workers for the sole purpose of improving the socio-economic and political interest of their members. From these definitions, it is evident that a trade union must: be an association of workers or employees; have the primary aim of regulating terms or conditions of service; be employees association or employers association or independent workers association; and aim to protect the interests and improve the welfare of their members.

Going by the above, trade union could be described as voluntary associations of workers or employees formed to promote and protect interests of specific set of people through collective actions. They help maintain and improve workers' terms and conditions of employment and also defend them against any injustice and exploitation at work or outside work. They achieve

their aim through the process of collective bargaining with the employers on issues of wages, working conditions, hours of work, job security and other welfare measures so as to ensure healthy and happy workers with improved standard of living. Technically, it is also important to note from the above that trade union is a collection of people who practice a particular or who share a common feature, either as employees or employers who organize themselves into a specific group with the sole intention of attracting some benefits for its members which hitherto would have been difficult to achieve. With this conception, it should be noted that though, existing literatures see trade union as restricted to employees alone, but there are instances where employers also constitute themselves into a trade union association. Examples of such are: the Manufacturing Association of Nigeria (MAN), Igbo Traders Union of Nigeria and so on.

Working Condition

Working conditions is an umbrella term used in describing all the conditions attached to a particular job vis-a-vis formal/informal, structural/virtual conditions or arrangement. Working conditions start from the formal agreement made between the employer and employees and extended to environmental issues such as workplace arrangement or other post-work issues such as motivation, compensation, insurance schemes and so on. The World Health Organization (2006) defines working conditions as involving combination of compensations, financial and non-financial incentives as well as issues relating to workplace safety generally. Scholarly explanation of working conditions have focused on a combination of factors, such as remuneration, training, supervision, recognition, and transparency in human resource management (Songstad, Rekdal, Massay, & Blystad, 2011). European Union Law conceived of it to include issues relating to minimum rights of all workers in a range of areas including working hours, information and consultation of

workers, health and safety at work as well as conditions for part time, full time and temporary agency workers.

In job evaluation literatures, working conditions imply two dimensions: environmental conditions and hazards. Environmental conditions range from ordinary to extreme conditions in terms of factors such as heat, humidity, noise, smell, light and dust. Unpleasant environmental conditions have both direct and indirect effects on employee job performance leading to a reduced productivity and high absenteeism. According to Akinyele (2010), about 80% of productivity problems reside in the work environment of organizations. Also, hazards are unavoidable direct or indirect exposure to light wound, flammable danger, electrical hazards, occupational disease, and mortal hazards. It is believed that ergonomic deficiencies are the root causes of workplace health hazards (Shikdar & Sawaged, 2003).

Difficult working conditions negatively influence employees' job satisfaction, performance, safety and health. This in turn could lead to high rate of absenteeism, labor turnover and general organizational efficiency and productivity. It is therefore necessary to take measures to eliminate uncomfortable working conditions. Safety at work is carried out to avoid accidents, injuries, occupational diseases thereby improving workers' occupational health by protecting them against sicknesses, diseases and hazards that may arise out of employment. Conducive work environment therefore ensures the well-being of employees which invariably will enable them to exert themselves to their roles with all vigor that may translate to higher productivity (Akinyele, 2007).

In relations to this study, working condition entails the physical conditions under which employees work and all the circumstances

relating to the work environment vis-a-vis safety measures put in place in the work environment, hours of work, rest intervals, work schedules, occupational safety, wages and allowances, job security as well as legal rights and responsibilities of the workers. These services/benefits needed to be provided to enable workers perform their work in a healthy, congenial environment with amenities conducive to good health.

Trade Unionism and Working Condition of Factory Workers: A Review of Relevant Literature

Historically, it is right to say that the zeal to improve the work environment has been the fact that gave impetus to the development of workers' union. This action was as a result of Karl Marx call that until the *proletariat* gets united and fight the *Bourgeois* with a unified voice, their work conditions is not likely to improve significantly. For well over centuries, improving workers welfare and working conditions have been important objectives of trade unions; many unions are borne out of these struggles against hazardous and unsafe working conditions. Unions deploy their strength to advocate for social policies and legislation that would be favorable to their members and to all workers in general. In the absence of trade union, workers naturally become easy victims of oppression and exploitation (Akinyele, 2007). When workers have no unions to protect them, they suffer injustices without justifiable reasons. They could be plundered to work under excruciating condition of service without commensurate remunerations; might not have access to fair hearing with the management on issues concerning them (Chukwunenye, 2011).

The trade union movements give healthy and safety issues a higher priority in order to improve employees' condition of work. When the working conditions are good and favorable, their quality of life is improved because an employee can only put in

his/her best when he/she is physically and mentally sound (Akanji & Lawal, 2012). In recognition of the importance of workers welfare and health therefore, the Workmen Compensation Act and Factory Act 1990 was enacted to protect the right of employees by preventing accident and giving victims reasonable compensation. Whenever accidents occur, the Act also spells out responsibilities for the employers as well as, the employees in order to make the workplace safe for them (ILO, 2004).

The rapid industrialization in the past millennium, which arose from the global technological advancement, has consistently rendered Nigerian workers, especially those in the factories vulnerable to high risks of work related hazards, injuries, diseases and illness (Ajakaye, 2010). Some of the common features of these companies are heavy loadings, unpleasant working conditions, poor machine system, etc. With the use of high technology equipments and the work processes, workers are daily exposed to diverse occupational health hazards such as dusts, gases, noise, vibration, radiation, extreme temperature and other highly reactive chemicals like carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, ozone, sulphuric acid, nitrogen oxide and host of others, which had led to sudden death of some workers and gross deficit in the health status of many others (ILO, 2011; ILO, 2013, Omokhodion, 2009). For instance, work related diseases are put at 160million every year while more than 2.2million occupational deaths and 250million work accidents occur every year worldwide (Ajakaye, 2010). According to Tramatis (2010), researchers find that workers in factories with more compliant and better working conditions are more productive than their counterparts in factories where conditions is not enhanced.

In a nutshell, trade unions with a view to safeguard the health of workers while trying to achieve organizational goal of productivity demand the management to provide good working

conditions and safe work environment free of hazards with good lighting and ventilation, sanitation, rest-rooms, safety equipments when discharging hazardous duties, leave and rest, minimum working hours, better work schedule, holidays with pay, social security benefits and other welfare measures. By providing good working conditions, trade unions help in reducing the rate of absenteeism, labor turnover and developing systematic grievance settlement procedures leading to harmonious industrial relations. Trade unions thus contribute to improved level of production, productivity and discipline thereby improving the quality of work, living and organizational efficiency.

Methodology

The research study made use of survey design using the quantitative techniques of data collection. This is because the survey method is an efficient method for systematically collecting data from a broad spectrum of individuals. The study population consists of 192 employees in the selected organization. To get a truly representative sample, stratified sampling was used in dividing the workers into strata based on the categories of staff in the company. Simple random sampling technique was then used to select the sample population from which data was elicited for the study. A total of one hundred and twenty respondents drawn from the senior and junior staff categories made up the sample size for the study.

The research instrument was the structured questionnaire designed to capture all relevant information by means of a variety of question types. After thorough checking for omissions and other inconsistencies, out of the one hundred and twenty questionnaires taken to the field, six were not returned while four was not appropriately filled. A total of one hundred and ten questionnaires duly completed were therefore analyzed using descriptive statistical tools which are: frequency tables and

percentages. The relationship between variables was determined through cross tabulation and chi-square was used to test the study hypothesis.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This section presents the analysis of the gathered data and the discussion of major findings.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	83	75.5
Female	27	24.5
Total	110	100
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
S.S.C.E	10	9.1
NCE/OND	37	33.6
HND	53	48.2
B.A/B.Sc.	10	9.1
Total	110	100
Staff Category	Frequency	Percentage
Junior Staff	89	80.9
Senior Staff	21	19.1
Total	110	100
Duration of Employment	Frequency	Percentage
2 - 5 years	51	46.4
6 - 10 years	16	14.5
Over 10 years	43	39.1
Total	110	100
Term of Employment	Frequency	Percentage
Permanent	80	72.7
Temporary	30	27.3
Total	110	100

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, (2016).

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic information of the respondents on gender, educational qualification, category of staff, duration of employment and term of employment. Majority of the respondents 83 (75.5%) were males while 27 (24.5%) were females. This male dominance might be attributed to the nature of job carried out in the company. Data on educational qualification

of the respondents shows that 10 (9.1%) had secondary education, 37 (33.6%) had NCE/OND, and 53 (48.2%) had HND while 10 (9.1%) had B.A/B.Sc. Also, 89 (80.9%) are junior staffs while 21 (19.1%) belong to the senior staff category. On duration of employment, the data reveals that 51 (46.4%) respondents have been in the company for a period of 2-5 years, 16 (14.5%) for a period of 6-10 years while 43 (39.1%) have been there for over 10 years. A good percentage of the respondents have worked in the company for the period of 6-10 years and over 10 years. This result signifies a more stable workforce. It is also evident from the table that 80 (72.7%) respondents are permanent staffs while 30 (27.3%) are temporary staffs.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of respondents view on trade union activities

Trade Union Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Active	105	95.5
Passive	5	4.5
Total	110	100
Participation in Union Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	90	81.8
No	20	18.2
Total	110	100
Benefits from Union Membership	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	87	79.1
No	23	20.9
Total	110	100
Relevance of Trade Union at Workplace	Frequency	Percentage
Relevant	106	96.4
Not relevant	4	3.6
Total	110	100
Influence of Union in meeting Workers demands	Frequency	Percentage
Effective	95	86.4
Not effective	15	13.6
Total	110	100

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, (2016).

The data in Table 2 reveals that trade union is very active in the

union is active while 5 (4.5%) said it is passive. It is also obvious that majority 90 (81.8%) of the respondents participate in union activities in the company while 20 (18.2%) did not participate in union activities. This finding is in agreement with that of Sharon (2013) in which nearly all the respondents belong to a trade union. The obvious deduction from this finding is that greater numbers of the respondents participate in union activities which show that the employees recognize the important roles played by trade unions. Furthermore, a significant majority 87 (79.1%) of the respondents have derived benefit from being a member of trade union while 23 (20.9%) said they have not. A study by Sharon (2013) reiterates that unionized workers' earnings exceed those of comparable non-union workers by about 15% showing therefore that unions benefit their members as confirmed also in this study. More than eight (8) out of ten (10) respondents that is, 106 (96.4%) stated that trade union is relevant at the workplace while a negligible few of the respondents 4 (3.6%) said trade union is not relevant at the workplace. The deduction that can be made from this finding is that trade union is relevant at the workplace. Also, majority of the respondents 95 (86.4%) affirmed that trade union is very effective in meeting the worker's demands while a few of the respondents 15 (13.6%) is of the opinion that trade union is not effective in meeting the worker's demands. This finding corroborates that of Bishal (2012) which confirmed that workers rely on trade unions and by unionizing their interests are safeguarded. It can be inferred therefore that trade union is effective in its role of protecting workers' interests.

Table 3: Descriptive analysis of the Working Condition

Working Conditions	Frequency	Percentage
Conducive	78	70.9
Not conducive	32	29.1
Total	110	100
Work Schedule	Frequency	Percentage
Satisfactory	74	67.3
Not satisfactory	36	32.7
Total	110	100
Working Hours	Frequency	Percentage
Favorable	68	61.8
Not favorable	42	38.2
Total	110	100
Improved Workers Welfare by Unionizing	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	91	82.7
No	19	17.3
Total	110	100
Union enhancing Conducive Work Environment	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	86	78.2
No	24	21.8
Total	110	100

Source: Researchers' Fieldwork, (2016).

As reflected in Table 3 above, 78 (70.9%) of the respondents stated that their working condition is conducive and 32 (29.1%) stated that their working condition is not conducive while 74 (67.3%) of the respondents also believed that their work schedule is satisfactory and 36 (32.7%) believed that their work schedule is not satisfactory. Moreover, 68 (61.8%) of the respondents see their working hours as favorable while the remaining 42 (38.2%) stated that their working hours is not favorable. Also, majority of the respondents 91 (82.7%) affirmed that workers welfare have improved by unionizing while 19 (17.3%) were of contrary opinion. From this finding, it can be inferred therefore that unionizing is very important in improving workers welfare. This finding also concurs with that of Okereke (2011) where majority (80%) of the respondents stated that their welfare has improved

by unionizing. Likewise, 86 (78.2%) opine that trade union has been helpful in enhancing conducive work environment while 24 (21.8%) thought otherwise.

Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the existence of trade union and the provision of conducive work environment.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between the existence of trade union and the provision of conducive work environment.

Table 4: Cross-tabulation of the relationship between trade unionism and the provision of conducive work environment

Trade Union Activity	Work Environment		
	Conducive	Not conducive	Total
Active	61	15	76
Not Active	17	17	34
Total	78	32	110

$\chi^2 = 10.430$; $\chi^2_c = 3.841$; $df=1$; α level=0.05; H₀ rejected

Since the chi-square calculated value is greater than the chi-square tabulated value, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. This means that there is a significant relationship between trade unionism and the provision of conducive work environment.

Discussion of Findings

The general objective of this research work was to examine the influence of trade union on enhancing improved working conditions. In the organization, trade union is very much active which allow for adequate assessment of the

consideration. It was revealed from the findings that trade union is very relevant in any work organization most especially in improving workers welfare and the working conditions. This is in agreement with the views of Obisi (2005) that trade union is very relevant at the workplace with its relevance cutting across various areas like economic, political, socio-psychological and managerial relevance.

On rating the influence of trade union in meeting worker's demands, 86.4% of the respondents assert that trade union is effective in meeting worker's demands. This finding is supported by Akinyele (2007) who found that trade union is very important in meeting worker's needs and demands stating further that in the absence of trade union in an organization, workers naturally become easy victims of oppression and exploitation. From the findings, it is obvious that a good percentage of the respondents see their working hours as favorable and are also satisfied with their work schedule and working conditions acknowledging the activities of trade unions in achieving this. The findings further revealed that trade union is very essential in providing conducive work environment as 82.7% and 78.2% of the respondents confirm that their welfare have improved by unionizing and also assert that trade union has been helpful in providing them with conducive work environment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

On a note of conclusion, trade union still remain a relevant social force active in playing the important role of agitating for improved welfare and conditions of work. The significance of trade union in protecting workers' interests, motivating and defending their rights, providing conducive work environment, preventing worker's victimization and discrimination, improving terms and conditions of employment, providing job security and

are therefore important institutions of the industrial society as a result of their unwavering success in legitimizing workers struggle and protecting their interests. Trade unions provide opportunity for progress and development of the organization by making the worker to be more undoubtedly efficient, result oriented, highly dedicated and committed to work. Based on these findings therefore, the following recommendations are made:

1. Trade union is influential in improving employees' general welfare as well as their working conditions and must therefore be given room for improvement by the management to ensure improved standard of living for the workers and sustainable delivery of quality services at the company. This could be done by allowing workers to freely unionize, co-operating with the union officials and ensuring that decisions pertaining to workers' welfare and conditions of work are jointly taken.
2. It was also discovered from the study that trade union is helpful in providing conducive work environment. Union should therefore improve on their role in providing a relaxed and congenial work atmosphere by making sure that the work environment is free from hazards and all necessary facilities and safety equipments are adequately provided. Management should also support them by prioritizing workers' demands most importantly on conducive work environment and improved working conditions so that the workers can perform their duties in healthy environment conducive to good health and high morale.

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INCREASING SPECIFICITY OF RESPONSE IN INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Edward Yesufu Eke

Introduction

There is this need to expose children to educational centres where the educational abilities, responses and stimuli from the mother's womb will be of utmost benefit to the society instead of allowing children to be brought up in parks, markets, secret cult's centers etc. In some advanced countries early childhood education usually comes up with crèche centre, Montessori and nursery centres are used for adequate training.

Crèche is a place where small children can be left to be looked after while their parents are doing something else. Nursery is a place where children who are not old enough to go to school are looked after. Foetal is used to describe something that is related to or is like a fetus.

Fetus is an animal or human being in its later stages of development before it is born. Montessori education is children of little age using play-way method in actualizing educational goals. Heart beat of every living person commences at four weeks of conception as a matter of fact, birth does not mark the beginning of the individual. If birth takes place earlier than 280 days which is the normal period of birth the child is said to be prematurely born. Four weeks after conception the expectant mother reports feeling of fetal movements at about four and half months, and the respiratory movement can be evoked by the fifth to sixth months if appropriate stimulation is employed. From seven to nine

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