

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

GRIEVANCE HANDLING PROCEDURES AND EMPLOYEE
PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF JAYEE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature Date

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Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's signature..... Date

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed grievance handling procedures and employee performance with a specific focus on Jayee University College. To achieve this objective, the study identified the styles used at the university in handling employee grievances, explored employees' perceptions about the way their grievances are handled, discovered factors which hinder effective management of employees' grievances and found out what should be done to effectively manage employees' grievances. In terms of research design and methodology, the study adopted a qualitative research design and gathered data through interviews. The population of the study included 22 staff of Jayee University College. Data were collected and analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The study found that majority of supervisors used integrating approach in trying to solve their employees' grievances, whereas few supervisors used intimidating style of managing employee grievances. This study found that lack of human resources management skills, bureaucratic procedures and unequal relationship between supervisors and employees were the major hindrances to effective management of employee grievance at Jayee University College. The study concluded that there should be improved communication, enforcement of rules and regulations and improvement of employee punctuality through disciplinary procedures.

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DEDICATION

To my dear children, Bryan and BraydenAssafuah

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

There are three essential things to manage in life and they include human resources, non-human resources and time (Ohiri, 2002). Organization effectiveness is defined as the efficiency with which an organization is able to meet its objectives (Jones & Heinz, 2004). This means an organization that produces a desired effect or an organization that is productive without waste. The most valuable resource of an organization is its employee. This is because, machines cannot operate themselves without human assistance. For workers to perform efficiently, they must have the motivation to perform, this means they must be satisfied. An unsatisfied worker usually has a grievance.

In the education sector, just like most organizations be it private or public, conflicts and disputes are inevitable though collective agreements meant to manage these unproductive situations exist between labour and management. To arrest or address this situation, each collective agreement in an organization should contain provisions for grievance handling procedure by which the dispute arising between the employers, the union or the individuals (employees) may be resolved (Opatha, 2004).

The subject of employee grievance is as old as industrial societies, but in most recent time the question of management of employee grievance in Africa and specifically Ghana deserves attention. This is because a prompt response that leads to quick resolution of a grievance will boost employee morale and productivity and can forestall costly legal action.

The term grievance described the breakdown of mutual confidence between employer and employee (Nurse, 2006). At the start of working at a new place, there is a mutual expectation that form the basis of the forthcoming working relationships. Apart from what is written in the contract of employment, both parties will have expectations to what is to come. That working relationship is sometimes going to go wrong. If the employee is dissatisfied, then there is potentially a grievance.

An aggrieved employee who feels a grievance against a manager or the company as a whole is an unhappy employee and unhappy employee cannot do effective work. The employee becomes depressed, has low morale and as a result efficiency drops. Satisfaction at work in terms of all circumstances that surround the job is key to high morals. It does not matter how well paid and interesting a job may be, until the individual performing the job realizes satisfaction, the moral will be adversely affected (Daud, 2010). The continuation of grievances in organization is inevitable because for an organization to have grievances free relationship means that they will have no relationship at all (Ohiri, 2002). Improper handling of grievances leads to disruption of work in the form of demonstration, violence, strike and resignation which ultimately amount to labour turnover with its effect on the organizations.

Jones (2004) asserts that employee grievance in organizational or industrial relation context is a state of dissatisfaction or discontent on the part of either labour or management. The author also said that grievance is negative feeling which commonly finds expression in various forms ranging from complaint to strike action or destructive reactions. An organization

will usually establish a grievance practice to give an opportunity to the employee to file his or her frustration. For an organization to have meaningful productivity and improved labour management relationship requires the design and adjustments of equitable grievance handling system. The establishment of grievance procedure is in line with the principle of “due process” which guarantees the application of procedural justice and ethical decision making in an organization (Mante-Meija & Enid, 1991)

Grievance handling procedures serve as a system of communication between workers and managers. It provides an avenue for complaints, informs managers of trouble ahead, curbs absenteeism, strikes and other incidents that has the likelihood of affecting business operations negatively (Ivancevich, 2001). In other words, grievance procedures are the laid down mechanisms through which workers’ grievances are dealt with or resolved. The type of grievance procedure applied varies from organization to organization, its management structure and resources availability. One of the effective ways of minimizing and eliminating the source of employee’s grievance is by having an ‘open door policy’. An ‘open door policy’ facilitates upward communication in the organization where employees can walk into superiors’ office at any time and express their grievances (Peterson & Lewin, 2000).

Managers must be educated about the importance of the grievance process and their role in maintaining favorable relations with the employees. Effective grievance handling is an essential part of cultivating good employee relations and running a fair, successful, and productive workplace (Daud, 2010).

There are several theories underpinning the study of grievance handling procedures. However, the one to be used for the study will include the leader-member exchange theory, clinical theory, behavioral and management theories.

Statement of the Problem

A grievance is any dispute that arises between an employer and employee, which relates to the implied or explicit terms of the employment agreement (Britton, 1992). The use of grievance procedure is intended to serve the needs of both employers and employees (Jones, 2004). Despite Jayee University College being one of the oldest private universities in the country charged with responsibility of developing competent human resource which would better manage what has been poorly managed by other institutions, the management of employee grievance in the university has remained a challenge. This challenge has been evidenced by the fact that some employees have threatened to break their employment contract with the university in order to work with other public institutions while others have decided to leave the teaching career for other ventures. By all accounts, this situation has been caused by employee dissatisfactions over how the supervisors manage their grievances. In support of this observation, Kamoche(1997) found that the unsatisfactory performance of most African private organizations is due to inappropriateness of management practice and weak inefficient decision making.

Review of the literature has shown the various styles or approaches used in managing employee grievances and performances in different

organizations. So far, few studies comprising (Danku&Apeletey, 1999) on workplace grievances and(Aboagye&Benyebar, 2010) on assessing discipline handling and grievance management procedure have been conducted in Ghana to examine styles used by supervisors and managers in managing grievances raised by their subordinates or fellow employees. The researcher has observed that improper or unsatisfactory handling of grievance in many organizations including Jayee University College used for the study has caused high labour or employee turnover, poor human relation and ineffective communication of objectives. It is against this background that this study focuses on grievance handling procedures and employee performance at Jayee University College

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate grievance handling procedures and employee performance. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. To examine the nature of workplace grievance at Jayee University College
2. Assess the grievance handling procedures prevailing in Jayee University College
3. Examine how the grievance handling procedure influence employees' performance
4. Identify styles used in handling employee grievance

Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the following research questions were used to guide the study.

1. What are the causes of workplace grievances?
2. What are the grievance handling procedures prevailing in JayeeUniversity College?
3. How do grievance handling procedures influence employees' performance?
4. What are the styles used in handling employee grievance?

Significance of the Study

Employee grievance is of great importance to the survival of any organization. This is because grievances when not addressed will turn to have a major effect on the organization. The aim of this study was to investigate grievance handling procedures and employee performance. The research would not only add to works that have been done in this area, but also provoke further research into the grievance handling procedures and its resultant effect on the achievement of the object of the university. It would benefit the university in its effort to handling grievances and increasing performance. It is assumed that this research will be a guide to human resource managers as well as those who may have keen interest in handling grievances in organizations.

Delimitations

The scope of this study is restricted to only employees and management of Jayee University College.

Limitations

The restrictions of the population to only employees of Jayee University College renders the findings, conclusions and recommendations applicable mainly to the organization but not all private universities. The unwillingness of some of the interviewees to provide needed information with particular regard to the study affected the findings of the study. Getting clearance from authorities to carry out the interview, some respondents not being available for the interview due to work load and some respondents not able to provide answers to all interview questions.

Definition of Terms

Management: In this context means the top managers and decision-makings in an organization.

Grievances: Is any discontent or sense of injustices expressed or not felt by an employee in an organization

Bargaining Agreement: A record of all binding conclusion and agreement reached between management and employees especially through negotiation.

Performance: The accomplishment of a given task measured against present known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed.

Productivity: Rate of out per man hour of work volume of output in relation to input

Employer: An employer is a person or institution that hires employees or workers.

Employee: Any person who enters into a contract of employment to offer his labour

Labour turnover: Is the term given to the management of employees leaving a company and their replacement.

Organisation of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is the introductory chapter which focuses on the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and organization of the study. In the second chapter, the study reviews the existing literature. The review will mostly be related to the fundamental concept of grievance handling procedures and elements.

Chapter three gives a description and explanation of the procedures followed in the collection of the data, that is, both primary and secondary. Chapter four involves data analysis and discussion of the results from data analysis. The fifth and final chapter gives the summary, conclusion and the recommendations arising thereof from the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

For a proper understanding of this study, the review of related literature and empirical will be made in this chapter which in turn will create a focus and better direction. In this light, the literature will discuss the concept of grievance and highlights expressed views concerning grievance handling procedures. Other segments of the literature such as grievance handling styles, causes of employee grievance and performance management will be discussed. Lastly, a summary of the chapter is presented at the end of the chapter.

The Concept and Scope of Grievances Procedure

Grievance procedures are means of dispute resolution that can be used to address complaints by employees against management or to settle disputes between a company and its suppliers, customers, or competitors (Coleman, 2000). The best known application of grievance procedures is a formal process outlined in labour union contracts. “The term grievance as it appears in the written contract refers to a formal complaint by people who believe that they have been wronged by a management decision”(Lewin& Richard, 1999).

Definition of Grievance

According to Britton (1992), grievance may be defined as any dispute that arises between an employer and employee, which relates to the implied or explicit terms of the employment agreement. The validity of grievance

depends upon whether or not there is “just cause” or reason for such complaint. Grievance is more than likely a violation of an employee’s rights on the job, a right that is usually but not always defined by the contract.

Disciplinary proceedings are the result of employees not following rules and regulations or not performing according to standards set by the company. The reverse situation is also possible when an employee feels that he/she is being treated unfairly or inequitably. His / her grievance may arise due to many factors such as inappropriate interpretation of rules, unfair treatment, personal grudge, non-recognition of work performance, among others. Unless the employee’s grievance is addressed from the very beginning, it can be a constant source of worry and anger for the employee who in turn may impact his / her work performance (Britton, 1992).

Disgruntled employees may be a source of danger not only to the organization but also to the other employees in the organization. Such employees can also cause nuisance value to the company. Therefore grievances should be addressed and resolved at the earliest opportunity. Although having grievance procedures in place is important in both unionized and non-unionized settings, companies must support their written policies with consistent actions if they hope to maintain good employee relations. To make the grievance procedure work, management and the union have to approach it with the attitude that it serves the mutual interests of management, employees and the union (Thompson, 2005).

According to Scarpello, (1995), an effective procedure helps management discover and correct problems in operations before they cause serious trouble. It provides a vehicle through which employees and the union

can communicate their concerns to upper management. For grievance procedures to be effective, both parties should view them as a positive force that facilitates the open discussion of issues. In some cases, the settling of grievances becomes a sort of scorecard that reinforces an “us versus them” mentality between labour and management.

In other cases, employees are hesitant to use the grievance procedures out of fear of recrimination. Some studies have shown that employees who raise grievances tend to have lower performance evaluations, lower promotion rates and lower work attendance afterwards (Britton, 1992). This suggests that some employees may retaliate with other employees who raise complaints. It is vital that a company’s grievance procedures include steps to prevent a backlash against those who choose to use them.

Types of Employee Grievances

There are three types of grievances, individual, groups and policy (Randolph & Blanchard, 2007). An individual grievance is a complaint brought forward by a single employee in which a decision made affects that specific employee. Such cases can deal with issues related to the collective agreement, discipline and human rights, as well as other matters affecting the employee concerned. For example, an employee who has been overlooked for promotion within an organisation, may complain about this fact. The employee may feel that he/she has performed adequately and he is the most senior in the directorate, as per the rules. The onus will be on his immediate supervisor to present the facts (Peterson, 2000).

A group grievance is a complaint brought forward by more than one employee grieving the same alleged violation with the same facts. Therefore, a group grievance involves the “effect of management action on two or more employees under same collective agreement or regulation. Grievances of this type are used in situations where a group of employees in the same department or agency face the same problem. The problem must relate to the interpretation or application of the collective agreement. A policy grievance is a dispute of general application or interpretation of any section or paragraph of the collective agreement or rule rather than the direct management action involving a particular employee. These types of grievances are normally, initiated at the final step of the procedure (Stessin, 1999).

Theoretical Review

Theories to be reviewed in this study include the Procedural Distributive Justice Theory, Exit-voice-loyalty theory, the leader-member exchange (LMX) theory and the clinical theory.

Procedural and Distributive Justice Theory

The relationship between perceptions of justice and the grievance system was highlighted by Gordon and Fryxell (1993). They asserted that a union’s relations with its constituents is tied more closely to the procedural and distributive justice afforded by its representation in the grievance system than by any other type of benefit in the collective bargaining agreement. This means that filing a grievance is a formal expression of procedural justice perceptions. Through this, employees develop their perception toward the

union. In other words, perceived fairness of the grievance procedure is positively related to employee satisfaction with the grievance procedure, management and union. Perceived fairness of grievance handling has stronger effects on employee satisfaction than perceived fairness of grievance procedures outcomes; access to grievance procedure negatively related to job performance and intent to exit (Lewin&Petterson, 1988)

Exit-Voice-Loyalty Theory

In terms of this theory, members of an organization, whether a business, a nation or any other form of human grouping, have essentially two possible responses when they perceive that the organization is demonstrating a decrease in quality or benefit to the member: they can *exit* (withdraw from the relationship); or, they can *voice* (attempt to repair or improve the relationship through communication of the complaint, grievance or proposal for change) (Lewin, et., al 1999). The implications of the above concept can be enormous and can allow for a new perspective on daily examples of social interaction. Exit and voice themselves represent a union between economical and political action. By understanding the relationship between exit and voice, and the interplay that loyalty has with these choices, organizations can craft the means to better address their members' concerns and issues, and thereby effect improvement. Failure to understand these competing pressures can lead to organizational decline and possible failure.

The Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

This is a relationship-based approach to leadership that focuses on the two-way relationship between leaders and followers. It suggests that leaders develop an exchange with each of their subordinates, and that the quality of these leader-member exchange relationships influences subordinates' responsibility, decisions, and access to resources and performance. Relationships are based on trust and respect and are often emotional relationships that extend beyond the scope of employment. Leader-member exchange may promote positive employment experiences and augment organizational effectiveness. It is widely used by many managers and is replacing many of its predecessors (Getman, 1998).

The Clinical Theory

This theory places emphasis upon the problems of treating grievances rather than upon the mechanics of accepting or dismissing grievances (Lewin, et., 1999). The agreement is utilized not to determine what merit the grievance possesses or its right to consideration, but to facilitate non-discriminatory consideration of all grievances. Where a complaint can be settled by application of the agreement, the clinical approach advocates that this should be done and the matter thereby concluded. However, where current disputes threatening relationships and production cannot be negotiated or adjusted in this manner, it is concluded that until the dissatisfaction underlying the complaint is also mitigated or adjusted the problem will remain. Consequently, it is further held by the clinical approach that the investigation

of a complaint should not be considered complete until these highly important bodies of facts have been compiled.

Causes of Grievance and Related Issues

In an organization, a grievance may be presented by an employee or group of employees, with respect to any measure or a situation that directly affects the individual or is likely to affect the conditions of employment of many workers. If such a grievance is transformed into a general claim, either by the union, or by a group of employees, then the claim falls outside the scope of grievance procedure as it is a collective grievance and therefore it falls under collective bargaining. There are rules, regulations and instructions which are archaic and aimed at shifting the work towards employees (Freeman, 2009).

The factors that generate the grievances in an organization are Slackness in admission which can be defined as being careless in doing something, moving slowly, lacking in activity, lacking firmness among others, Misemployed people: situation where people go to work and spend the day performing activities and being busy, but it light years away from tapping into their full capacity. Communication problems: where people do not dare to speak their minds because they know they would be punished for doing so. British writer, Erwin once said, "To hear nothing but what is pleasing is to make a pillow of the mind". Sadly, many firm partners and practice leaders are actually sleeping on this kind of pillow. They only hear the good news (Kellor, 1999).

Other factors are colleagues and partners not accessible for help: that is where partners and practice group leaders are good at demanding results from their people but are pathetically poor at supporting them to produce the demanded results. Lack of personal and professional growth in the firm: management should endeavour to develop the competence levels of staff and do away with obsolence. Bad performance appraisal: Majority of performance appraisal systems not resulting in valid and reliable evaluations of employee performance which results in conflicts and grievances in the organizations. Absence of incentives: the factors that serve or induce or motivate employees. Participating employees must be presented with timely awards at a value commensurate with their efforts and contributions; the absence incentives create grievances in the organization and Lack of proper authority and accountability wheredelegation of authority is a prerequisite for the successful implementation of result based management. Lack of proper authority and accountability contribute to grievances in the organizations (Freeman, 2009)

These factors need to be tackled properly through systematic changes. Prevention is better than cure. On these lines, the best method to redress a grievance is not to allow the grievance to arise at the first instance. Even the redress of a grievance, which arose on account of delay, is also delayed as is revealed by the analysis of grievances to which an average of six months is taken to redress a grievance (Britton, 1992)

Management's Responsibility in Handling Grievances in an Organization

If an organization has to move towards excellence, maintaining of harmonious and cordial relationship is a vital condition. Similar to

organization expectations from the employees, the employees do not have more expectation in terms of what they have contributed to each other. Failure to meet with each other's expectation or the deviations from what had already been accepted may lead to indiscipline. Grievances and stress are continuing in nature and often judicial legal process may not be of much help in resolving them. Managers should be extremely sensitive in handling grievance situations. Every case of grievance must be treated as an opportunity to improve the working environment and not viewed as a nuisance created by an employee. A clearly defined grievance policy should exist in every organization. The policy should be made available at all employees (Getman, 1998).

The policy should allow the employee the complete freedom to "air his / her grievances" to different levels of management. It should also provide for a fair hearing with assurance of complete privacy where necessary. No action should be taken against employee simply based on hearsay or unconfirmed reports. Applying this system to the issue of grievances, one can see a constructive role for the board. The board can define through a statement or series of statement the overall results to be achieved by the organization's grievance policy. Then it is management's responsibility to craft the specific procedures, prepare needed documents and set up a system that will achieve the results outlined by the board. Of most importance, though the board does not dictate the specific procedures to be followed and not be involved with specific grievance cases (Ichniowski, 1987).

In general, the board wants to make an overall statement of goals for a grievance system and general guidelines on how grievances should be

handled. A board's statement about grievances will probably address management's authority in defining grievance procedures, who must be involved in handling grievances, accountability to the corporation and overall standards of a grievance procedure (Carver, Byars, & Ru, 1990). A board's statement about grievances should avoid dictating such as where materials should be posted or how much time the committee may spend on a particular case (the means). Instead, if the board focuses on making clear statements of what results it expects, management can develop a particular procedure to fit those conditions.

Grievance Handling Procedures and Related Issues

Not all conflicts occur between parties who have no formal relationships; it is possible for intractable conflicts to develop even where parties have shared working relationship. But an intractable conflict is less likely to arise when parties have used their negotiation time wisely. In particular, parties who anticipate the likelihood of future conflicts and create procedures to deal with them when they occur are much less likely to find the tensions of subsequent conflicts destroying their ability to continue to work together. A key element in such planning is often the establishment of a formal grievance procedure, a standardized set of procedures to follow when someone has a complaint or a problem (Scarpello, Philip, & Adrian, 1995)

It is particularly important to have a grievance procedure when it is likely that people who were not direct signatories to the original negotiations will be affected by the implementation of an agreement. Employees whether represented by a union or not, are frequently in this position, and the classic

grievance procedures are derived from workplaces with unions. Many decades of experience have resulted in fairly standard grievances procedures that might well be utilized by people in other situations as well.

There are two key factors in establishing a workable grievance procedure. The first is the concept of progression of levels at which a given complaint may be handled. Typically, this begins with a step that provides for a rapid and informal addressing of a complaint by those immediately involved, with appeals to successively higher levels of management or other possible representatives possible in the event that lower-level resolution does not work.

The second factor is the availability of an alternative procedure to be used if several successive attempts at negotiation have failed. Typically, this will be mediation, arbitration or both (Scarpello, et. al., 1995)

Many grievances can be resolved quickly by correcting a misunderstanding, or with a simple negotiation. In this case the grievance procedure saves time, money, and the relationship between the parties. Having the issue handled by those immediately involved is a benefit as well as those who know more about the problem at hand than the people at higher levels. However, a given grievance may involve a more difficult issue, or one or more of the parties may refuse to settle with simple negotiation.

The availability of appeals to a higher level not only provides an end to what might otherwise become frustrating bickering, but often serves to remind a given representatives at any levels that reasonableness at this stage will eliminate the need for review of his or her actions by someone higher up. Time limits at each step, so that no one can stall the process indefinitely are

typical, and in the event that the parties have discussed the matter at all levels provided in the procedure and are still deadlocked, an arbitration provision generally provides for a final decision by a decision maker that both sides have had a say in choosing (Ichniowski, 1987).

According to Honeyman (2003), a typical grievance procedure in a unionized environment might look something like this: Any dispute which may arise from an employee or union complaint with respect to the interpretation of the terms and conditions of this agreement shall be subject to the following grievance procedure, unless expressly excluded from such procedure by the terms of the agreement. All grievances shall be initiated in phases. Time limits set forth herein may be extended upon mutual agreement of the parties. The union shall have the right to be noticed and be present at the steps of the grievance procedure.

Phase 1: The employee, union steward or officer, and / or the union representative shall present the grievance to the most immediate supervisor who has the authority to make adjustments in the matter within fourteen days of the alleged grievance or knowledge thereof.

Phase 2: If a satisfactory settlement is not reached in step 1, within three days following completion, the employee, the union and union representative may present the grievance to the department head. Upon the request of said department head, the grievance shall be in writing and shall state the grievant(s) name(s)

Phase 3: If a satisfactory settlement is not reached in step 2 within five days of the date of submission of the written grievance to the department head, the employee, the union committee and the union representative may present the

grievance to the personnel manager. The manager or his designee shall schedule a meeting to be held within fourteen days of the receipt of the grievance by the personnel manager with the union committee and union representatives for the purpose of attempting to resolve the grievance. The personnel manager shall respond in writing within seven days of the date of the meeting. Timeframes may be extended in writing by mutual agreement of the parties.

Phase 4: If the grievance is not resolved at step 3, the union may within fourteen days after the personnel manager's written response is due, serve written notice upon the employer that they desire to arbitrate the grievance. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding upon the parties. The cost of the arbitration shall be borne equally by the parties, except that each party shall be responsible for the cost at any witnesses testifying on its behalf. Upon the mutual consent of the parties more than one grievance may be heard before one arbitrator.

Grievance Handling Styles

Styles in handling employee's conflicts may give an impact in industrial relation culture (Holt & Devore, 2005). A unitary organization is more centralize (Rose, 2004). As a result, avoidance and dominating styles may be utilized in resolving grievances (Green, 1987). On the other hand, a bilateral organization which is more decentralizing may employ compromising, integrating or obliging styles when confronting with employee's grievances (Rahim, 1983). Rahim's study has constructed

independent scales to measure five styles in handling conflict namely compromising, integrating, obliging, avoiding and dominating.

Compromising Style: This style involves moderate concern for self as well as the other party involved in conflict. It is associated with give-and-take or sharing whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision (Rahim &Magner, 1995). Compromising style also refers to splitting the difference, exchanging concessions or seeking a quick middle-ground position (Thomas, 1976).

Integrating Style: Integrating styles involves high concern for self as well as the other party involved in conflict. It is concerned with collaboration between parties to reach an acceptable solution to both parties (Rahim &Magner, 1995). Thomas and Kilmann (1974) labeled this style as collaborating mode. Collaborating mode refers to the ability of manager to work with his or her employee to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both. Collaborating between two persons might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insight, with the goal of resolving some condition that would otherwise have them competing for resources, or confronting and trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem (Thomas , 1976).

Obliging Style: Obliging styles involves low concern for self. An obliging person attempts to emphasize commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party (Rahim &Magner, 1995). Thompson (2005) named this style as accommodating mode. According to them, individual performing accommodating style neglects his or her own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person. In accommodating style, managers might take the form of

selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's needs and prefer to yield another's point of view.

Avoiding Style: Avoiding style is associated with low concern for self as well as for the other party involved in conflict. It has been associated with withdrawal, passing-the-buck, sidestepping or "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" situations (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation (Thompson, 2005).

Dominating Style: Dominating style involves high concern for self and low concern for the other party involved in the conflict. It has been identified with a win-lose orientation or with forcing behavior to win position (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Thompson, (2005) portrayed dominating style as power-oriented mode or competing style. A dominating manager always stands up with his or her rights, defending a position that his or her opinion is correct and simply trying to win.

A Typical Grievance Process

In a union environment, a typical grievance procedure begins with an employee presenting a problem to his or her immediate supervisor within a certain time period after the offending event has occurred. The supervisor then has a set amount of time to either respond or send the grievance on to be addressed by the head of the department. At this point, a union representative enters the negotiations on behalf of the employee. If the situation is still not resolved, the grievance continues up the chain of command to the plant manager and the president of the local union. If the labour union fails to

follow the procedures at any point, the contract usually specifies that it must drop the grievance. Conversely, the company is usually obligated to resolve the grievance in the employee's favour if management fails to follow the procedures outlined in the collective bargaining agreement (Reeves, 1995).

If the situation still cannot be resolved, the final step in the grievance process is for both parties to resent their side to an arbitrator. The arbitrator's role is to determine the rights of both parties under the labour agreement, and his or her decision is usually final. The labour contract generally specifies the type of arbitrator used. The method of selecting the arbitrator, the scope of the arbitrator's authority, and the arrangements for the arbitrator's payment. A potential intermediate step involves presenting the grievance to a mediator, whose job is to help the parties solve their own difference before they reach the formal arbitration phase. Mediation is usually less time consuming and expensive than arbitration. In addition, the mediator may be able to teach the two parties dispute resolution skills that may be helpful in solving future problems (Dalton, 2001)

Grievance Handling Procedures and Performance & Related Issues

Monitoring the Grievance System

The fact that employees file grievances does not necessarily indicate problems or failure on the part of management. Rather, it indicates that people are involved who see things differently. Directors will want to make sure that this philosophy is reflected to their guidance to management, and in their consideration of management performance. And yet, having numerous

grievances filed year after year about the same issue could indicate a failure in the way grievances are handled or in follow-up to grievances cases.

When boards focus on the results and they want to have it accomplished, they can then monitor implementation to determine whether those results are achieved. An annual report by the grievance committee to the board, like the management letter corporations get from their auditing firm, can provide an outside review of the way management has handled grievances, without getting involved in the merits or particular findings of specific cases (Varian, Rahim & Magneret, 1997).

Where the corporation's general manager is faced with the uncomfortable and difficult situation of having to fire an employee, the employee can decide to file a grievance per the corporation's policies with the board of directors. After taking testimony from the grievant, the board may decide that the employee should be reinstated with back pay. Imagine how the manager will behave after such a decision is taken. Of course corporation's managers can make mistakes but if such a decision is to be reversed, who would the manager prefer to hear; recommendations from the board or a more impartial group? If the board adjudicates grievances, how can the manager trust that the board will stand behind him or her when faced with other difficult decisions? A manager would be willing to accept this decision by the board if it also happens that the employee involved was a good friend of a vocal and critical board member. Would it be not better for board members not to get involved in this situation? Board members should refrain from any involvement in handling grievances or in formulating the details of grievance procedures (Lewin & Richard, 1999).

According to Lewin and Richard (1990), if boards focus on making constructive, goal-oriented statements about how grievances are to be resolved, they will provide guidance to management without usurping responsibility for implementation. As a consequence, boards also end up with a much better basis for evaluating management performance. It is almost impossible to bring an unbiased and neutral review to a grievance that involves people with whom one works closely, just as true for board as it is for any party. When boards focus on providing overall guidance through statement of results to be achieved, they provide constructive leadership and help their corporations be the kind of exemplary, responsible and responsive employers they should be (Ichniowski, 1987).

Limit on Arbitrators

The arbitrator shall have jurisdiction and authority to interpret the provisions of the agreement and shall not amend, delete or modify any of the provisions or terms of this agreement. Note that as it is often the case, the parties have provided for a final and binding arbitration phase at the end of the grievance procedure if nothing else has worked. Only a small percentage of all grievances filed end arbitration, which keeps the overall cost of the system under control. Yet the availability of the arbitration mechanism provides a “fail-safe”, as well as a set of standards against which the reasonableness of proposals made in grievance negotiations can be measured, though only minorities of arbitrators decisions (generally known as “awards”) are indexed and published (Bales, 2007).

It is also possible that an intractable conflict that has already occurred (or more likely, a particular dispute in such a long-running conflict) might be submitted to a grievance procedure drafted specially for that occasion. The practical difficulty in doing this is that unless the grievance procedure already exists, the pressures of the dispute tend to discourage the parties from committing themselves to a new procedure. There have been relationships in which the proliferation of day-to-day grievances overwhelmed the parties' willingness and ability to use an existing grievance procedure effectively, and resulted in a larger intractable dispute (Bales, 2007).

As a start, the employee should contact his immediate supervisor who should endeavour to amicably resolve the issue. Most grievances can be settled by open, effective and regular communication between the employee and his supervisor. If, unfortunately, the immediate supervisor's efforts do not satisfy the employee, he should have to approach the higher levels of management for assistance because of the high importance placed on the employee-supervisor relationship to resolve grievances, it is critical that the manager makes his best efforts to first understand and then resolve the complaint. The supervisor's final resolution should be documented for reference in future actions, if any. If the employee is not satisfied with this resolution and decides to pursue the matter with higher authorities, this documentation would serve as a key role in future proceedings (Rahul, 2009).

According to Carver (1990), the board of director's responsibility is to define overall standards and results to be achieved for a grievance procedure. The General Manager has full authority to define and implement specific procedures consistent with these guidelines. This statement directs the General

Manager to achieve results and limits his / her authority to actions that are within acceptable boundaries of prudence and ethics. Carver outlines a grievance handling procedure as follows:

The General Manager shall establish a grievance procedure that ensures fair, impartial and timely handling of all employee grievances. The grievance procedure shall ensure that all parties treated respectfully and professionally. The grievance resolution process shall also address ways to prevent the same type of problem from recurring, if possible (Singh, 2004).

The corporations grievance procedure shall ensure that all informed about the steps to take in pursuing a grievance and that forms and explanatory materials are readily accessible to employees at all times. One employee (not the general manager) shall be designated to counsel employees about grievances to help them determine if they have grounds for a grievance, fill out forms and explain steps as follow (Singh, 2004).

Grievances by corporations employees shall be reviewed by a grievance committee that is chaired by someone not employed by the corporation and not involved with corporation in any way. The grievance committee chair shall be selected for his or her experience and expertise in labour relations, mediation or human resources. The committee chair shall be formally appointed by the board, based on research and recommendation by management, and shall serve in this position for one year term. The grievance committee shall also include at least one non-management employee.

The findings of the grievance committee shall be binding on the corporation and its management. The grievance committee shall issue its findings as promptly as possible so that issues do not remain unresolved for

long periods of time. The general manager shall cooperate with the committee and implement its findings in a timely manner.

The grievance committee shall issue an annual report to the board regarding its activities and general findings. The committee's report shall focus on the quality of corporation it received from management and management compliance with its findings.

The corporation's grievance procedure shall be cost-effective. The committee shall issue an annual budget for its work.

Performance Management

Performance is referred to as doing the work, as well as being about the results achieved (Otley, 1999). Performance is a multidimensional construct, the measurement of which varies, depending on a variety of factors that comprise it (Fitzgerald & Moon, 1996). According to Meyer, Jones & Simon (2003), performance management aligns the goals of the individual employees to those of the organisation with which they are associated. It is important to determine whether the measurement objective is to assess performance outcomes or behaviour. Therefore, an organisation should distinguish between outcomes (results/output), behaviour (the process) and appropriate performance measurement devices (Mwita, 2000). Campbell (1990) subscribes to the premise that performance is behaviour and should be distinguished from the outcomes because they can be contaminated by system factors, which are outside the control of the performer. What is implied in Campbell's argument is that performance measurement can only focus on an individual/group's final output, if and only if, system factors are controllable

Factors Affecting Performance Management

Performance management is a management approach, which seeks to get the most out of the human resource (Daniels, 1989). Factors that affect performance are a personal factor which has to do with the individual's skills, confidence, motivation and commitment, leadership factor: the quality of encouragement, guidance and support provided by the managers and team leaders. Team factor: The quality of support provided by colleagues. System factor: the system of work and facilities provided by the organization and situational factor which is about internal and external environmental pressures and changes.

Performance

Performance is the process whereby an organization establishes the parameters within which programmes, investments, and acquisitions are reaching the desired results (Jones, 2000). Organizations measure performance by analysing financial and non-financial metrics over time, across departments, between different entities (e.g. employees, organizations, investments, systems), and against benchmarks and targets to gauge success. To correctly measure for performance success, the benchmarks and targets comparisons must be aligned with the corporate strategic goals. The ultimate purpose of measurement is to improve performance. Behn (2003) gives eight reasons for measuring performance; to evaluate, control, budget, motivate, celebrate, promote, learn and to improve performance. Performance measurement enables organizations to assess their progress and identify

strengths and problem areas. A simple example of performance measurement is the measurement of time to meet deadlines of targets.

Effects of Grievance Handling Procedure on Performance

Employee complaints are part of the business life of any corporate entity as every business has to deal with situations in which things go wrong from the employee's point of view. As a growth oriented organization, imparting good employee grievance handling and enhancing level of employee satisfaction should be the prime concern of any organization, if they are satisfied then only they can satisfy the customers. Providing prompt and efficient grievance handling is essential not only to attract new talented employees, but also to retain existing ones(Daniels, 1989).

Inadequate job performance or a decline in productivity or changes resulting out of job disturbances requires some type of grievances handling procedures. As the job become more complex the importance of the employee development also increases. In a rapidly changing society , grievances handling of employees in the organization is not only an activity that is desirable but also an activity that an organization must commit resources to if it is to maintain viable and knowledgeable workforce (Otley, 1999).

A grievance procedure provides a hierarchical structure for presenting and settling workplace disputes. The procedure typically defines the type of grievance it covers, the stages through which the parties proceed in attempting to resolve matters, individuals responsible at each stage, the documentation required, and the time limits by which the grievance must be presented and dealt with at each stage. Every organization follows different steps which are

little bit similar to each to resolve the grievance among their employees(Singh, 2004).

Research studies show that when employees are asked to evaluate different dimensions of their job such as supervision, pay, promotion opportunities, coworkers, and so forth, the nature of the work itself generally emerges as the most important job dimension (Judge& Church, 2000). Of all the major job satisfaction areas, satisfaction with the nature of the work itself which includes job challenge, autonomy, variety, and scope best predicts overall job satisfaction, as well as other important outcomes like employee retention. Thus, to understand what causes people to be satisfied with their jobs is compensation, pay, job security, opportunity to use their own skills and ability and communication with management and supervisor.

Likert (1961) and Otley, (1999) were among the first researchers to theorize that employee satisfaction has important implications for organizational performance and effectiveness. They expressed that job satisfaction influences the extent to which one works to their fullest potential towards organizational goals and cooperates with colleagues. A number of studies have examined the relationship between job characteristics and job performance (Blegen, 1961; Brown & Peterson, 1993; & Daniels, 1989) and have shown that job satisfaction is related to job performance.

Inadequate job performance or a decline in productivity or changes resulting out of job disturbances requires some type of grievances handling procedures. As the job become more complex the importance of the employee development also increases. Every employee has certain expectations, which he thinks must be fulfilled by the organization he is working for. When the

organization fails to do this he develops a feeling of dissatisfaction. When an employee feels something is unfair in the organization he is said to have a grievance. In their working life, employees do get dissatisfied with various aspects of working which may be with the attitude of the manager, policy of the company, working conditions, or behavior of colleagues. Grievance handling procedure is therefore a significant predictor for the employee satisfaction which further affect on performance of the employees (Rahim &Magner, 1995).

Empirical Review

A study was conducted by Morishima (1999) on the behavior and perceptions of individuals on grievance resolution outcomes. In terms of methodology, the study used exploratory research design in collecting data for the study. Underpinned by the theory of conflict resolution constructed by Dessler (1997), this study has assumed that people believed their goals were positively interrelated (in that they could both be successful) and were able to manage conflict more effectively than those with competitive goals. The study found that managers used competitive and cooperative styles to manage their employees' grievances. According to the study, competitive approach to managing employees' grievances involved opposing and intransigent aspirations which aimed to promote a political agenda. On the other hand, cooperative style in managing grievances generated flexible and open-minded discussion between the managers and employees.

McGrane, Wilson &Cammock(2005) have accomplished a study on one-to-one dispute resolution. The target population for the study included

individual employees in the British Isles who worked in small office contexts. A total of 31 male and 57 female employees of managerial and non-managerial levels were recruited as respondents to this study. In terms of methodology the study used exploratory research design in collecting data for the study. In establishing one-to-one dispute resolution, McGrane and his colleagues found three methods of dispute management that were often used by managers and their employees. The methods were fight, flight and intervention. According to the study, fighting style focused on identifying a winner and a loser. This often took the form of an employee invoking an organization's formal grievance procedure in which a dispute was investigated with high costs to all involved. Flight was another method of dispute resolution that was commonly used. This occurred by avoiding an issue or transferring away from a problem.

Intervention was the third method of dispute management that is typically used. In this method, employees requested that their line manager intervened directly and managed their dispute for them. However, the involvement of a third person in the management of the dispute could add to the problem. According to Bemmels and Resyef (1991), the intervention of third party in grievance resolution will drag the time period that will affect worker's frustration. Rahul and Deepati (1999) asserted that third party normally was not familiar and lack of knowledge on issue raised by aggrieved employee. The study recommended that problems between an employee and his or her supervisor should not involve a third person who does not have a deeper understanding of the major cause of problem raised by the aggrieved employee. This study is linked to the present study because it unveils the

differences between the various styles or approaches used in managing employee grievances.

A study conducted by Holt & Devore (2005) on supervisor and manager styles in managing discipline and grievance. This study included 91 supervisors and managers who were attending a weekend training course in human resource topics. In terms of methodology, three vignettes in terms of grievance situation were distributed to the respondents in order to examine styles used in managing grievances. Situations in each vignette were varied in order to identify different solution styles used by respondents for different cases. The study found that “tell”, “tell and sell”, “tell and listen”, “ask and tell”, “problem solving” and “ask and listen” were styles used in managing employee discipline and grievance. In this regard, the study discovered that the “telling” style was the style in which all the power was vested in the hands of the supervisors. The “ask and tell” approach was the approach where the subordinates did most of the talking. The “ask and tell” approach was very open and involved the employees having a greater degree of control over the interaction. In the “problem solving” style power and involvement were shared by both parties. In “tell and sell” approach the supervisor informed the employee of the decision that the supervisor has made and would then try to persuade the employee of the correctness of that decision (Tetty, 2006).

Findings from a study by Opata (2004) revealed that respondents preferred more participative styles when dealing with grievance. However, the study also found that when supervisors and managers perceived a situation that appeared as a direct threat to their authority, they reverted to a much more autocratic style which was first telling their subordinate their decision and then

persuading them of its correctness. This study is linked to the present one because it highlights the styles used by supervisors and managers to manage discipline and grievance of their subordinates and their implications to the organizational survival

In conclusion, The above review of the literature has shown a number of studies carried out on employee grievances. It has also shown the various styles or approaches used in managing employee grievances in different organization. It can therefore be said that effective grievance handling play a critical role in ensuring that employee's performances are improved thereby increasing productivity.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter discuss the methodology employed by the researcher for the study which includes the research design, population, sample size, sampling technique, survey instrument, data collection procedure, and proposed statistical analysis of the study.

Research Design

Basing on Fisher (2010) who argues that researchers willing to take an exploratory kind of design as a plan that will lead their studies, this study will apply exploratory research design and semi-structured research tool. This means that, the study was carried out in a manner that should not presume to know the conclusions that were drawn from this study in other words what will be discovered later by the study. The main reason of using an exploratory research design was to gain new insights on the causes of employee grievances, measures taken at all levels of decision-making to address employee grievance, employee perceptions about the way the management address their grievances, the factors which hinder effective management of employee grievance.

However, this research design according to Fisher has been criticised in the first place that it tends to create a patronizing relationship between the researcher and those being studied. Also, it has been criticised that either willingly or unwillingly those being studied may wish to mislead the researcher by telling him or her only the stories they know that the researcher

would wish to hear from them. To guard against this, the researcher ensured that the study is carried out as intended and produces the intended results by collecting and analyzing data very carefully.

Study Area

The study was conducted at Jayee University College. Jayee is the acronym of 'John Emmanuel', the initials of the names of the founder and President, Mr J E Donkoh, of the Jayee University College. The University College started modestly as a secretarial school with eight (8) students at YMCA, Adabraka – Accra in 1988. With time, the students' number grew, and it became necessary for a more spacious campus. Jayee consequently, relocated to the Kwame Nkrumah Circle in Accra. The name was changed from Jayee Secretarial School to Jayee Professional Training Institute. Jayee got affiliated to the University of Education, Winneba in 2004 and re-named as Jayee University College.

The University was accredited by the National Accreditation Board to run a 4-year Degree in Journalism (with options in Sports Reporting, Political Reporting, Environmental Reporting, and Economic Reporting) and Business Administration (with options in Accounting, Secretaryship and Management, Public Relations and Marketing). There is a 2-year Non-Tertiary Diploma in Office Management and Secretaryship. The university currently has a student's population of 764. The reason for the selection of this target population was that, they constitute the client/customer of the case study and as such offer the researcher the opportunity to develop and have an

understanding of the employee's feelings and perception toward grievance handling.

Population

The population refers to a group of persons from which a sample is drawn (Nsawah-Nuamah, 2005). Basing on that definition, the population of this study therefore included administrative, academic and technical staff of the university. By the time of the study, Jayee University College had 88 academic staff, 20 administrative staff, and 14 technical staff, making a total of 122.

Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling which is a non-probability sampling technique was used to select the respondents. Saunders et al (2009) defines purposive or judgmental sampling as the sampling technique that enables the researcher to use his or her judgment to select the cases that would best enable him or her to answer researcher questions and meet his or her research objectives. This study adopted a census. According to Saunders et al (2009), a census study occurs if the entire population is very small or it is reasonable to include the entire population. It is called census because data is gathered on every member of the population. Twenty two in depth semi structured interviews were conducted in Jayee University College for the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Saunders et al (2009) define primary data as data which results from the need to understand what people do as well as the frequency of their actions. That being the case, the researcher used interview guide to collect primary data. Saunders et al (2009) defines interviews as a purposeful discussion between two or more people. They argue that interviews enable researchers gather valid and reliable data which are relevant to their research questions and objectives. The use of semi-structured interviews means that the researcher would have a list of themes and questions that would be covered during the interviews.

Basing on Fisher (2010), another necessary concern that the researcher dealt with was to identify the areas which were covered during the interview and ensure that they are organized into the order of priority. Interviews involved those who had answers to the questions the researcher wished to ask. These interview schedules were administered to all the categories of the respondents for the study. To make sure all the main themes were covered during the interviews, an interview script was created to guide the interviews. After compiling the script, several pilot interviews were conducted before starting the data collection process. This was done as a guide for the researcher to correct any mistakes that might arrive during the interview. Based on the information gained during the pilot interviews, the interview structure and the main questions were finalized. Although the sets of questions formed the basis of each interview, for instance, the order, the exact number of questions and their wording varied depending on the interview.

Furthermore, the interviewees were encouraged to elaborate on their perceptions and experiences also concerning topics that were not covered by the initial script, if they were relevant for the current study. Moreover, since the study focused on exploring the perceptions of the interviewees, no hypotheses were formulated prior to the interviews. However, the research presented in the review of literature serve as the background of this study, and thus form the basis also for the interview questions.

Data Collection Procedures

During this study, data was collected by the researcher, using interview. Interviews are ways for participants to get involved and talk about their views. This study used semi-structured types of interviews as the data collection method. The use of semi-structured interviews is based on the assumption that the researcher would have a list of questions that would be covered during the interviews. Basing on this, questions varied from interview to interview whereby some questions were omitted in certain interviews and additional questions were added depending on the type of questions.

Data Processing and Analysis

To analyze the data, a qualitative content analysis was chosen as the method of analysis. According to Schreier (2012), qualitative content analysis is a method that can be used to explore qualitative data in a consistent manner. The first step, before starting the actual analysis, is to familiarize oneself with the data thoroughly (Schreier, 2012). This is important to gain an overall understanding of the data. Thus, after transcribing the interviews, the

transcriptions were read through several times before starting the actual process.

In qualitative content analysis, the research questions that have guided the data collection are utilized to direct the analysis (Schreier, 2012). Therefore, after familiarizing with the data, the researcher went through the transcripts using each of the research questions as guidelines to capture those parts of the data which were relevant for the study. The purpose of the qualitative content analysis is therefore not to give an overview of the collected data, but instead, concentrate on those aspects of the data that are relevant for the analysis (Fisher, 2010)

Ethical Issues

Cooper and Schindler (2008, quoted in Saunders et al, 2009) defines ethics as the norms or of behaviour that guide moral choices about our behaviour and our relationships with others. Saunders et al (2009) associate research with questions about how a researcher and clarifies his or her research topic, designs his or her research and gains access to data, collects data, processes data, analyses data and writes up his or her findings in a moral and responsible manner.

Basing on the above explanations, the researcher ensured that he gets a research clearance letter from the office of the Registrar which enabled him to effectively conduct the study in the university. Therefore, the researcher ensured that he followed formal ethical approvals to ensure he went in accordance with all the prescribed ethical standards before beginning the process of data collection.

Chapter Summary

The aim of the study is to examine grievance handling procedures used in Jayee University College to manage employee's dissatisfactions. Employee grievance has been defined as a way of expressing an employee's dissatisfaction regarding work and workplace shown by the employee to his or her immediate supervisor. Also, a critical literature review was done to highlight a number of management theories were discussed as well as their link to the study. The study will be guided by the functionalist paradigm to understand social realities whereby interviews will be used as data collection techniques.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the research on the assessment of the grievance procedures in Jayee University College. This chapter examines evidence resulting from focused interviews.

Analysis of Results

The primary purpose of the study was to assess the grievance procedures utilized in Jayee University College. Interviews were conducted as a means to provide an overview of the components within the grievance procedures. The responses collected were compared to the ideal characteristics as set forth by the current literature. The questions asked in the survey are designed to determine the type of grievance procedure, the contents of the procedure and the nature and extent to which each component is used. In all, twenty two interviews were conducted. They were made of sixteen male and eight female. Their age ranges from thirty one to fifty six.

How Employee Grievance is Dealt with at the University?

When asked what the university does to deal with employee grievance, A lecturer in Human Resource Management responded that every time employees walk to their office lamenting, they expect that someone will lend them an ear as they vent out what has been offending them. Listening is an art, and good managers listen more than they talk. They allow the workers to express themselves fully, after which they acknowledge their grievance

formally. It makes them go back to their work station with an assurance that someone has listened to their cries and is willing to do something about it. This is not a bad thing. If anything, it improves the environment and makes it conducive for constructive activities to go on.

From another interviewee in political science point of view, once they have acknowledged the resentment, they set on a mission to establish the truth. The aim is to ascertain whether the employee's allegations are a true reflection of the state of affairs as at that particular time. Numerous avenues exist for this purpose, and it is upon the management to decide on the best way to accomplish this objective. Once they have the facts, they do not take too long to act. Taking too much time before decisive action is taken can result in some unrest which will escalate the grievances. They ought to deal with these formal objections as fast as you can before things get out of hand.

Going the quick fix route can be costly and detrimental to the organization. The Examinations Officer explained that once an employee formally launches a complaint, it should be addressed once and for all. If the employee does not get a lasting solution, one can expect the employee to come back to the office every day with the same complaint, which can be quite annoying. The key to finding a good solution lies in the ability of management to identify the real cause of the problem. Solving this quagmire guarantees that no one will bother with a similar complain. The action taken should ensure that the grievance is addressed fully. Once a decision is made, there should be no time wasted in communicating the resolution. The action taken might not be agreeable to all employees, but they have to understand the stand of the

management. The course of action to be taken must be clear in the minds of all those concerned.

How Heads of Department Minimize Employee Grievance

Grievances are alarm bells warning about large problems that require immediate attention. If you receive a grievance, be grateful because it allows you to work out the problem within your company rather than in a courtroom.

In trying to minimize employee grievance, The Head of Department of Marketing explained that interviewees listen carefully to the person submitting the grievance and then try to see the situation from their personal point of view. They then refer to the grievance manual. It is important that they take specific steps when following up to validate a grievance. According to James (2005), in minimizing employee grievance, respondents have to tell the person who submitted the grievance what steps need to be taken. Once they agree there is a problem, specify what you intend to do about it. However, once it becomes difficult to handle the grievance, it is important to let the person know the effort that was put into it and how there was not solution to the problem.

Also, the head of public relations unit gave a practical example of how he minimize grievance at his department. "The Head of department treats the 15 employees of his department to a snack break every six weeks. "Call it a 'working social,'" he says. Everyone gets relaxed, making it easier to lay their gripes on the table and problem-solve. By meeting regularly and often, "Minor complaints tend not to mushroom into major crises. Our business is so hectic we don't have time or energy to sit down together once a week and discuss

people's complaints, but they all know they'll be able to have their say at the next meeting. Of course, it would immediately troubleshoot any urgent problems such as a sexual harassment complaint."

How Management Handles Employee Grievance

Handling an employee complaint or grievance can be one of the most challenging duties. According to the Registrar of the university, aggrieved workers gave a practical approach to handling grievance. To start with, be a good listener: Never interrupt when an employee is talking, even if you disagree with the opinions expressed. Complaints often dissolve and resolve themselves when people simply have a chance to talk about them.

Ask questions: Your questions should indicate interest and a desire for more information. When you ask open ended questions like "Why do you think that happened?" you might uncover underlying causes or related problems. When you ask good questions you communicate that you are not unfairly pre-judging people or situations.

Do not argue: Present any information you have in a persuasive manner rather than an argumentative one. Arguing builds resistance and can make employees more determined to have their way regardless of the facts. Asking questions can be an effective tool for disarming a potential argument. Your point of view is more persuasive when you refuse to be drawn into an argument.

Make sure you understand: Some people have difficulty expressing themselves and can have even more problems if they are stressed or emotional. Use all of your questioning and listening skills to make sure that

you fully understand their position. Restate, summarise and ask additional questions to make sure you understand their point of view.

Treat all employees with respect: Ridicule or comments that minimise an employee's concerns can be devastating and have no place in today's management and leadership style. If you attempt to make an employee feel foolish, you will destroy the lines of communication and trust. Let others save face and retreat gracefully.

Criticising and belittling employees in front of others should also be avoided as this also destroys communication, trust and respect. Let the employee know when to expect a response from you: Often a problem can be settled on the spot. However, if a problem will take time to resolve, establish and communicate a time-frame for your action and response. Gather the facts: If you are unable to make a decision during the meeting, investigate what the team member has said, check the situation, refer to employment agreements or other relevant documents and, where appropriate, consult with higher management before making a final decision.

Make a decision: Once you make a decision (even if it is unpopular), stick to it firmly unless new evidence that deserves consideration is presented. Explain your decision: If your decision is distasteful to the employee in question, take the time to explain it and answer any questions. Employees might not agree and might appeal your decision, but they will respect you for your stand.

Thank the employee: Express your appreciation for the employee's willingness to communicate openly about problems. This will encourage more open communication in the future.

Measures Taken to Manage Employee Grievance

In managing employee grievance, interviewees from marketing, Human resource and Marketing use different measures and approach. The first approach is to settle them immediately as and when they arise. This requires the first line supervisors be trained in recognizing and handling a grievance properly and promptly. The supervisor should try to recognize and accept the employee grievance as and when it is expressed. It must be noted that acceptance does not necessarily mean agreeing with the grievance, it simply shows the willingness of the supervisor to look into the complaint objectively and dispassionately to deal with the grievance.

Evidence from the employees suggest that the more the supervisor shows his or her concern for the employees, lesser is the number of grievances raised by the employees. The grievance expressed by the employee maybe at times simply emotionally, over-toned, imaginary or vague. The supervisor, therefore, needs to identify or diagnose the problem stated by the employee. Once the problem is identified as a real problem, the supervisor, then, collect all the relevant facts and proofs relating to the grievance. The facts so collected need to be separated from the opinions and feelings to avoid distortions of the facts.

It is useful to maintain the facts for future uses as and when these are required. Having collected all the facts and figures relating to the grievance, the next step involved in the grievance procedure is to establish and analyse the cause that led to grievance. The analysis of the cause will involve studying various aspects of the grievance such as the employees past history, frequency of the occurrence, management practices, union practices, etc. Identification of

the cause of the grievance helps the management take corrective measures to settle the grievance and also to prevent its recurrence. The decision, whatsoever taken, is immediately communicated to the employee and also implemented by the competent authority. McGregor's "Hot- stove Rule" should be strictly followed while implementing the decision. The decision, thus, implemented should also be reviewed to know whether the grievance has been satisfactorily resolved or not.

In case, it is not resolved, the supervisor once again go back to the whole procedure step by step to find out an appropriate decision or solution to resolve the grievance. However, if the grievance is not resolved at the internal level, the grievance is, then, referred to an arbitrator who is acceptable to the employee as well as the management. The arbitrator follows a quasi-judicial process where both the parties present evidence. Based on the evidences so produced, the matter is cross-examined in thread-bare. The arbitrator then thinks, applies his mind and arrives at a decision. The decision taken by arbitrator is final and binding on both the parties.

Challenges Encountered in Managing Employee Grievance

The Head of communication Science revealed that lack of human resources skills among supervisors was the first problem. In trying to explain this, interviewees stated that due to lack of human resources management skills, some supervisors fail to respond adequately to the problems facing their subordinates. According to them, human resources management skills on the part of supervisors should include good communication skills on the part of supervisors, which should include for instance, ability of the supervisors to

listen to problems aired by their subordinates; use of polite language; involving their subordinates in decision-making of anything that directly touches their lives; ability to relate equally with their employees irrespective of their level of academic achievement, gender and work experience, the list is long.

Additionally, the head of Business Faculty stated that bureaucratic procedures were the second problem. These respondents revealed that unnecessary bureaucratic processes were another problem hindering effective handling of employee grievances. In this regard, interviewees stated that it was not easier for them to meet the high level of decision-making in order to inform them about their problems. According to them, this situation was mainly due to the fact that because immediate supervisors did not allow them to meet higher authorities under the excuse that higher authorities have a lot of commitments. Alternatively, they have delegated minor employee problems to immediate supervisors.

Moreover, the head of research indicated that selfishness among supervisors was another problem hindering effective handling of employee grievances. In respect to this, interviewees explained that sometimes supervisors did not take into consideration the interests of their subordinates during the process of trying to solve the problems which they are facing, this being the major reason why their supervisors were unable to come up with an appropriate to the problem faced by employees.

Elaborating on this, a lecturer in public relations revealed that some of their fellow employees were not ready to air their grievances to their supervisors for fear of being demoted or terminated; hence, blaming those who

used to air their grievances. According to them, equal relationship would facilitate effective handling of their grievances. This implies that the selected higher learning institutions have a number of factors which hinder effective handling of employee grievances, hence, leading to loss of job morale and poor performance among some employees.

Interviewee's Perceptions on the way Employee's Grievances are Handled.

A worker in the administration department indicated that the way their supervisors solve their grievances was moderate. In trying to explain this, interviewees reported that this was due to the fact that many of their grievances were not handled to their higher satisfaction. These interviewees noted that despite some problems associated with the commitment of their supervisors towards handling their subordinates' grievances, their supervisors are striving to ensure that they found lasting solutions to the problems facing their subordinates.

Besides, a security officer also revealed that the way supervisors solved their grievances was not effective. These respondents indicated that because some supervisors believed in an intimidating style, they tend to make the aggrieved employees feel they are the ones whom should be blamed for the problem instead of trying to settle the problem in more collaborative manner. Interviewees further stated that lack of human resources management skills among supervisors was the major factor for the attitudes shown by their supervisors in handling employee grievances.

Also, a lecturer in accounting stated that the way supervisors solved their grievances was effective. These respondents stated that they appreciated

the way supervisors handled employee grievances because they aimed at looking for lasting solutions to problems facing their subordinates.

Styles Used in Handling Employee Grievance

A lecturer in secretaryship and management pointed out that supervisors used integrating approach in trying to solve their grievances. When the researcher needed further explanations about this, respondents stated that supervisors used collaborative approach in solving employees' grievances. In this regard, respondents further indicated that they show greater concern for the problems facing their employees through exchanging ideas on how to solve the dissatisfaction, being open and willing to listen to their employees problems, and trying to settle the differences. This observation agrees with Rahim and Magner (1995) who argues that integrating style of handling employees' grievances should involve high concern for self as well as the other party involved in conflict.

According to Rahim and Magner (1995), the style should involve collaboration between parties, for example openness while discussing the cause of the grievance, exchange of information and examination of differences in order to reach an acceptable solution to both parties. However this study found that, despite the fact that majority of interviewees stated that their supervisors used integrating style in solving their grievances, still some interviewees were not happy about the way supervisors worked on the conclusions reached during the discussion on how to settle the grievance.

In addition, another lecturer revealed that supervisors used an intimidating approach in handling employee's grievances. In trying to explain

this, respondents stated that during the discussion on how to solve the problem facing an employee, supervisors always tend to defend what they perceive to be right and try to win and sometimes do not want to listen to the concern of the aggrieved employee. Consequently, employees do not see the importance of tabling their grievances to their immediate supervisors so that they can be worked on accordingly. This observation agrees with Thomas (1976) who argued that a dominating manager always stands up with his or her rights, defending a position that his or her opinion is correct and simply trying to win.

Chapter Summary

This study found that majority of supervisors used integrating approach in trying to solve their employees' grievances. In this respect, the study found that supervisors used collaborative approach in solving employees' grievances through exchanging ideas on how to solve the dissatisfaction, being open and willing to listen to problems faced by their employees and try to settle the differences.

Further, the study found that another group of supervisors use intimidating approach in handling problems faced by their subordinates. This study found that in the course of trying to solve employees' grievances, supervisors always tend to defend what they perceive to be right and try to win and sometimes do not want to listen to the concern of the aggrieved employee, which makes employees to do not realise the importance of tabling their grievances to their immediate supervisors so that they can be appropriately managed.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides the study summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations of this study. It also suggests areas for further research.

Summary of Findings

This study found that, despite the fact that interviewees stated that their supervisors used integrating style in solving their grievances, still some interviewees were not happy about the way supervisors worked on the conclusions reached during the discussion on how to settle the grievance.

Also, the study found that respondents perceived the way their supervisors handled their grievances to be moderate. Also, the study found that, the way supervisors solved their grievances was not effective because some supervisors believe in an intimidating style, which makes the aggrieved employees feel they are the ones to be blamed for the problem instead of trying to settle the problem in more collaborative manner. This was mainly caused by lack of human resources management skills among supervisors.

Also, the study found that the way supervisors solved their employees' grievances was effective because supervisors aimed at looking for lasting solutions to problems facing their subordinates. In the same vein, the study revealed that the way supervisors solved their grievances was highly effective. Likewise, respondents stated they were happy with the way supervisors handled their problems. However, this study found that majority of employees

complained about the way supervisors managed their grievances because the process was to a larger extent one sided.

This study found that lack of human resources management skills, bureaucratic procedures, selfishness, and unequal relationship between supervisors and employees. In the case of lack of human resources management skills, this study found that, due to lack of human resources management skills, some supervisors fail to respond adequately handled the problems facing their subordinates. However, this study found that not all supervisors lacked professional human resources management skills. But this encourages the university to ensure that it recruit professional human resources managers in order to get away with this.

In terms of bureaucratic procedures, this study found that it was not easier for employees to meet the high level of decision-making in order to inform them about their problems. The study also found that selfishness which manifested itself when supervisors failed to consider the interests of their subordinates while trying to solve their problems. In terms of fear to be demoted and terminated, this study found that sometimes supervisors should not be viewed as hindrances towards effective managed of problems faced by their fellow employees because sometimes some employees are not ready to air their grievances to their supervisors for fear of being demoted or terminated. Lastly, unequal relationship between supervisors and subordinates made it difficult for employees to tell their problems to their supervisors. This implied that the university has a number of factors which hinder effective handling of employee grievances.

In terms of reducing bureaucratic procedures, bureaucracy in solving employees' problems should be adequately dealt with in order to reduce the rate of grievances among employees. Lastly, mutual relationship between heads of department and employees would build the culture of friendship and togetherness.

Conclusion

It is highly believed that effective grievance handling procedures have the tendency to ensure the existence of a harmonious work environment for the organisation and its employees to achieve effectiveness, efficiency and a higher level of productivity. Since the organisation cannot function effectively without discipline, in the same vein, the organisation cannot function well without effective employee job performance. Deduction on the summary of findings stated above, this study concluded that:

Recommendations

Communication Outcome of the research has shown that grievance handling in Jayee University College has the potency of enhancing employee punctuality and performance even though some challenges have been identified. It is therefore recommended that management should continue to improve upon what has so far been achieved. This could be done by taking preventive measures in setting clear expectations on employee behaviour and performance and ensure that written policies, procedures and work rules regarding discipline are made communicated to employees through employee handbook.

Enforcement of rules and regulations of punctuality revealed that there is a direct positive relationship between punctuality and performance. Employee punctuality is a degree of commitment to the job role, organisation and time management just to mention but a few. Based on these findings, the researcher recommends that apart from re-enforcing application of the time and Attendance System, rules and regulations regarding attendance and punctuality, management should also institute a reward system for employees with perfect attendance and punctuality.

Interviewees also pointed out that some disciplinary actions sometimes were unfair, inconsistent and did not also fit the offence(s) which according to them had accounted for the numerous court cases pending in courts against the university. The researcher therefore recommends that management should try and coach/counsel/educate workers on disciplinary procedures and other work related matters. Besides, there is the need for management to ensure that effective disciplinary actions are carried out in the organisation by following standard procedures without compromising fairness and consistency.

Suggestions for Further Research

It is evident from the study that only twenty two out of the total worker population were interviewed. Therefore, owing to the entire worker population, resources and time constraints, the researcher could not conduct the study across the entire university or tackled all the related areas of the topic. The researcher therefore recommends future researchers to take up the challenge and conduct further study into the topic at Jayee University College or other private universities in the country.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the term employee grievance?
2. What does the university do to deal with employee grievance?
3. What do you do as the head of the department to minimize employee grievance?
4. What is your intention in trying to deal with employee grievance in your department?
5. How many times have you been involved managing employee grievance?
6. To what extent has the university management adequately dealt with employee grievance?
7. What are the measures taken to manage employee grievance?
8. Are you satisfied with the way the management manages grievances?
9. What are the possible challenges encountered in managing employee grievances?
10. What style is used by supervisors on daily basis to handle their subordinatesgrievances?
11. How do grievance handling procedures influence your performance?