

An Analytical Study of Grievance Handling Mechanisms in Vadakara Co-operative Hospital

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ABSTRACT:

Grievance handling mechanisms are critical in maintaining a healthy work environment, particularly in healthcare settings where stress levels tend to be high. This study analyzes the grievance handling process at Vadakara Co-operative Hospital, focusing on employee satisfaction, perceptions, and areas for improvement. Through surveys and data analysis, various factors such as workload, leave policies, communication, and management responsiveness are evaluated. The findings suggest overall satisfaction with grievance handling mechanisms but highlight areas that require attention, specifically in workload management, timely responses to complaints, and record-keeping practices.

Keywords: Grievance Handling, Employee Satisfaction, Hospital Management, Communication, Workplace Policies, Record-Keeping.

INTRODUCTION:

Grievances in the workplace refer to dissatisfaction arising from workplace conditions, organizational policies, or interpersonal conflicts. These grievances, if not addressed, can lead to lower morale, reduced productivity, and increased employee turnover. Healthcare environments, such as hospitals, present unique challenges as they involve high-stress work and complex interactions among staff and management. For this reason, an efficient grievance handling system is paramount in preventing dissatisfaction from escalating into a conflict that can adversely affect hospital performance.

A grievance is an expression of dissatisfaction about workplace issues like policies, workload, compensation, interpersonal relationships, or other conditions affecting employees' well-being. It can be formal or informal, but for issues to be effectively resolved, they must be properly addressed through a structured grievance handling system. This study aims to evaluate the grievance handling mechanisms at Vadakara Co-operative Hospital and provide recommendations for

enhancing employee satisfaction and organizational performance.

Definition of Grievance

According to Michael Jucious, a grievance is any dissatisfaction related to company practices perceived as unfair by employees. This dissatisfaction can be related to policies, treatment by superiors, or the quality of working conditions. Grievances are distinct from complaints, as they typically involve formal requests for resolution and are related to unjust treatment or violations of established workplace norms. Grievances often take the form of written complaints, highlighting dissatisfaction in areas such as pay disparities, unfair treatment, or workplace environment.

Grievances can be categorized into individual grievances (raised by a single employee) or collective grievances (raised by a group of employees who share a common concern). The grievance handling process seeks to address these issues through a structured approach aimed at resolving conflicts and improving the work environment.

Features and Causes of Grievances

Grievances can arise due to several reasons, which may be either real or perceived. Common causes include:

1. **Economic Issues:** Disputes related to pay disparities, wage cuts, bonuses, or allowances.

2. **Work Environment:** Poor working conditions, inadequate facilities, faulty equipment, or unsafe work conditions.

3. **Supervision:** Complaints regarding the attitude of supervisors, favoritism, or unfair treatment by management.

4. **Organizational Change:** Grievances stemming from changes in policies, work rules, or procedures.

5. **Employee Relations:** Conflicts between colleagues, perceived favoritism, or lack of recognition.

6. **Miscellaneous:** Issues like promotions, medical benefits, and safety conditions.

By addressing these grievances effectively, organizations can reduce dissatisfaction, improve employee morale, and create a more harmonious workplace.

Need for a Formal Grievance Procedure

A formal grievance procedure helps prevent dissatisfaction from escalating into a conflict that might disrupt operations. It provides employees with a clear mechanism to express their concerns and ensures that grievances are handled fairly and promptly. This structure not only improves employee morale but also ensures that management is held accountable for addressing grievances efficiently. Grievance handling procedures are crucial in high-stress sectors like healthcare, where employee well-being is critical for optimal patient care.

A well-established grievance system reduces the chances of arbitrary decisions by supervisors and helps maintain fairness in the workplace. When employees feel that their concerns are being taken seriously, it fosters a sense of respect and trust between staff and management, thereby improving overall organizational performance.

Steps in Grievance Handling Procedure

The grievance handling process involves several systematic steps designed to resolve employee dissatisfaction in a fair and transparent manner:

1. **Acknowledgment:** The first step is acknowledging the grievance. Management

must be attentive to the concerns raised by employees and ensure that no issue is dismissed without due consideration.

2. **Problem Definition:** The grievance must be clearly defined, which involves gathering information from the employee to understand the exact nature of the dissatisfaction.

3. **Fact-Finding:** A thorough investigation should be carried out to gather all relevant facts and determine the validity of the grievance. This step helps in distinguishing between legitimate concerns and misunderstandings.

4. **Analysis and Decision:** After collecting the facts, management must analyze the situation and decide on the best course of action. The decision should be fair and based on established company policies and labor laws.

5. **Follow-Up:** The final step involves communicating the decision to the concerned employee and implementing the resolution. Follow-up is crucial to ensure that the grievance is fully resolved and that no further issues remain.

Grievance Handling in the Healthcare Sector

In the healthcare sector, particularly in co-operative hospitals, grievances are often tied to the stressful nature of the work environment. Hospital staff face long hours, high patient loads, and challenging interpersonal dynamics. This makes an effective grievance handling system even more critical.

Co-operative hospitals are community-based and often have close-knit staff members who work together to deliver healthcare services. Therefore, grievance handling is not only about resolving conflicts but also about maintaining harmonious relationships among staff members and ensuring that the hospital continues to function smoothly. Effective grievance management can lead to improved staff retention, reduced absenteeism, and better patient care outcomes.

INDUSTRY PROFILE: CO-OPERATIVE HOSPITALS

Co-operative hospitals, unlike traditional private or public hospitals, operate on a shared ownership model, often involving collaborations with other healthcare institutions. These hospitals are usually managed by a cooperative body made up of medical professionals, and their aim is to

provide affordable healthcare services to the community.

While the cooperative model fosters shared decision-making and responsibility, it also poses challenges in terms of coordination, policy enforcement, and employee relations. Therefore, grievance handling mechanisms must be robust and adaptable to the specific needs of co-operative hospitals, where multiple stakeholders are involved.

Literature Review:

Several studies have highlighted the importance of grievance handling in maintaining organizational harmony and productivity. For instance:

■ **M.R. Vidhya (2015)** highlights the role of informal grievance handling mechanisms in ITES companies. She suggests that a supportive work environment, where employees feel free to express concerns, can be more effective than formal channels.

Dr. S. Gomathi (2014) argues that informal grievance management can be more efficient in some contexts, especially when the issues are less severe or can be resolved at the department level.

■ **Dr. Nilesh Thakre (2013)** emphasizes that prompt resolution of grievances at the early stages leads to higher employee satisfaction and productivity. Thakre suggests that grievance handling mechanisms should be tailored to the specific needs of different types of organizations, including healthcare institutions.

Research Methodology

The study uses both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was collected through surveys administered to 80 employees at Vadakara Co-operative Hospital, while secondary data was sourced from literature and existing studies. The survey data was analyzed using percentage analysis and bar diagrams to assess employee satisfaction with the grievance handling process.

The study also evaluates the demographic profile of respondents, their job satisfaction, and perceptions of the grievance management

system. The research aims to identify key issues within the hospital's grievance handling process and suggest improvements.

Statement of the Problem

In high-stress environments like hospitals, grievances related to workload, management practices, and interpersonal conflicts are common. These grievances, if unresolved, can lead to burnout, reduced employee morale, and decreased organizational effectiveness. This study focuses on evaluating the grievance handling mechanism at Vadakara Co-operative Hospital to identify areas of improvement and enhance employee satisfaction and hospital performance.

Findings and Suggestions

Findings of the study are:

1. **Demographic Profile:** The majority of respondents were women (52%), with a significant proportion (41.3%) having over five years of experience. The workforce is predominantly educated, with 58.4% holding professional degrees.

2. **Job Satisfaction:** A majority of employees were satisfied with their work environment (42%) and pay (31.3%), indicating that basic satisfaction levels are met. However,

dissatisfaction was expressed in terms of workload management and response times to grievances.

3. **Grievance Handling:** Although 41.3% of employees expressed satisfaction with the current grievance handling policy, a significant portion (36.3%) felt neutral regarding management's responsiveness.

Suggestions for Improvement: Employees suggested improvements in the following areas:

a. **Record-Keeping:** Accurate documentation is vital for tracking grievance resolutions.

b. **Communication:** Open communication channels should be fostered to make employees feel more heard.

c. **Workload Management:** Reducing excessive workloads can alleviate stress and improve job satisfaction.

d. **Timely Responses:** Faster resolution of grievances, especially health-related issues, is necessary.

e. **Policy Review:** A review of leave and overtime policies can enhance employee satisfaction.

Conclusion

Vadakara Co-operative Hospital has a generally effective grievance handling system, but several areas need improvement. Enhancements in record-keeping, communication, and timely responses to complaints are recommended. Addressing these issues will likely improve employee satisfaction, reduce stress, and enhance overall organizational performance. The findings highlight the need for a grievance management system that not only addresses complaints but also proactively reduces the potential for grievances through transparent policies and a supportive work environment.

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