

The Role of Grievance Handling Procedure on Employee Performance in Longisa Referral Hospital, Bomet County

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Abstract: Organizations cannot avoid grievances arising from either individual employees or a group of employees due to dissatisfaction of the prevailing conditions of work or interaction with fellow workers. Since the devolution of the health sector after the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010, the challenge of handling employees' grievances has been on the rise. The study sought to analyze the role of grievance handling procedure on employee Performance at Longisa referral hospital. The study adopted a case study design. The target population comprised 307 employees working at Longisa referral hospital. Census was used because the population was accessible and also not vast. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics for frequency and percentages, Pearson correlation analysis and Chi-square analysis to summarize and classify data, to establish the relationship between the variables and to determine the strength of association between the variables respectively. Data was presented using frequency tables. The study established a high positive and statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.820$, $P\text{-value} = 0.000$) between grievance handling procedure and employees' performance at Longisa referral hospital. The null hypothesis was rejected using Chi-square test. There was general perception from the respondents that employee's performance was influenced by grievance handling procedures. The study therefore concluded that for effective employee's performance organizations should adopt prudent grievance handling procedures. The study recommends that for effective employee's performance organizations should incorporate sound grievance handling procedures. The study will help improve grievance handling procedures in public health institutions in Kenya.

Keywords: Grievance Management, Grievance handling Procedures and Employee Performance

1.1 Background of the Study

Organizations cannot avoid grievances arising from either individual employees or a group of employees due to dissatisfaction of the prevailing conditions of work or interaction with fellow workers. Grievance refers to any genuine or imaginary feeling of dissatisfaction or injustice which an employee experiences about his/her job and its nature about the management policies and procedures which are expressed by the employee and brought to the notice of the management and the organization (Juneja, 2018). Further, Mubezi (2016) defines grievance as any dissatisfaction regarding work and workplace expressed by employee in a formal way to his immediate supervisor. She further argues that grievance is a matter raised by employee to show dissatisfaction with management behavior and is an attempt to effect changes. In addition, employee grievance is viewed as the process which involves an employee's attempt to show that she or he has suffered or been wronged by actions or decisions made by the organization management. According to Daud (2020) the term grievance described the breakdown of mutual confidence between employer and employee.

Statement of the Problem

Since the devolution of the health sector to the counties after the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010, the challenge of handling employees' grievances leading to industrial action and hence poor employee performance in the health sector in Kenya has been on the rise. Since then, the county governments have been in friction with health workers. For example, in 2020, health workers in Bomet county were on strike and operations at the Longisa Referral Hospital were paralyzed. This forced the Bomet governor Hillary Barchok to threaten sacking the striking health workers. However, responding to the threats by the governor the Union of Health Workers (UHW) maintained that the strike was legal and was still on until the demands of the health workers were met. It's at the heart of such issues that the study intended to analyze the role of grievance handling procedures on employee performance in Longisa referral hospital, Bomet County.

Specific Objective

To establish the role of grievance handling procedure on employee Performance in Longisa referral hospital, Bomet County.

Research Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between grievance handling procedure and employee Performance in Longisa referral hospital, Bomet County.

Significance of the Study

This study intended to assess the role of grievance handling procedures on employee performance at Longisa referral hospital. Through this assessment, the hospital management will be able to develop good guidelines and strategies concerning grievance handling procedures in public hospitals in Kenya. It will also help Management and other stakeholders in effectively applying grievance handling procedures. Further, the study will provide a solid basis for management to know how grievances handling procedures can effectively be applied to enhance positive performance on employees at their work place. By adding new knowledge in the discipline of grievance handling procedures the research will help trade unions and other organizations to set up grievance handling mechanisms.

2.1 Literature Review

Theory of Organizational Justice

Theory of organization justice was postulated by Greenberg in 1987. The theory seeks to explain how an employee judges the behavior of the organization and the employee's resulting attitude and behaviour. According to Monizjr (2020) grievance procedures play a critical role in contributing to the organizational justice. This is achieved by resolving the dispute between management and the workforce by collecting the information about the employee relations, expressing of the grievances by employees and safeguarding workplace equality and justice. The theory of organizational justice comprises of three diverse perspectives that include: distributive, procedural and interactional justices (Chetty, 2017).

Distributive justice, which has its origins in equity theory centers on the impartiality of the distribution of products. Distributive justice deals with the fairness of outcomes such as rewards, promotions and compensation. Employees tend to compare their outcomes with that of others on the same post or work profile and that they measure the justice (Mccardle, 2017). Procedural justice, on the other hand, focusses on the fairness of the process through which outcomes are distributed. When an employee feels that the procedure by which he has received the outcome is accurate and unbiased then the procedures are considered to be fair (Mccardle, 2017). When employees perceive outcomes (e.g., pay and promotion) to be fairly distributed, they will be satisfied with their pay and positions. Perceived fairness of formal rules and procedures governing decisions, on the other hand, will improve employees' attitudes toward their organizations and supervisors. Interactional justice is a measure of how the employees relate to each other at the workplace. This is not just looking at the superior-subordinate relationship but also the interactive behaviour among co-workers at the workplace. Establishing standards of conduct are critical to ensuring a high level of respect is shown to employees and to ensure the organization is regarded as a fair and safe workplace (Mccardle, 2017).

In this context therefore, the appearance of grievance in a situation becomes in itself a mortar or glue that holds people together. Conflict (grievances arising) is necessary in every organization because it helps the, management to harmoniously deal with the rising grievances as with time the management develop the best way forward in handling the grievance and in return it creates a positive trend on employee performance in an organization (Whitfield, 2014). Functional conflict is a positive conflict because it is associated with progress and achievement. Positive conflict is according to Deutsch et al. (2012) called an approach-approach in which an individual is faced with two positive valences of approximately equal strength to choose from. This is not a problematic type of conflict. In spite of the various contributions, the theory approach also has not been acknowledged as a unified theory of management because it also suffers from empirical testing, that is it presents problems in testing the percepts of the theory. The contingency theory is reactive and proactive; the theory approach is basically reactive in nature. It suggests what managers can do in a given situation. Therefore, managers are responsible to manage the environment in such a way that they avoid the undesirable aspects of environment. Theory of Organizational Justice was used in this study to establish the roles of grievance handling procedure on employee Performance in Longisa referral hospital.

Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by a conceptual framework in Figure 2.1.

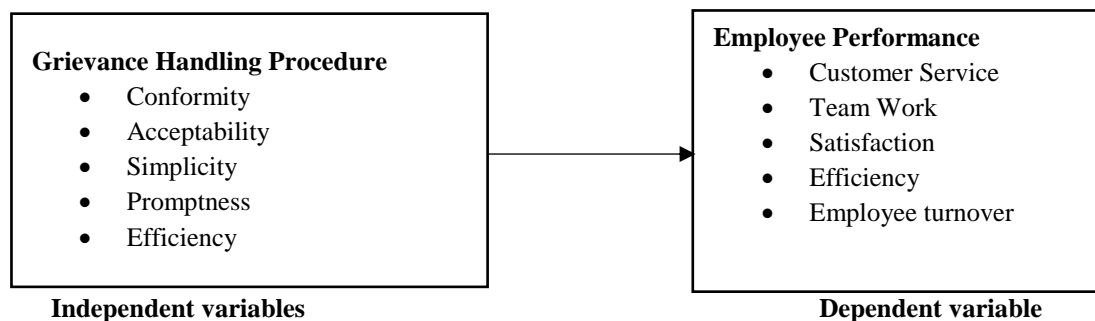


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Source (Author, 2022)

Grievance Handling Procedure and Employee Performance

Employee grievance refers to the dissatisfaction of an employee with what he or she expects from the organization and Management. It is a disappointment concerning an official act or omission by the employer that adversely affects the relationship between employees in the service excluding unfair dismissal. Organizations apply grievance procedures as one of Human resource management tools to guide in resolving grievances and the way they are handled. It is a formalized way of handling specific matters of grievances and complaints at the work place. In an organization the grievance procedure plays very important role of compliance, judicial and administrative (Lewin & Peterson, 2018). Good Grievance handling procedure should have the following characteristics: conformity, acceptability, simplicity, promptness and efficient. Conformity ensures that the grievance handling procedure is integrated to the organization culture and hence well embraced by employees. This leads to high employee's satisfaction and hence good customer service to clients in an organization. Grievance handling procedure should be acceptable to all or majority of employees. The universal acceptance of grievance handling procedures in an organization creates synergies among employees and hence improved teamwork. The procedure should be simple and well understood by all employees in an organization. This helps launch grievances within the shortest time possible and hence creating more production time and hence improved employees' efficiency at work. The grievance handling procedure should be efficient and hence any grievances should be solved within the shortest time so as to create more time for production and hence increased employee efficiency in an organization.

Different organizations have different kinds of grievance handling procedures but it is the duty of management to guarantee that employees understand the grievance procedures. For better understanding, such procedures should be written and communicated so that in situations where there are adverse effects on the well-being of individual employees in terms of working environment and conditions one would know exactly what steps can be taken. According to Bagraim (2017) the rationale for grievance procedures is to help individual organization attain its best in terms of employee's performance and service delivery. However, in most cases the procedures are management centered and may not allow employees to initiate expression of their dissatisfaction with regard to their work situations.

Empirical Review

Studies done on grievance handling include those done by Hook et al. (1996), who conducted a study on supervisor and manager procedure of handling grievances in a telecommunication firm. Results from the research showed that respondents preferred more participative procedures when dealing with grievance. However, when respondents perceived a situation that appears to direct threat to their authority, they revert to a much more autocratic style which is first telling their subordinate their decision and the persuading them of its correctness and this could have a negative effect on employee performance.

Underpinned by theory of conflict resolution constructed by Deutsch (1949), this study assumed that people believe their goals are positively interrelated and were able to manage conflict more effectively than those with competitive goals. As suggested by Deutsch (1949), in resolving interpersonal conflict the study used competitive and cooperative as the styles in handling employees' grievances. Results of the study showed that in cooperative style of handling employees' grievances, respondents were confident that they could interact effectively and discuss grievance issues openly and constructively. In addition, cooperative style was correlated with positive effect, efficient resolution and a creative, high-quality solution. In contrast, competitive style diminished expectations of an effective and open-minded interaction. Competitive style was found to be negatively related to feelings, efficiency and quality'. Tjosvold and Morishima (2009) concluded that cooperative style in resolving grievances drove positive feelings and

satisfaction for both union and management and hence improved employees' performance. Competitive style on the contrary, left feelings of frustration and anger at management, this had a negative effect on employees' performance. The study was however, limited to county governments in Kenya.

Another study on handling employees' dispute among managers was carried out by Karambayya and Brett (2018). From this research it was revealed that by using the Varimax-rotated seven factor solution, four roles have been determined as manager's behavior in handling disputes. The first role was named inquisitorial role where managers imposed own idea, made final decision and proposed own idea; the second role was mediational role which allows the manager to ask their employees questions regarding conflicts, requests proposals from employees and try to incorporate their ideas into employees' proposals; the third role was procedural marshal. Managers taking this role describe the dispute-handling procedures to be followed and strictly enforce those rules; the fourth role was motivational role, in this role managers rely on threats and incentives. However, the study was limited to organizations in Nairobi County.

Njiraini (2015) led an examination on the impacts of grievance dealing with system on peace-making in Kenya at the Kenya National Union of Teachers. The study found out that the grievance capturing systems and poor handling procedures had an impact on the management of the employees with a subsequent effect on the institutional performance. While Ngetich (2016) considered apparent impact of grievance dealing with system on representative execution at the Jomo Kenyatta foundation. The study found that available employee grievance handling procedures created channels of presenting their issues and had a judicial protection. The study findings indicated that the employees had a view of fairness and equitability in which their issues would be handled and hence employees were motivated to work. However, the study was limited to the Kenya National Union of Teachers and Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.

The grievance procedural model is recommended by the labor national commission. It helps in ensuring the fast settlement of employee's grievances in the company. As Harter and Sharma (2016) mention that, there are around five steps related with grievance procedural model. Firstly, the staff has to offer complaint in the company. The unsatisfied employees are required to convey their grievance issues in both written and verbal form to the designated officer (Harter & Sharma, 2016). The officer who is appointed by the organization for handling the grievances require to respond for the complaints within specific time. In starting, the officer is expected to acknowledge employees that their complaints are heard. It is expected that officers should analyze the issues and collect all needed and appropriate information related with grievance. Afterwards, they should decide about relevant solution about the problem and act accordingly in no time (Janani 2013). If the appointed officer fails in offering the suitable results within set time period, then the aggrieved staff can present the grievance to the company's departmental head. Kent (2014) argues that, if the staff is not satisfied with the results given by appointed officer, then staff can move towards head of the department (Kent, 2014). If head of the department fails in satisfying the results, the staff can move towards grievance committee. However, this had a negative impact on employees' performance because of the lengthy process in handling grievances.

3.1 Materials and Methods

The section covers the research methodology that guided the study.

Research Design

The study used case study design.

Target Population

This study targeted 307 employees working at the Longisa referral hospital.

Table 3.1 Target Population

No.	Department	Population
1.	Administrators	76
2.	Doctors	20
3.	Nurses	98
4.	Subordinate Staff	113
	Total	307

Source (HRM Record, 2022)

Sample and Sampling Procedures

This study used census.

Data Type and Research Instrument

In this study, primary data was used. The primary data was collected using questionnaires.

Pilot Testing

Before the visits to collect data at the hospital, the research instruments were pre-tested. The instruments were pilot tested at Olololunga hospital. Pilot study aimed at testing the reliability and validity of the instruments.

Validity of and Reliability of the Instruments

Validity of the Instruments

The study also used the KMO sampling adequacy formula from factor analysis to establish the validity of the instruments. It was noted that the results obtained from each objective were above 0.4 and hence valid. This is summarized in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Validity of the Instrument

Items/Scale	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)	Sig.
Grievance Handling Procedure	.754	.000
Grievance Handling Styles	.493	.000
Grievance Prevention Strategies	.592	.000
Employees Performance	.787	.000

Source (Author, 2023)

Reliability of the Research Instruments

According to (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2015) as a rule of thumb, a proposed psychometric instrument should only be used if a value of 0.70 or higher is obtained on a substantial sample. For this study the reliability was computed with the help of SPSS. The result is summarized in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 Reliability Statistics

Items	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
All items on the questionnaire	.866	24
Grievance Handling Procedure	.711	6
Grievance Handling Styles	.702	7
Grievance Prevention Strategies	.726	5
Employee Performance	.761	6

Source (Author, 2023)

Data Analysis Procedure

After successive data collection, the collected data was organized for processing. This involved; coding the responses, tabulating the data and performing several statistical computations. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse the data collected and organized. The analysis procedure was uniform in all study objectives where descriptive and inferential statistics was used. Descriptive statistics; Frequencies and Percentages was calculated on the independent variables to summarize and classifying the data collected into meaningful form for easy interpretation. Inferential statistics; Pearson Correlation analysis and Chi-Square test was used to determine relationships between independent and dependent variable, check the normality of variables, and make generalizations about the characteristics of populations to other public referral hospitals in Kenya based on data collected.

Parametric Tests

In this study parametric tests were used to estimate the population parameter, because this estimation process involves a population, certain parametric assumptions were required to ensure all components are compatible with each other. It's used where the following three assumptions have been observed: Observations are independent, where the population data has a normal distribution and Scores in different groups have homogeneous variances. In this study the following parametric tests were used.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to find out relationships between Variables. Using Pearson Correlation Coefficient, the study expressed the extent to which the variables are related. Product Moment Coefficient (r) gives an indication of the strength of the linear relationship between two variables.

$$r = \frac{n \sum xy - \sum x \sum y}{\sqrt{n \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2} \times \sqrt{n \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

Non-Parametric Tests

The study used this method to test distribution free statistics that do not require that the data fit a normal distribution. It also requires less restrictive assumptions about the data. Another important reason for using these tests is that they allow for the analysis of categorical as well as rank data. For this study the Chi – square test of independence was used. This test was used to determine whether there is a significance difference between the expected observations and the observed frequencies in one or more categories. Pearson’s correlation was used to test the independence while the Phi and Cramer’s V. was used to test the strength of the association between variables. To make a conclusion about the hypothesis with 95% confidence, the value of significance, that is the *p*-value of the Chi-Square statistic should be less than 0.05 (which is the alpha level associated with a 95% confidence level). If the *p*-value < 0.05 and the critical Chi-square value is less than the computed value, then it is concluded that the variables are dependent in the population and that there is a statistical relationship between the categorical variables.

Chi – square formula

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where O = observed frequency

$$E = \frac{\text{Column total} \times \text{Row total}}{\text{Sample Size}} = \text{expected frequency}$$

4.0 Results and Discussions

The Role of Grievance Handling Procedures on Employee Performance in Longisa Referral Hospital

The first objective of the study sought to establish the role of grievance handling procedure on employee Performance in Longisa referral hospital. The respondents were asked to show their degree of agreement or disagreement with given statements on grievance handling procedure on a five-point Likert scale, where; 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5- Strongly Agree. Descriptive statistics were calculated and the results are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Grievance Handling Procedures

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total (%)	Mean	Std. dev.
The organization has established a prompt and effective grievance handling procedures.	36(15)	104(43.3)	60(25)	24(10)	16(6.7)	240(100)	3.50	1.075
The organization grievance procedure is simple and well understood by employees.	36(15)	108(45)	76(31.7)	4(1.7)	16(6.7)	240(100)	3.60	.989
The grievance handling procedure is well accepted by employees.	44(18.3)	84(35)	64(26.7)	28(11.7)	20(8.3)	240(100)	3.53	1.162
The organization grievance procedure has enabled employees and management to resolve grievances in peaceful, orderly and in an expeditious manner.	36(15)	80(33.3)	68(28.3)	32(13.3)	24(10)	240(100)	3.50	1.176
The organization grievance procedure has enabled employees and management to resolve grievances in peaceful, orderly and in an expeditious manner.	32(13.3)	120(50)	60(25)	20(8.3)	8(3.3)	240(100)	3.62	.935

Grievance handling procedure conforms to the international standards on grievance handling procedures.	44(18.3)	52(21.7)	84(35)	40(16.7)	20(8.3)	240(100)	3.25	1.180
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Key: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; N=Neutral; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree
Source (Author, 2023)

The results in Table 4.4 show that 36(15%) of Longisa referral hospital employees strongly agreed, 104(43.3%) agreed, 60(25%) were neutral, 24(10%) disagreed and 16(6.7%) strongly disagreed that the organization has established a prompt and effective grievance handling procedures. This indicates that majority of the respondents (Mean = 3.5, std. dev. = 1.075) agreed that the organization has established a prompt and effective grievance handling procedures. On whether the organization grievance procedure is simple and well understood by employees 36(15%) of Longisa referral hospital employees strongly agreed, 108(45%) agreed, 76(31.7%) were neutral, 4(1.7%) disagreed and 16(6.7%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that majority of the respondents (Mean = 3.6, std. dev. = 0.989) agreed that the organization grievance procedure is simple and well understood by employees. This agreed with Njiraini (2015) who found out that the grievance capturing systems and poor handling procedures had an impact on the management of the employees with a subsequent effect on the institutional performance. This also agreed with Tjosvold and Morishima (2009) who concluded that cooperative handling procedures in resolving grievances drove positive feelings and satisfaction for both union and management and hence improved employees' performance.

On whether the grievance handling procedure is well accepted by employees, 44(18.3%) of Longisa referral hospital employees strongly agreed, 84(35%) agreed, 64(26.7%) were neutral, 28(11.7%) disagreed and 20(8.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that majority of the respondents (Mean = 3.53, std. dev. = 1.162) agreed that the grievance handling procedure is well accepted by employees. On whether the organization grievance procedure has enabled employees and management to resolve grievances in peaceful, orderly and in an expeditious manner, 36(15%) of Longisa referral hospital employees strongly agreed, 80(33.3%) agreed, 68(28.3%) were neutral, 32(13.3%) disagreed and 24(10%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that majority of the respondents (Mean = 3.5, std. dev. = 1.176) agreed that the organization grievance procedure has enabled employees and management to resolve grievances in peaceful, orderly and in an expeditious manner. The study agreed with Hook et al. (1996) who found that respondents preferred more participative procedures when dealing with grievance.

On whether grievance procedure has provided a peaceful means to reduce the pressures and fears of employees and to settle workplace disputes without stoppage of work, 32(13.3%) of Longisa referral hospital employees strongly agreed, 120(50%) agreed, 60(25%) were neutral, 20(8.3%) disagreed and 8(3.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. Finally, on whether grievance handling procedure conforms to the international standards on grievance handling procedures; 44(18.3%) of Longisa referral hospital employees strongly agreed, 52(21.7%) agreed, 84(35%) were neutral, 40(16.7%) disagreed and 20(8.3%) strongly disagreed with the statement. This indicates that majority of the respondents (Mean = 3.25, std. dev. = 1.180) did not understand about the international standards on grievance handling procedures. The study was in consonance with Harter and Sharma (2016) who mention that, there are around five steps related with international grievance procedural model whoever majority of employees didn't understand the five steps. The findings further agreed with Tjosvold and Morishima (2009) who concluded that cooperative procedures in resolving grievances drove positive feelings and satisfaction for both union and management and hence improved employees' performance.

The data was subjected to further analysis using Pearson's Correlation to establish the relationship between grievance handling procedure and employee performance at Longisa referral hospital. The results are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Pearson's Correlation Analysis Between Grievance Handling Procedure and Employee Performance

Grievance Handling Procedure	Pearson Correlation	Employee Performance
		.820**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	240

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source (Author, 2023)

The results in Table 4.2 show a high positive and statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.820$, P -value = 0.000) between grievance handling procedure and employees' performance at Longisa referral hospital. This indicates that grievance handling procedure is an important factor on employee's performance at Longisa referral hospital. This agreed with Njiraini (2015) who found out that the grievance capturing systems and poor handling procedures had a negative impact on the management of the employees with a subsequent effect on the institutional performance. The results further were in agreement with Tjosvold and Morishima (2009) who

concluded that cooperative procedures in resolving grievances drove positive feelings and satisfaction for both union and management and hence improved employees' performance.

Further analysis sought to establish the strength of the association between grievance handling procedure and employee's performance at Longisa referral hospital. This was guided by the first null hypothesis which was stated as:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between grievance handling procedure and employee Performance in Longisa referral hospital.

The analysis was carried out using the test of independence and the results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Chi-square Test of Independence for Grievance Handling Procedure and Employees Performance

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1121.794 ^a	240	.000
Likelihood Ratio	658.184	240	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	160.550	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	240		

Source (Author, 2023)

The results in Table 4.3 show that there is an association between grievance handling procedure and employees' performance in Longisa referral hospital. The association is significant since the Chi-square value of 1121.794 is greater than the critical Chi-square value and the *P*-value (0.000) is less than 0.05 and hence the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between grievance handling procedure and employee Performance in Longisa referral hospital was rejected. It therefore indicates that grievance handling procedures are significant factors influencing employee's performance in Longisa referral hospital. The was in consonance with Ngetich (2016) who found out that good grievance handling procedures had an impact on the institutional performance. The findings further agreed with Tjosvold and Morishima (2009) who concluded that cooperative procedures in resolving grievances drove positive feelings and satisfaction for both union and management and hence improved employees' performance.

Conclusion

The study concluded that grievance handling procedures have influence on employee's performance.

Recommendations

The study recommends that for effective employees' performance in organizations, human resource managers should adopt prudent grievance handling procedures. This ensures there are prudent mechanisms to deal with any grievance arising in the organization. Effective handling of grievances contributes to improved employees' satisfaction and hence increased productivity.

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