



The Role of Labour Grievance Management in Ensuring Decent Work Standards: A Study on Voltech Engineering

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Abstract

Grievance handling is essential to human resource management in industries where a large number of employees are engaged, such as electrical engineering and power services. This research looks at how the grievance management system works in Voltech Engineering and its role in upholding decent work conditions. Employing a descriptive research design and primary data from 82 employees, this research looks into critical factors such as awareness, accessibility, fairness and speed of the grievance system. The results indicate that while Voltech has a formal grievance management system that is widely perceived by employees to be positive, there are some things to be improved - particularly in relation to communication and time taken to resolve issues. Overall, the study reveals that a grievance system is not only a procedural necessity, but an important element in ensuring employee trust, satisfaction and productivity.

Keywords: Industrial relations, Grievances handling, Decent work, Employee awareness

Introduction:

The electricity engineering and power services industry is vital for economic development, infrastructure building and industrial advancement. This industry is heavily dependent on a workforce of engineers, technicians and office staff to oversee operations. But this work environment can be challenging. Workers are often exposed to dangerous working conditions, project constraints, and extended work hours. In such a work environment, employee grievances are almost a given. These could be related to working conditions, workload, remuneration, or even inter-personal issues. If not dealt with in a timely and effective manner, these issues can impact not only organizational morale, but also productivity. As a result, it is important for organisations to have an effective grievance redressal practice. This research aims to understand the impact of grievance practices at Voltech Engineering on the quality of work life, and how these practices support the concept of "decent work" (fairness, dignity and safe working conditions).

Industry Overview:

The electrical engineering sector is vast, involving activities such as generation, transmission, distribution and maintenance of electricity. This industry is highly technical, regulated for safety and often involves large projects. Workers in this industry are exposed to physically strenuous work and potentially dangerous conditions, such as high-voltage systems and remote sites. This can cause stress and the risk of job dissatisfaction.

However, the sector is also rapidly changing with the introduction of new technologies such as automation and alternative energy technologies. This offers new prospects but also poses challenges for employees as they need to continuously gather new skills. This may result in stress and grievances if not supported appropriately. To navigate such a dynamic and changing industry an effective grievance management system is vital. This assists an organisation in staying balanced, promoting employee wellbeing and fostering a healthy workplace culture.

Need for the Study:

The handling of grievances is critical to industrial relations harmony and job satisfaction. In human resource intensive sectors, failure to manage grievances can result in:

- Decreased productivity
- Increased absenteeism
- Higher employee turnover
- Poor workplace relationships

The study is significant as it assesses the effectiveness of grievance mechanisms in the organisation and its impact on the decent work standards of justice, dignity and safety in the workplace. It also shows the potential of using data analytics to enhance grievance management.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the Study are:

- To check the grievance management system
- To determine types of employee grievances
- To assess the employee's views on grievance process
- To assess the outcomes of grievance resolution
- To determine effects on job satisfaction
- To make recommendations for improvement

Research Methodology:

Descriptive research design is used in this study to capture employee perceptions and feelings. Data Collection:

- Primary Data: through structured questionnaire
 - Secondary Data: Collected from journals, reports and organisations
- Sample Size:

82 employees from various designations were taken as the sample. Tools Used:

- Percentage analysis
- Plots and visual analysis
- Pearson correlation

This approach provides a structured approach to assessing grievance management.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Analysis:

A large proportion of employees (57%) fall in the age range of 25-35, showcasing a youthful workforce. The response also includes 37% who are under 25 years old, revealing that there is also a significant number of early entry employees.

In terms of gender, 54% of the respondents are women and 46% are men. This shows that employees are relatively equally distributed with a slight female majority.

By designation, there are more executives (36%) and other staff (35%) and relatively fewer managers. This suggests that the results tend to reflect the views of operational staff.

Awareness of Grievance Mechanism:

This research shows that 66% of the employees are aware about grievance redressal. But 22% don't know, and 12% do not know.

This suggests although awareness is relatively high, there remains a considerable proportion of employees who are not clear. This suggests a need for improved awareness through communication and training initiatives.

Grievance Reporting Channels:

Employees primarily approach:

- HR department (64%)
- Reporting managers (32%)

Few employees use and anonymous channels or escalate to the senior management. This implies that employees still rely on more formal channels and HR is considered to be more accessible and trustworthy.

Accessibility of Grievance System:

The majority of respondents consider the grievance system as easy or very easy to access, with a large number of respondents being neutral. And no respondents find it difficult to access.

This suggests that the organization has successfully put in place an accessible grievance system.

Communication Effectiveness:

The grievance process is considered:

- Very clearly communicated 41%
- Clearly communicated by 32%
- Moderately communicated by 24%

While most employees find communication good, some employees might not have clear understanding of the process, as indicated by moderate responses.

Response and Resolution Time:

A majority of employees say that they are acknowledged:

- Straight away or as soon as possible But when it comes to resolving the matter:
- The majority report some delay
- There are some delays for some employees

This would indicate that although responses are initial rapid, there may be room for improvement in the resolution process.

Fairness and Confidentiality:

- Most consider the grievance process as fair or neutral
- Few as unfair
- Maintains confidentiality, and responses are overwhelmingly positive This is a fairly reliable system but some improvement is possible.

Management Attitude:

Over half of the staff feel management treats grievance handling very seriously, while others consider it as average.

This is an indicator of committed management and creates feelings of trust.

ANALYSIS:

Correlations

		Are grievances handled in a fair and unbiased manner?	Does effective grievance handling improve your job satisfaction?
Are grievances handled in a fair and unbiased manner?	Pearson Correlation	1	.870
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.055
	N	5	5
Does effective grievance handling improve your job satisfaction?	Pearson Correlation	.870	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	
	N	5	5

Interpretation:

The Pearson correlation value ($r = 0.870$) between fair and unbiased grievance handling and job satisfaction indicates a strong positive relationship.

This means:

- When grievances are handled fairly and without bias, job satisfaction tends to increase.
- Employees who perceive grievance handling as fair are more likely to feel satisfied with their jobs.

However, the significance value (Sig. = 0.055) is slightly higher than the standard threshold of 0.05:

- This means the relationship is not statistically significant at the 5% level.
- In simple terms, although the relationship is strong, it cannot be confirmed with full statistical confidence due to the small sample size.

Discussion:

The results indicate that Voltech Engineering has a formal grievance system that is accessible and reasonably effective. Employees have confidence in HR as the avenue and consider management responsive.

However, the neutral responses to several parameters suggest that it is not at its best. Concerns such as the lack of full awareness, reasonably clear communication, and the time taken to resolve issues point to the need for improvement.

The study also highlights openness, speediness and participation in enhancing the grievance process.

Conclusion:

The research findings conclude that grievance management is an important mechanism in securing decent work in an organisation. It helps in enhancing employee satisfaction, promoting justice and maintaining good industrial relations climate.

Voltech Engineering has an overall effective grievance management system, with high accessibility and support from management. But it needs better communication, awareness and efficiency to improve its effectiveness.

Improving these areas will lead to a more positive culture and increased trust and engagement with employees.

Suggestions:

The following suggestions are made based on the study:

- Regularly organise awareness programs on grievance procedures
- Provide clear communication through training and guidelines
- Reduce grievance resolution time
- Enhance transparency
- Use HR analytics for monitoring
- Promote employee involvement