

Staff Complaint Reasons and Handling Mechanisms: Sebeta Town Administration Education Office in Focus, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia

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Abstract

The objective of this paper was to investigate the nature of staff complaints in Sebeta town education office. The study also assessed the reasons for complaints and examined ways of handling the complaints. In the research, case study research design was used. Data were collected through semi-structured interview guide from four team leaders, four staff members as well as three discipline committee members working in the education office. The respondents were selected purposefully. Based on the research findings, complaints in the office have emanated from the manner the organization is structured with regard to departments and human power, the way of doing things (stringency and unfairness), individual differences, and the challenges from the management. Though the management was open to deal with the complaints from the staff, some of the most common complaints by employees were low pay and benefits, unfair and frequently changing organizational structure, absences of promotion, and high work load. Most employees believe that their concerns cannot be solved at office level. Despite the availability of formal committee at office level to deal with grievance from the employees, nearly all complaints fail to pass through this formal channel.

Keywords: Complaint; Complaint handling; Conflict

Background

Educational institutions are established to accomplish educational goals. The teaching and learning process that takes place in these organizations is complex and can be influenced by external factors. This makes managing educational institutions not easy. Education offices are among the institutions responsible for managing the schools under their supervision. To this end, they make use of different types of resources, of which human resources or staff members are the major ones. Education offices are organizations that have an administrative officer (district education office head), who is responsible for the overall functioning of the office.

While organizations are dealing with human resources/staff members, individuals in the organizations can have their own ambitions, styles and interests and be able to act differently. These differences between individuals might create conflict of interest among employees themselves as well as between employees and the management. Because of absurd organizational rules and regulations and related low pay, employees in an organization often complain and get dissatisfied about their work or interpersonal relationship; and these are of the reasons for employees' grievance and result in weak commitment (Brewer & Lam, 2009).

In education offices, unless major causes for complaints are detected and addressed, it affects the functions of schools that are supervised by the office and then students' academic achievements may possibly be hampered. Quality education can be hampered because of poor grievance

handling mechanism in educational organizations (Kumar, 2013; Sharma, 2015). Educational organizations are supposed to put into practice a clear-cut, effective structure for complaints management; “a good complaint management system will help reduce or prevent future occurrences of complaints” (Nwagbara, 2011, p.14).

Though the term complaint can be casual and presented in written or oral forms, grievance refers to a formal complaint by an employee. Therefore, complaint and grievance in this study are used interchangeably.

A complaint can be defined as any work-related dispute arising out of the interpretation, application, administration or alleged violation of the specific terms of the collective agreement (Danku et al., 2015). According to Ombudsman Western Australia, a complaint is an “expression of dissatisfaction made to or about an organization, related to its products, services, staff or the handling of a complaint, where a response or resolution is explicitly or implicitly expected or legally required” (2017, p.1). Complaints can be any issue raised by staff members that help in facilitating organizational goal achievement and to be addressed by the management.

Grievance is basically a complaint raised by an employee to fulfil his aspiration and expectations by the organization. Britton (1982), Hunter and Kleiner (2004) describe a grievance as “any disagreement that might arise between an employer and employee, which relates to the implied or explicit terms of the employment agreement” (p.85). Wijesooriya et al., (2021) explain grievances as signs of disappointment of staff members with the manner things are being accomplished in workplaces.

Some writers (e.g., Boden, 2003; Filip, 2013) view complaints positively. For Boden (2003), complaints are opportunities to assess how well the organization is performing its activities as well as to become aware of the weaknesses in the functioning of the organization so as to correct it. For Filip (2013) complaint is even more positive and ought to be welcomed and considered. Complaints and compliments are valuable sources of information that all organizations including educational organizations can use to improve program delivery and service (Latif et al., 2010).

In organizations, there can be different reasons for complaints. Capitalizing on this idea Hunter and Kleiner (2004) state the causes for complaints in organizations include negligence, unfair treatment, poor performance, absenteeism, substance abuse, and safety issues. Whatever the reasons for complaint are, complaints in organizations can emerge from an individual or collectively from staff members. Elaborating this idea, Ebire (2020) writes individual grievance is when an individual in organization submits own discontent on things that feels unfair; whereas collective grievances affect all the staff members. Ebire (2020) also puts causes of individual and collective grievances differently. The three major causes for individual complaints include personal discrimination, violation of seniority right, and unjust treatment. On the other hand,

collective grievances result from violation of any provision of collective agreement or legislation which could influence all or any of the employees.

Complaint handling mechanisms are ways in which organizations make use of dealing with confrontations that emanate from grievances. These mechanisms allow organizations to gather information regarding the functions taking place within that organization. Issues such as employee contract agreement, rules and regulations, policy or procedure, past practices, changing the cultural norms, individual interest and the like can be dealt with these mechanisms (Kumar, 2013).

Derr (1972) asserts as the nature of conflicts in organizations varies, the mechanisms to deal on each of the conflicts require different approach based on the nature of that unique organization. So having the information, the management can address individual grievances and improve the quality of administrative systems over time. Every staff member is provided variety of ways of filing complaints like through installing complaint boxes accessible to all, complaint committees, setting up complaint telephone numbers, and through preparing any convenient complaint forms. The management also needs to deal with each complaint carefully. Organizations may have different mechanisms in which they employ to deal with complaints arising from their employees. Stressing the importance of complaint handling mechanisms and techniques in organizations Latif, et al., noted “there are much to lose by ignoring complaints and much to be gained by having an effective complaint management system” (2010, p.8).

Different scholars forwarded varieties of means to deal with conflicts in an organization. Latif et al., (2010) suggest there must be conducive work environment so as to implement effective complaint management system in the organization. Hence, as far as the organizations culture is concerned, they uphold three important points that need to be taken in to account: acceptance, commitment, and communication. The management and employees should recognize and accept the potential benefits to be gained by managing complaints as complaints are important part of responsibility. This also helps to build the image of the organization positively. Besides, in a given organization, there must be commitment from the top to down in order to ensure that the complaint management system is widely recognized, maintained, and not be disregarded. The other key idea in the organizations culture is communication. The organization must facilitate complaints friendly environment via encouraging free discussion sessions and open communication with complainants on the issue raised.

Derr (1972) describes ways of resolving conflicts as follows:

There are three major ways to resolve the variety of conflicts arising in a complex organization. First, it is possible to train administrators to cope with the various conflicts. Second, organizational developers can intervene to change the ongoing processes and structures of the organization to better prepare it for that lie ahead. Third, the substantive and procedural problems that breed destructive conflicts should be resolved. (p. 498)

Some important skills are also imperative to understand any conflict or complaint situations and help to come up with solutions or proposals to respond to the situation via facilitating smooth communication with the other party. Negotiations or persuasions are important in the context of good staff relationship. As outlined by Sean (2010) there are about seven essential competencies to deal with complaints: listening, communication, problem solving, Interpersonal, persuasion, integrity and customer service skills. Sean further noted that, these competencies can be learned. Moreover, the complaints arising because of different reasons and need be solved in accordance with the rules and regulations of the organization.

Statement of the Problem

Complaints can impede goal effectiveness in organizations. Any sort of relationship among employees of an organization cannot be free from grievance or complaint. As noted by Rahim (2017), in an organization, a complaint is the most complex matter that requires proper handling skills.

Like other organizations, educational organizations are not the exception. District education office is an office that is responsible for carrying out government education programs and policies with in specified area or town administration. The rapport among workers, management and employees is crucial for the smooth functioning of the activities in an organization.

In the Ethiopian context, since 1994, following the implementation of decentralization policy in the federal structure of the country, educational leaders at district level have had major roles. According to Ministry of Education (2010) the respective district education offices of all regions have the authority to decide on fundamental issues like selection of teachers and other supporting staff, placement of leadership and school principals, implementing plans and programs, use of the budget allocated and other various issues in relation to the management of resources. This, therefore, necessitates managing complaints arising from the staff properly as crucial factor in the process of attaining organizational goals (Sean, 2010).

Staff complaints may arise because of different reasons. Meanwhile, the complaint handling mechanisms employed by the organizations by far can influence the staff commitment. Stressing this idea, Ombudsman Western Australia Guidelines (2017) affirm the big value that effective complaint handling system has to do with the provision of a quality service in organizations.

To improve the quality of the education given as well as to make education more relevant to the demands of the community, the role of educational leaders in planning and coordinating the teaching learning processes at all levels in the system is of a paramount importance. Besides, educational leaders have a critical role in the realization of educational goals through proper complaint handling mechanisms (Ministry of Education, 2015).

The way in which managers in an organization deploy the management practices such as human resources management activities can potentially influence the employee's level of organizational

commitment (Buck & Watson, 2002). To my knowledge, there are limited studies conducted in similar education offices on staff complaints and handling mechanisms. Particularly, no study has been conducted on such sub-urban areas as Sebeta town education office. In aspiring to fill this gap, therefore, I move toward working on this study.

Hence, this study aims to look into the nature of staff complaints and its handling mechanisms in Sebeta town education office of Oromia region, Ethiopia. The following are the basic questions to be addressed:

1. What are the reasons for employees' complaint in Sebeta town administration education office?
2. What are the prevailing views of management towards staff complaint and its consequence on organizational effectiveness?
3. How are complaints perceived and handled in Sebeta town administration education office?

Methodology

Research Methods

As the intention of the study is to investigate the nature of staff complaints in the study area, qualitative research methodology was applied. Patton (2002) highlights the appropriateness of qualitative research to study detailed and an in-depth understanding of respondents' perception and analysis of a range of guidelines. For deeper understanding of the subject under study and to examine in detail the nature and the how of staff complaint handling mechanisms in Sebeta town education office in which there are 31 staff members, case study is employed as the research design. Bogdan and Biklen (2006) explain the significance of research design in qualitative research to collect data, to match the methods with the research aims, to use the right kind of analysis to answer the basic questions and draw valid conclusions.

As it allows for a comprehensive analysis of the problem under study, the scope of this study is limited to Sebeta town education office. This is mainly because there are large numbers of schools (237) under its administration. The effectiveness of staff in the education office to the over whole school system in the administration is mandatory. The education office provides holistic support to all the schools under its supervision and their respective communities such as teachers, students, administrative staffs, and Parent Teachers Association.

Participants

This study is a case study that focuses specifically on one town, i.e., Sebeta town administration. Sebeta town education office holds thirty-one staff members. Of the total, eleven respondents including team leaders, senior staff members, and office grievance committee members were selected purposefully. Accordingly, four team leaders, four staff members and three office grievance committee members were included in the study. Face-to-face semi structured interviews which lasted for minimum of thirty minutes were held with each interviewee who

participated in the study voluntarily. A total of eleven interviews were conducted. Collecting interview data helped in gathering rich information from the respondents.

Except two, the other respondents were male. With regard to the marital status all respondents were married and had a work experience ranging from a minimum of nine years to a maximum of thirty-one years. In the Office there are eight teams. Under each team there are three to six employees. Hence, according to the office structure each team leader is responsible to handle the complaints that arise within the team before the issue is escalated to the grievance committee at office level.

Instruments

Interview guide and document analysis were data gathering tools used in the study. To achieve the objectives of the study, semi-structured individual interviews were used. As a data gathering instrument, interview gives opportunities to the interviewer to carry out an in-depth investigation and helps to extend further questions based on the respondents' response. And also, it provides a chance to the interviewee to clarify more openly what he/she knows and feels about the issue under study (Best & Kahn, 2003; Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Except for one interview that was conducted over the phone, all interviews were conducted face-to-face. From my rapport with them, the interviewees were not comfortable to be audio taped and as a result, I focused on rather creating a very relaxed and encouraging relationship so as to allow them to express their views. At times, during an interview if the interviewee feels that something is 'confidential' from his/her explanation, it is preferable not to audiotape than losing data (Rapley, 2004).

During the interview session, I was encouraging and using prompts to help the respondents respond freely and confidently on the issue: and almost all respondents were highly interested in the issue under study. I was taking detailed notes while interviewing. All the interview sessions were conducted in Afaan Oromoo language and then translated into English for further analysis; and these translations were the main sources of data in the study. As some contend, this gives an opportunity to speak their concerns and even asked me to report the findings of the research to the upper level of their organization; to the Regional Education Bureau, in which most of their concerns might probably be resolved and get decision as they anticipate.

Regarding document analysis, documents such as grievance committee minutes, the committee reports, human resource manuals, letters from regional education bureau and documents such as organizational manuals, rules and regulation manuals, management minutes, and letters written by the grievance committee were consulted. Besides, I observed in person the whole work atmosphere and the relationship between staff members for two weeks.

Data analysis

The data gained through semi- structured interview was jotted carefully and then content and descriptive analysis methods were used. In so doing, I coded the collected data so as to obtain different themes and edited accordingly. In addition, in the descriptive analysis citations were used frequently so as to align with the views of the research participants. Codes like (S1, S2, and S3 ... S11) were given to respondents. Patton (2002) contends on the aim of content analysis that content analysis is used to identify patterns in the major themes from the relatively large qualitative data collected so as to give the collected data unambiguous structure.

To have further verification that can be used to substantiate issues arising from the interview data, the relevant office documents in the office were analyzed. These documents were useful to look at organizational responses towards the staff complaints raised in the office.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations let research participants are informed and voluntary to participate in the research. To have the required data in a study, the researcher ought to provide necessary information with respect to the aims, nature and procedures of the study as necessary (Cohen et al., 2005). Accordingly, to conduct this study, permission was obtained from the education office head by informing the purpose of the study. Following that staff members were consulted and as a result each of the respondents agreed in advance to be part of the study. For confidentiality purpose, codes (S1, S2, and S3...S11) were used instead of the participants' real names to classify the respondents' response in the process of data analysis.

Results

As the intention of the study was to assess the causes for employees' complaints and the ways of managing the complaints, a number of causes for and ways of managing complaints were identified in the study. Accordingly, to deal with the research questions raised a number of assertions were derived.

Causes for employees' complaints

Regarding causes for employees' complaints, the findings of the research have been organized under four themes:

- Conflicts in relation to organizational structure.
- Conflicts stemming from the individual differences.
- Conflicts emanating from the management.
- Conflicts originating from stringency and unfairness.

The above four themes are treated in more detail as follows.

- a) Conflicts related to organizational structure.

Within this 1st category, respondents discussed freely regarding the problem of the organizational structure and related challenges they are facing. The structure of the organization has been changing frequently. As could be understood from the responses of the respondents, last year forty three positions were there in the structure of the organization, but that has been minimized to thirty four this year. Respondents complained that the change took place without deep investigation on the weaknesses and strong sides of the previous structure. A remark by one of the respondents among the team leaders is more telling:

Over the last five years alone, we passed through three different organizational structures which ended up in confusing the employees. Besides, issues related to career structure are sometimes unfair. At times, those with twenty years of experience are treated equally with those who have seven years of work experience. This clearly shows how those at regional education bureau working on this issue are too careless in designing the structure of the organization. (S4)

Despite the required qualification and experience, because of the organizational structure, within the office itself, grade level of employees and related salaries vary from team to team. Besides, some teams are overloaded while others are not. This disparity among the staff members can be a source of complaints. “Not only in relation to other government sectors”, says a respondent, “but also the structure of the teams’ (departments) within the organization itself are sources of complaints to most staff members” (S1). From the document analysis I made on the organizational structure of the office, I also found that team’s workload is not divided fairly.

More to the imbalance between the staff members, as a respondent addresses, “Most teachers in the schools we supervised were better than most of us in terms of salary, career structure and other benefits.” He further added, “because of this factor most staff members were uncomfortable”. Another respondent also had this to say on this issue,

If we compare a staff member from the education office and a staff from high school, in most circumstances the one at the school is better than that of the office [worker] in the amount of monthly salary and opportunity for career structure and further education. Besides, while we compare other government sector organizations to education office, we are deprived of many things; like unequal salary structure and different organizational benefits. (S9)

It can be argued that the staff’s complaints are related to what Brewer and Lam, (2009) highlighted regarding the importance of career improvement and financial rewards in the organizational effectiveness through smoothening interactions between the management and the subordinates.

b) Conflicts stemming from individual differences.

Individuals in an organization can have different views of the things they encounter in their surrounding and thereby can act differently. While some staff members showed their concern

plainly, some others hesitated to express their feelings freely and keep calm. Stressing the same idea, Milliken et al., (2003) reported in their study that some employees remained silent for not being viewed negatively and that resulted in damaging relationships. Edwards' (2005) stated, rather directly presenting their complaint to the concerned body formally, some employees were seen while moaning, ranting, biased, prone to complaining, whining, paranoid, and being over-sensitive.

According to the results of the study, it was found that some experienced staff members (S1, S4, S7) are busy in their social life and sometimes share their burden to their colleagues. As there are some staff members who are committed to the unity and cohesiveness of the office, there are also others who lag behind on the issue. Regarding the way of handling complaints, some staff members are less satisfied on the management (S2, S3, S10, S11), others are optimistic on the management (S5, S7, S9).

Though individual difference is expected, the unity and cohesiveness of the staff members is significant in addressing complaints raised in organizations. Emphasizing the importance of harmonious relationship among the staff members, one participant said:

Though there are some difficult issues that can't be addressed by the office management directly, the unity of the staff by itself can play greatest role in addressing grievance related issues arising from all the staff members via letting them [voicing] loud high as a team. (S5).

Highlighting the importance of harmonious relationship between staff members to organizational goal attainment in general and for the benefit of individual staff members in particular, a respondent commented, "Let alone positive relationship among staff members here, but also there should be well-built tie between the education office and other education stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, and students' parents" (S9). Adding to the idea, another respondent says, "Though we are from different background and experience, we are working for the same organization. This forced us to give priority to organizational goal than individual interest" (S6). On the other hand, in explaining the individual differences as a cause for complaint in the office, one respondent made clear that "even if most staff members talk about the supremacy of organizational goal than individual interest, but in practice every one is striving to fulfil his own individual interest in the office" (S8).

c) Conflicts emanating from the management.

All the challenges that are observed in the education system of the town administration are related to the education office which is responsible for the overall functioning of the education in the town. The organizational structure of the education office comprises eight departments. Each department has its own head; in which the head is the member of the office management

committee. Therefore, in the education office including the office head, there are nine individuals in the management committee.

As one respondent claims, “In most cases the management of the office instead of directly trying to solve the complaints arising from the staff members, tries to treat employees with mere pledge” (S11). Another respondent notes, “Treating employees sympathetically is not bad...but sometimes mere promise given to employees is likely to later worsen the issue more ” (S3).

Another respondent said:

Obviously, the office head cannot be free from the imposition of the top managers especially that of political leaders. Meanwhile, he should always stand with his staff members. Regardless of conditions and pressures from top level managers and the politicians he must give priority to the concern of his staff members (S1).

Management committee of the office which comprises 8 team leaders and the office head at times try to deal on employees’ grievances so as to solve issues informally before submitting it to the complaint committee and be filed formally.

At some point, though the management is willing to solve employee complaints, it fails to do so because things are beyond the office’s capability. As one respondent contends, “The allocation of insignificant amount of daily allowance to staff members as well as few education and training opportunities provided to the office workers are beyond the responsibility of office management” (S7). Stressing as the situations are discouraging to staff members, another respondent expressed a concern. “Issues related to minimal amount of per-diem and little education opportunities to staff members,” decries the respondent, “are complaints without solution” (S2).

Complaint on poor results given to performance evaluation is also one reason as far as the management is concerned. The other challenge from the management side is, instead of focusing on the output of the activities, sometimes there is a tendency to focus on attendance sheet only. As pointed out by a respondent, “Though I am not blaming the necessity of attendance sheet, focusing much on it is not good; it hampers staff initiations resulting in poor morale and leads to poor performance” (S7). Some respondents also raised issues on the misconceptions from the management side. For S11 said:

If there is an extra ordinary effort from an employee towards his responsibilities, sometimes the view of the management is not positive; they associate such effort with individual benefit rather than that of the organization (S11).

From the interview I conducted with some of the respondents, I found out that there is no practice that focuses on questioning the upper echelon (the town council/management team or the regional education bureau) even towards some challenging duties to the staff members in particular and to the office in general. A remark by a respondent illustrates the situation well:

From the office management side, there should be a practice to challenge and question the upper-level managers. From my long years of experience in this office, I have seen no one challenging them. The office management accepts everything flowing down to the office. But as to me the office management must learn to say 'no' to some shaky issues for the sake of overall organizational goal achievement (S10).

d) Conflicts originating from stringency and unfairness.

Under this theme, respondents forwarded their views on the unique characteristics that depict the ways in which tasks are being accomplished in their office. The number of staff members in the office is quite few as compared with the duties and responsibilities expected of the staff. A true indicator is that the education office is responsible to supervise a total of two hundred thirty-seven government and private schools found in the town administration. This situation has created burden on the staff members to supervise, manage, and provide the required support.

According to some of the respondents (S2, S6, and S11) the way that some staff members are working is different from the others. They contend that some staff members do their work as they like without following the proper schedule or in any convenient time to them. They come to office any time they like and leave the office suddenly. While explaining the reason, S9 says "Because of the variation in the intensity of the work load between staff members, some are enjoying their time while others are burdened by routine activities they are expected to accomplish." Respondents S2, S6, and S11 also asserted that such a condition has created discomfort to the others and unfair distribution of work load as stipulated by the structure and job requirement can be taken as one possible source of complaint.

As the respondents reported, the more careless way of life in the office can hamper the motivation of some members; this kind of situation may favor those employees who took initiation by themselves to work their duty while leading others to be reluctant on their job. Even though the majority of the staff members are matured and experienced enough, the control from the management is mandatory and maintains the work balance.

Despite the above challenges, almost all staff members have failed to accomplish their planned duty (activities) because of the repetitive emergency duties from higher officials of the town; e.g., unscheduled repeated meetings, emergency report compilation and the like are some of the causes as the respondents mentioned. Taking too long-time during staff meetings on irrelevant issues is the other concern that staff members have complained about as "Most staff meetings are boring, repeated, time consuming and are without values; in some circumstances even, the meetings used to end up with creating an extra argument." (S7)

Mechanisms of managing complaints

As complaints are inevitable in organizations, the mechanisms in which organizations make use of handling complaints really matters. Hence, an organizational system should address such

inconveniences. One possible way of addressing complaints is the use of complaint procedure acknowledged within the organization (Ombudsman Western Australia, 2017).

According to the respondents, there is formal complaint mechanism system in the education office in which staff members can present their concerns. From documents such as complaint committee minutes and related documents, a document showing the organizational structure of the office, letters written by the office complaint committee, office guidelines on complaints show the presence of formal complaint filing ways. That is consistent with Kolb's (1987) contention that almost all organizations have set a unit in which they manage the conflicts emerging amongst members of that particular organization.

Despite the availability of the complaint handling mechanism in the education office, except few major complaints like career structure and issues related to education opportunity, most complaints don't seem to be tabled as per the formal channel. That is because whether they complain formally or informally, they personally believe their problem may not be solved. Instead of expressing formal complaints "Most staff members explain their concerns or grievances informally: like feeling discomforts, weak work tempo, ignoring, few responses and the like" (S3).

The discipline (complaint) committee as a unit established at office level deals with any grievance from the employees. From the document analysis I made, this is also put on the text of the committee: 'any staff member can present his/her issues to the committee'. Individual staff members can file their complaints in writing to the committee. Based on the established rules and regulations of the office, the committee then makes decision on the issue. This committee also has the mandate to see issues or disputes coming to office from all the schools in the town administration.

Discussion

In organizations, job dissatisfaction can emanate from weak complaint handling mechanisms. This in turn has a negative impact on organizations' performance. Therefore, complaints emanating from employees need to be treated carefully. For the smooth implementation of organizational functions, human resource offices are responsible.

In this study, I tried to see the reasons for staff complaints and how they are handled by the management in Sebeta town education office, Ethiopia. As far as complaint handling in the office is concerned, I can say the general feeling of the respondents is not good. Staff members are not happy in their work life; the payment and the duties, roles and responsibilities of the staff members are not sufficient; no balanced payment for the work done. As the respondents repeatedly claim, the payment is minimal in relation to their duty and dissatisfied with their jobs. They are also disappointed with the academic results of their students.

Four major sources of staff complaints have been identified. The first category is about the organizational structure comprising eight teams or departments; each department with varieties of

duties and varying intensity as well: without the variation in the amount of monthly salary. This creates discomfort among some staff members because it made them busy. As job structure design might have assumed proportional, to my observation this condition is upsetting because some are busy and dissatisfied with the job structure. Others are in favor of the variation in the organizational job structure and enjoying the leisure time because of their fewer loads compared with other staff members on parallel positions.

The second category focuses on the individual differences. Though no two men are alike, the individual difference in terms of background, qualification, experience, position and the like are causes for viewing things from different perspective and ultimately leads to a sort of disagreement.

The other reason stems from the management side. Though it is difficult to the office management to satisfy the interest of all its staff members, there are some issues that, if given due attention by the management, can make the smooth functioning of the organization possible. This is possible upon facilitating open discussion sessions and information exchange, searching for alternatives, examining differences, and treating all equally. For the continuous improvement of their administration, the management of education offices should handle complaints properly, with patience and understanding, and provide on time responses within an appropriate time frame. Complaints that are not handled properly have influence on the motivation and morale of the staff (Danku et al., 2015)

The fourth category focuses on the ways in which tasks are being accomplished in the office; such as stringency and unfairness observed in the organization. This is closely related to the management as well as employees' difference in their personalities; as these differences influence the way they react to the circumstances that exist in the organization.

With all the discontent mentioned, staff members fail to accomplish their duty efficiently. Moreover, the management should deal with employees' grievances regularly as the major causes for staff complaint identified can affect staff morale and resulted on poor performance of the education sector. Lower employee morale, frequently changing organizational structure, little education opportunity, and transfer or promotion related issues were mentioned as the causes for employee grievances.

Managing staff complaints properly creates good working environment in an office. Failing to address employees' complaints early in the workplace leads to dissatisfaction. If employees are dissatisfied in their work place, they lack interest and enthusiasm to their work; they impede the job; they become absent from work; they get stressed and thus show decline in their performance.

To build a satisfying work environment, the management of the office needs to be keen on handling the complaints from the staff. The management also needs to gather employees' feedback on each circumstance. Besides, the management ought to appreciate the employees for their effort. In any possible means, to deal with their financial difficulties, the management must promote

performance bonuses and promotions through compensation strategies. To enhance workplace relationships and work life balance, training and development opportunities need to be promoted in organizations.

Conclusions

An ample amount of time should be spent by the management to understand employee grievances. There may be a number of significant or insignificant factors which may cause grievances in an organization. This study intends to unpack the nature and reasons of staff complaints in the education office. Though there was formal complaint handling mechanism in the office; few staff members make use of the formal mechanism. According to the stipulated regulations, staff members present any grievance they have in written form to the staff grievance committee so that the committee deals on the issue. The main complaints witnessed in the education office include conflicts in relation to organizational structure, individual differences, and the management stringency and unfairness. With respect to office grievance handling procedure, almost all staff members in the education office had plenty of knowledge concerning the matter.

An effective complaint management system is an essential part of quality services. Fair and just treatment for all the staff members from the office management enhances mutual communication and acceptability among the staff. As a whole, the education office should refer to higher officials complaints that cannot be solved easily at office level but raised frequently by staff members so that all grievances can be addressed to the level expected.

Implications

- The office management should give priority in handling complaints that can rise from the staff members.
- Discussion sessions at office level should be prepared on a regular basis to allow staff members to discuss freely so as to make possible conducive working environment.
- Incentive system has to be established to encourage staff members accomplish their job actively.
- The office management together with stakeholders at town/district level should notify upper echelons (Regional Education Bureau) in relation to challenges they are facing because of the frequently changing office structure by regulation.

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