EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

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Section One

AC 1.1 Emerging approaches to employee voice and engagement

Employee voice refers to the ability of an employee to communicate their views in opinions with their employers and influence factors that may affect them at the workplace. employee voice can contributes to the building of trust and employment relationships, the facilitation of productivity and innovation, and the fostering of organizational improvement. Employees can feel valued when their voices are heard, which results in increased employee engagement. One of the emerging approaches to employee voice is the undertaking of surveys. Surveys can be practical ways for organizations to gain insight into employee likes and dislikes and their needs and demands that may affect their performance. Such surveys include pulse feedback, census surveys, joiner service and 360-degree feedback reviews. This method has the advantage of gaining honest and immediate feedback from employees and helping management understand organizational issues but it has the disadvantage of not ensuring results reflecting reality and making employees tired of too many surveys (Ge, 2020). Another emerging approach undertaken by organizations is the creation of online platforms for undertaking discussions related to work. These online platforms where employees can post suggestions, file complaints and share their ideas to that these can become valuable sources of information regarding issues they are facing at work and modifications they would like to see at the workplace. Workplace meetings are another approach that organizations can take to facilitate employee voice and engagement. These are positive channels for employees to voice their issues directly to management and can be a valuable tool for getting immediate feedback on worker issues through direct interaction. This process incorporates communication for easy assessment of problems and searching for solutions through discussions, preventing the escalation of situations.

AC 1.2 Difference between employee involvement and participation in building relationships

Employee involvement and participation might be referred to as two main forms of employee voice approach. Employee participation is where the employees participate in the decision-making process of their organization, either directly or through representatives. This is in contrast to employee involvement, where employees and management cooperate and work collectively, putting their ideas and talents together to accomplish tasks (Kao *et al.* 2021). The simple definitions of employee

involvement and participation reveal one of the main differences between the two in terms of the direct and indirect nature of these approaches. Employee involvement focuses on the individual employees and this is a process designed to produce committed workforces who are likely to contribute their skills and efforts to make sure the organizational objectives are accomplished and the business is run efficiently. Employee participation, in contrast, deals with the extent to which the employees are involved in the decision-making process of their organization, influencing the ways in which the organization is going to operate and make use of their knowledge and experiences to bring positive change. Employee participation can help build effective relationships at the workplace because it brings together the management and employees to share information and ideas to plan for organizational development and enhancement of the workplace conditions, so that better bonds are formed among them (Sifatu *et al.* 2020). Employee involvement can also contribute to the development of effective workplace relationships because it encourages employees to develop a collective voice, reflecting the views of the entire workforce and moving toward the achievement of a collective target that can strengthen the bond between them. The concepts of accepting each other, their ideas and talents and leveraging those for individual and collective benefits can improve the work environment and establish relationships at the workplace that are effective.

AC 1.3 Assessment of three employee voice tools and two approaches for driving employee engagement

One-on-one meetings

Features	Advantages	Disadvantages
These are meetings held at the workplace between a single employee and a single manager or organizational official where specific attention is given to their problems	- It helps organizations know their employees inside out - It facilitates managers develop a sound understanding of the employees and their work processes	- These tend to have 'talk and forget' outcomes - These take a lot of time and money

Additional: It drives employee engagement by helping facilitate discussions that let employees peak about their issues in a detailed manner (Song *et al.* 2022).

Social media communication		
Features	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
This is where social media platforms are used at work for communication, networking, collaboration and posting of important information	● It allows quicker and more efficient communication ● It can build strong work relationships	● It can decrease employee productivity ● It can damage employer brand

Additional: It drives employee engagement by providing an outlet for a healthy distraction from work.

Focus groups		
Features	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
This is where a group of individuals come together to discuss and provide feedback on specific workplace issues	- It gathers in-depth opinions and data - It offers real-time feedback	- There might be social bias - The cost and logistics are substantial

Additional: It drives employee engagement by encouraging the generation of new ideas to help in the decision-making process (Dutta *et al.* 2023).

Reverse mentoring

Features	Advantages	Disadvantages
This refers to the time when a senior leader of a company is mentored by a junior or younger employee, recognising their skill gaps and opportunities of development	- It empowers even younger employees to speak up - It encourages the sharing of diverse skills	- Senior team members may not believe younger mentors have anything valuable to share - Younger members of the organization might be disregarded because of their inexperience

Additional: It drives employee engagement by facilitating inclusivity in the workplace and showing that no knowledge is less valuable.

Employee engagement supporter networks		
Features	**Advantages**	**Disadvantages**
These are employee supporter networks created by organizations or the employees themselves for supporting their personal and career development	• These give employees a strong sense of connection and belonging to their workplace • These help employees connect with their teammates	• Employees might be engaged with their own issues instead of the organization's • People might be overwhelmed with their teammates' issues
Additional: It drives employee engagement by informing them about the customs, traditions and practices of their organization.		

AC 1.4 Critical evaluation of interrelationship between employee voice and organizational performance

The relationship between employee voice and organizational performance is multifaceted and quite complex. According to Wilkinson *et al.* (2020), employee voice is a critical component of employee engagement that can also have a significant impact on organizational performance. This is because employee voice can provide employees with opportunities of influencing their workplace conditions as well as contribute to the decision-making process. This results in the increase in their workplace engagement so that their performance at the workplace can also be enhanced. It has also been agreed upon by Cheng *et al.* (2022) that an organization that allows employees to voice their opinions and concerns can benefit from the new suggestions and ideas that they provide so that it can drive its own innovation and performance. This is because when they employees feel that they can share their ideas and opinions without any fear or repercussions and feel valued and appreciated, they are more likely

to continue to share their ideas, feel motivated, engaged and committed to their work. This could lead to higher levels of creativity, productivity and performance, with the generation of greater customer satisfaction, innovation and revenue collection. However, in order to effectively leverage the benefits of employee voice and engagement, organizations have to create inclusive and supportive workplace cultures that value employee inputs and provide meaningful opportunities for them to express themselves.

AC 1.5 Concept and design of better working lives

In order to explain the concept of better working lives, the concept of good work has to be explained. Good work is something that provides a supportive environment for individuals to work in, along with a means to securely make a living, developing knowledge and skills, the formation of constructive relationships, developing a career that gives a sense of fulfilment and positive health and well-being. Therefore, better working lives is all about providing workers with a fulfilling work life where they have job satisfaction, sufficient commitment and engagement, good career growth prospects and opportunities of achieving their individual performance potentials while also improving their personal and family lives (Abdullah *et al.* 2021). In order to create better working lives, and organization like Go Quest has to look at its employee experience, which has to be enhanced through career development opportunities, opportunities of improving employee work-life balance coaching, mentoring, and training, opportunities of facilitating positive and healthy workplace relationships, delegating better and achievable tasks and goals, engaging with their work and colleagues positively, building a meaningful sense of belonging and team spirit, filling their learning gaps and sharpening their skills, offering job security and financial stability, having them share a purpose and identity, supporting their career development and professional and personnel growth, offering better terms and conditions of employment that would support a balanced and healthy lifestyle, offering fair and equal pay, making the employees feel mentally and physically fit and fulfilled, celebrating their achievements and successes, investing time and resources in team building, helping employees manage stress and workload, providing necessary counselling and support, and undertaking other ways of promoting well-being amongst the employees.

Section Two

AC 2.1 Distinction between organizational conflict and misbehaviour and formal and informal conflicts

Conflicts are natural occurrences in organizations or anywhere people from different backgrounds, practices and beliefs are present and working in groups. Organizational conflicts occur because people have expectations from each other yet have differences in opinion and still have to stay together to accomplish a goal or task. These usually result in some form of positive change, but the course of achieving that is through temporary disruptions of work and these can be a source of displeasure and discontentment of people. Misbehaviour can be referred to as intentional behaviour or action taken by an individual in an organization, which includes cheating, debauchery, stealing, misleading of customers, harrowing others, damaging company property and engaging in any form of behaviour that is socially and ethically condemned and is against organizational policies (Li *et al.* 2022). Misbehaviour can be damaging to the company's reputation as well as the cause of harm to others and in terms of company expenses for repair or reimbursement and unlike organizational conflicts, these do not usually lead to any positive change at the workplace, rather the termination of employment. Conflicts can be carried out in primarily two ways, namely the formal and informal methods. In the formal method, the complainant files an official complaint but they cannot decide the outcome of the dispute as formal grievance-handling procedures are utilised with a neutral third party undertaking investigations and offering a verdict. In the informal method, the disputing parties can stay in control of the entire process of dispute resolution and can solve it among themselves through communication, negotiation and compromise without the need for filing official complaints.

AC 2.2 Distinction between official and unofficial employee action

When the employees in an organization undertake any action that has been authorised by a trade union they are members of, it is known as official employee action. When the employees in a company undertake actions that have not been authorised by a trade union or any such employee representative body, then it is known as unofficial employee action. A minimum level of protection is offered to employees when they take part in actions endorsed by their trade unions, so that their job security is guaranteed. In the case of unofficial employee action, the trade union can refuse to answer for the staff members and no protection is given to the employees taking part in such action, so that there might be threats to their employment (Mowbray *et al.* 2021). Official employee action is a more formal process where a ballot vote is taken where members of the union have to cast their votes determining the type of action that is to be undertaken in protest against the employer in question, and

unless a majority vote is achieved, the action cannot be deemed lawful. Unofficial employee action does not call for the fulfilment of any such balloting requirements as this is a more voluntary process where the employees themselves decide what action they should take against their employer. Official employee action is a more organised form of protest where legislative and social doctrines are followed, but unofficial employee action can be very disorganized and even violent, where legal or social rules are often abandoned. An example of an official employee action is a workers' strike, while an example of an unofficial employee action is a wildcat strike.

AC 2.3 Emerging trends in types of conflicts and industrial sanctions

Industrial conflicts refer to employment and employment relationship issues, disputes of personality, differences in opinion and general discontentment between employers and employees that could lead to the stoppage of work. There are many ways in which companies can overcome these conflicts, and one of them is industrial sanctions. One of the emerging trends in organizational conflicts is lunchtime demonstrations by employees as a form of civil disobedience. this form of protest is increasingly becoming more common as a tool for people to communicate their displeasure related to their workplace and demand change without actually wasting work hours (Nechanska *et al.* 2020). Many people hope to be heard and expect their ideas to be implemented, therefore they are willing to take action in the hopes of achieving positive results, even if that means they have to protest during their lunch hours. In terms of industrial sanctions, it is also seen that recent trends suggest trade unions are emphasizing professional growth and are collaborating with organizational management to further the needs and interests of the employees. Therefore, an emerging trend is trade unions creating platforms for employees to voice their protest in an organised manner instead of undertaking actions like mass-absenteeism or leaving their jobs for another.

AC 2.4 Distinction between conciliation, mediation and arbitration

Third-party conciliation is a way of solving disputes among parties by the appointment of a third entity that is employed by the parties involved in the conflict. The conciliator needs to be unbiased, not having any interest in the subject matter of the dispute so that their recommendation remains neutral and not in the interest of any single party. The conciliator then persuades them to have a mutual discussion and make a decision that is beneficial to both. Mediation is another dispute resolution process where a third person is involved to solve a dispute between two parties who require the assistance of the third party to undertake a negotiation process for the formation of an

agreement that can conclude the conflict. The decision taken by the mediator is not legally binding to the disputing parties since this is not a legal process, but the mediator simply tries to get the conflicting parties to communicate with each other and solve the problem among themselves (Kim *et al.* 2020). Arbitration refers to another means of solving disputes among parties where a third party or legal facilitator is involved so that they can take a decision on behalf of the disputing parties because they have failed to come to an agreement or arrive at a decision that is mutually beneficial. The arbitrator is a non-biased entity who holds significant power to offer a verdict on any method after taking into consideration the available evidence and this verdict is legally binding upon the conflicting parties. Conflicts solved through arbitration involve decisions that are taken in the interest of all parties, however, if one is dissatisfied with the outcome, they can appeal to higher courts.

AC 3.1 Principles of legislation relating to unfair dismissal law

Unfair dismissal law is under the legislation of the Employment Rights Act of 1996, which states that the special of an employee would be considered unfair if they have been terminated for being members of a trade union or other employee representative bodies, taking part in lawful industrial actions, making a request for flexible working, raising concerns or grievances at the workplace or any other substantial reason other than performance or behavioural issues. In this context, a capability or misconduct dismissal would be considered fair and legal, provided that the employer has followed legal protocols of termination such as providing adequate notice and severance payment before dismissal (Abdulgalimov *et al.* 2020). Capability dismissal is when an employee is dismissed from their job because they are underperforming or incapable of performing the tasks they had been hired for. Employers might give them a chance to prove they are capable of completing their duties, but dismiss them in case of failure. Conduct dismissal is when an employee is dismissed from their job because they are engaging in behaviour or conduct that is unacceptable according to societal norms or organizational policies, and might even land them in legal troubles. Employers might give them a warning in such cases, before dismissing them if the misconduct continues.

AC 3.2 Key causes of employee grievances

- ● *Wages-* If the employees are given unfair and inadequate wages it would cause them dissatisfaction and lead to them filing grievance cases.
- ● *Discrimination-* If the employees are discriminated against in their workplace, for any reason it would cause them grievance (Wilkinson *et al.* 2020).

- *Workload-* If unnecessary and extreme workload is put on employees, as a result of the assigning of too many tasks or working hours, then the employees would be aggrieved.

AC 3.3 Skills required for effective grievance and discipline-handling procedures

- *Communication skills-* This is an important skill for handling grievance and disciplinary issues at the workplace because it allows want to build relationships and trust so that information and feedback can be generated to help understand a situation better. Being a good communicator means listening to others and making others understand what one is saying, so that conflicts are effectively resolved.

- *Conflict resolution skills-* It is an essential skill for preventing or resolving disagreements among parties who are not able to resolve conflicts on their own (Shin *et al.* 2022). With good conflict resolution skills, one would be able to prevent situations from getting out of control but solve the issue effectively whether it has caused employees grievances or whether disciplinary action has to be taken due to the behaviour of employees.

- *Investigation skills-* This is a crucial skill for handling grievance and disciplinary cases at the workplace because such situations necessitate the undertaking of investigations to generate the truth and get to the root of matter before the corrective course of action can be determined. With good investigation skills one would be able to find evidence that could prove the validity or reliability of any decision taken.

AC 3.4 Importance of handling grievances effectively

The importance of handling employee grievances effectively lies in its ability to create an environment of trust, transparency and openness because it can provide organization members with a course of action that can help them voice their complaints and concerns without fear of retribution and resolve matters internally without recourse to an employment tribunal. A proper grievance-handling process can reduce the time and resources required by the HR Teams of an organization to resolve issues. It can reduce employee absenteeism and turnover by increasing employee job satisfaction through the addressal and proper resolution of the grievances they are facing at the workplace and improving their overall well-being (Almeida *et al.* 2020). It can also act as an outlet for employee discontentment, frustrations, and gripes that can make them de-stress and

focus better on their work, which could increase their commitment. And proper handling of employee grievances can improve the reputation of a company and protect it from legal troubles.

AC 4.1 Main provisions of collective employment law

Statutory recognition is one of the main provisions of collective employment law, which dictates that a trade union has to make an application to the Central Arbitration Committee (CAC) in order to be recognised to undertake collective bargaining. This application is made after the union has failed to agree to all the terms of voluntary recognition with the relevant employer. in order for an application to CAC being admissible, the trade union has to serve a copy of the correct application form as well as supporting documents on the employer, and CAC must check for at least 10% workers in a bargaining unit are members of that union and a majority of the workers of that bargaining unit are in favour of the union being recognised, before granting it statutory recognition (Kong *et al.* 2020). Disclosure of information is another provision of collective employment law, which dictates that whenever an employer is engaged in collective bargaining with a trade union, the employee has to disclose all relevant information to the trade union so that it is enabled to effectively engage in the process of collective bargaining. According to the code of practice of ACAS, this information would be in accordance with good industrial relations practice to disclose, but the code does not impose any legal obligation on an employer in disclosing any specific item of information. The process of statutory recognition and disclosure of information are governed by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act of 1992.

AC 4.2 Employee bodies, union and non-union forms of employee representation

Trade unions can be given as an example of a union form of employee representation which are formed voluntarily, representing its members and their interests exclusively. On the other hand, work councils can be given as an example of a non-union form of employee representation, which is formed by the members of a single company to represent themselves before organizational management in the bargaining and negotiation processes. The similarities between the two are that both are employee representative bodies more than one employee can be a part of and both these bodies serve the purpose of advocating the cause of workers. However, there are certain differences between the two (Potnuru *et al.* 2023). Trade unions are generally formed based on the industry rather than any specific companies that its members are a part of, while work councils represent the

workforce of a specific company where the work council has been formed. Trade unions can be defined as a formal body where the members have liberty of seeking help from a union representative to negotiate on behalf of them to their employers and voice their interests, choices and grievances on matters related to their employment and workplace. Work Councils have limited power in influencing decisions of the management of organizations and furthering the needs and interests of the employees because there is no unionised body to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment on behalf of the workers, but here the employees can voluntarily initiate communication with their employers.

AC 4.3 Purpose and process of collective bargaining

Collective bargaining can be referred to as a method of negotiation between an organization and its staff members, who are authorised by the officials, that has the purpose of determining mutually satisfying terms and conditions of employment that would safeguard the interests of both the employees and the management. According to the International Labour organization (ILO), collective bargaining is a fundamental right that all employees have and it helps in the elimination of working inequities while applying workers with employment security. This is a free procedure that results in the formation of a collective agreement determining the employment terms and conditions of a company and regulating disputes between employers and employees in that company. It usually deals with elements like salaries, terms of service, insurance, leave and holiday policies, flexible work schedule, and health and safety standards at the workplace, among other things (Morrison, 2023). How the process of collective bargaining works can be explained as follows:

- Firstly, the issues that require negotiation and worker demands are identified
- Next, negotiations are undertaken, which is continued to the point where an agreement is reached
- After a tentative agreement has been arrived at, it is checked whether it is acceptable to all concerned
- The agreement is then ratified
- Finally, the agreement is administered and implemented

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Section One

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