Do We Need To Train Our Managers in Handling Grievances?

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Abstract

Research on grievance management is burgeoning, and yet the understanding of its antecedents and consequences remains rather unclear. This research discusses styles in handling grievances among heads of department at a telecommunication company located in Peninsular Malaysia and the influence of training and experiences in selecting the appropriate grievance handling styles. This quantitative study is conducted to achieve two main objectives which are to investigate the styles that managers use in handling employees' grievances and to examine the influence of training and experience on grievance handling styles. Factor analysis has resulted that the styles in handling grievance used by respondents are integrating, compromising and dominating. In general, this study reveals that after attending training in grievance handling, managers will not utilizing integrating style due to this particular style demands a longer period to perform. Unfortunately, each grievance management stage has stated a specific time for resolution. Thus, integrating is not becoming their style of resolution. In contrast, they will significantly selecting compromising and dominating styles. Additionally, experience in handling grievance is significantly influence the usage of dominating style amongst managers. Finding from this study will help organizations to construct their training framework when especially training in grievance management and leadership.

Keywords: Grievance handling styles, grievance procedure, training and experience in handling grievance.

1. Introduction

A grievance is defined as a good faith complaint of one or a group of employees, or dissatisfaction between employees and management involving the work and working environment. The issue of grievance portrays employee's needs in their attempt to reach his job satisfaction. Grievance issue is normally related with terms and conditions of employment and other statutory provisions that stated in company's policy. Normally, an organization establishes a grievance procedure either in collective agreement or other company's statutory documents to give an avenue to the employee to file his or her dissatisfactions. The establishment of grievance procedure is in line with the principle of "due process" (Mante-Meija & Enid, 1991) which guarantees the application of justice in organization particularly in grievance resolution management. To resolve employee's grievances at the lowest level, supervisors play a vital role in grievance system as they are the nearest personnel who represent the management in managing subordinates.

Rose (2004), D'Cruz (1999), and Maimunah (2003) have indicated that establishing a machinery to resolve employee grievances and the role of supervisors are seen to be important in creating a harmonious working environment. Besides, the selection of appropriate style or combination of styles in handling grievances by managers will help in reaching a mutually and satisfactorily grievance resolution outcome (Rollinson, 2000). In line with the importance of supervisors' role in resolving employee's grievances, this study will examine styles that managers used in grievances resolution. To tailor managers with knowledge, skills and ability in selecting appropriate styles in handling grievances, training and experience are the best tools (Davy & Steward, 1992; Bemmels, 1994; Tjosvold & Morishima, 1999). Therefore, this study will also evaluate the influence of these variables on grievance handling styles selection.

2. Literature Review

Tension in labor relations is by no means a new phenomenon, but the methods for dealing with it should always be open for improvement and new ideas. In modern industrial organizations, the traditional interpersonal relationship between employer and employee is largely disappearing. The role of trade union becomes important in protecting employees' right. Nowadays, industrial relations involve more than negotiating a labor agreement (Mills, 1994; Wu, 1995). In fact, in the view of most management and union officials, the real test of effective industrial relations begins after the agreement is signed (Ayadurai, 1996). An important provision that is most beneficial in collective agreement is a procedure for resolving the inevitable employee's problem that arise from time to time (Green, 1987) for example grievance procedure.

Grievance is a matter raised by employee to express dissatisfaction that involves an individual's claiming that he or she has suffered from the actions or decisions made by the manager acting on behalf of the organization. A substantiated grievance is a signal that a manager's behavior was in error or manager has breach worker's right (Meyer, 1994). The grievance often arises because of lack of clarity in the explicit company's rules (Hook, et. al, 1996). In order for an employee's grievance to be considered as formal, it must be expressed in written to the employee's immediate supervisor through a formal grievance procedure; whether or not represented by union official.

Constructive grievance handling is largely depends on the ability of managers and supervisors to recognize, diagnose, and resolve the grievances before they become disputes. Ivancevich (2001) mentioned that supervisor should take every grievance seriously, work with the union representative, gather all information available on the grievance and after considering all the facts, provide an answer to the employee who filing the grievance.

The greatest opportunity for the settlement of a grievance lays at the lowest level, that is, the initial step of the procedure. In this level, normally, the supervisor will discuss with the aggrieved employee in resolving the grievance without any interference by the union. Tjosvold & Morishima (1999) and Rose (2004) suggested that supervisors must have ability and willingness to discuss the problem with the employee at the initial stage. Thus, supervisors must have knowledge, skill and ability to select appropriate styles according to the issue of grievance. Issues involving working environment need to be negotiated. Therefore, styles such as integrating, compromising and obliging may be used. On the contrary, issues involving legislative need autocratic resolution styles. Hence, dominating and obliging styles may be appropriate.

3. Grievance Handling Style

Styles in handling employee's conflicts may give an impact in industrial relation culture. A unitary organization is more centralize. As a result, avoidance and dominating styles may be utilized in resolving grievances. On the other hand, a pluralist organization which is more decentralizing may employ compromising, integrating or obliging styles when confronting with employee's grievances.

This study utilizes style in handling interpersonal conflict constructed by Rahim (1983) in its attempt to examine grievance handling styles. Rahim (1983) has suggested five different styles in handling conflict including integrating, obliging, compromising, dominating and avoiding. Integration style concerns with collaboration between parties to reach an acceptable solution (Rahim & Magner, 1995). This style refers to the ability of manager to work with his or her employee to find a solution that fully satisfies the concerns of both. In integrating style, each party will learn and explore the grievance from his as well as other's insight. The grievance resolution via this style will meet both parties' objective. Obliging styles involves low concern for self. An obliging person attempts to emphasize commonalities to satisfy the concern of the other party (Rahim & Magner, 1995). To Thomas and Kilmann (1974) individual performing obliging style neglects his or her own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person. In this style, managers might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's needs and prefer to yield another's point of view. In compromising, this style involves moderate concern for self as well as the other party involved in conflict. It is associated with give-and-take whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Compromising style also refers to splitting the difference, exchanging concessions or seeking a quick middle-ground position (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974). Dominating style involves high concern for self and low concern for the other party involved in the conflict. It has been identified with a win-lose orientation or with forcing behavior to win position (Rahim & Magner, 1995).

Thomas and Kilmann (1974) portrayed dominating style as power-oriented mode or competing style. A dominate manager always standing up with his or her rights, defending a position that his or her opinion is correct and simply trying to win. Avoiding style associated with low concern for self as well as for the other party involved in conflict. It has been associated with withdrawal, passing-the-buck, sidestepping or "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" situations (Rahim & Magner, 1995). Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation (Thomas & Kilmann, 1974).

4. The Importance of Training and Experiences in Handling Employees' Grievances

Training and experiences may guide managers to use the best style or styles in grievance resolution process. Mouton and Blake (1964) have referred training and experiences in selecting conflict resolution styles as "chance". "Chance" is defined as learning either through training or experience on the variety of managerial styles, in an attempt to integrate people to identify alternatives for conflict resolution (Blake & Mouton, 1964). Managerial styles in resolving grievances are not fixed. They are changing due to the uniqueness of employee's dissatisfaction issue. Through a necessary training, managers will have appropriate knowledge, skill and ability to select the most appropriate style to solve grievances reported to them.

The above statement portrays the role of training and experiences in educating managers to choose the effective styles in handling grievance. Training is one of the important functions in human resource management to serve supervisor with specific knowledge, skill and ability (Khulida Kirana, Abdul Rahim, Mohd Faizal, Zulkiflee, Johanim & Zurina, 2005). Grievance resolution training may serve knowledge and experiences to managers in preparing good attitudes towards choosing the right styles in managing grievances (Rothman, 1997; Wyman, 1971; Fisher, 1997b). Training in conflict resolution gives supervisors a new insight to the dynamics and nature of employees' grievances. Therefore, grievance management training is important to increase understanding on the particular conflict issues, give knowledge on grievance resolution, creating join ideas for peace-building activities with subordinates and build interpersonal relations among conflicting parties.

Selecting appropriate grievance handling styles are more effective when supervisors are trained (Bohlander & Snell, 2004; Bemmels & Resyef, 1991). This statement is parallel with Mondy and Noe (2005) and (Rose, 2004), as the authors mentioned that industrial relations problems can escalate when a supervisor is not equipped with better skill and knowledge to handle grievance at the initial step. If the supervisor fails to create a mutual grievance resolution, aggrieved employee will transform the grievance into dispute.

The conflict resolution training should include familiarization with the terms of the labor agreement (Lewin, 2001; Bemmels & Resyef, 1991; Coyle, 1994), the development of counseling skills to facilitate a problem-solving approach (Hill, 1982; Coyle, 1994), patience (Tan, 1995) and listening skills (D'Cruz, 1999). Coyle (1994) cited that conflict resolution training should concentrates on communications skills and negotiation strategy. In communication skills, supervisors must able to describe the situation of the conflict, the effects of conflict to work behavior and the management perception about these effects. When the conflict becomes complex, negotiation strategy must be applied. This strategy involves six steps; making sure that the needs of both parties are clearly understood, brainstorming together as many workable solutions as possible, evaluating the possible solutions in light of mutual needs, collaborating on a mutually acceptable solution, planning the implementation of solution actions, trying out the solution together, evaluating the solution results and gathering employee's feedback (Fisher, 1997a). McGrane, Wilson and Commack (2004) have exhibited that communication skill in dispute resolution is vital in grievance management. These skills include skill in scanning the workplace context, personal attributes, managing emotions, preparing for the one-to-one resolution, making an effective approach, maintaining people-oriented approach, problem-solving skill and concluding skill.

There were few types of training programs suggested by previous researchers in the area of grievance resolution. Shuford and Spencer (1999) have recommended the experiential training while Rothman (1997) suggested action-evaluation training. Action-evaluation training is similar to in-basket training or role play. Fisher (1997b) indicated that evaluating real cases allow the participants to learn what styles they want to use in resolving conflict and how to perform those styles. Now, problem-solving method is widely used in grievance management training as this style was based on negotiation amongst conflicting parties (Fisher, 1997a).

Problem-solving method serves a useful pre-negotiation function either with employee's representative or among the management negotiation team (Hills, 1982). Training in grievance handling must addresses how to promote peace, deliver knowledge on terms and conditions of employment, supporting justice and equality, develop creativity, utilizing experiences in grievance handling, managing political intrusion either from top management or union, how to use collaborative approach in grievance resolution and creates environment that enhances the transfer of training. In order to indicate an effective training program, training evaluation is a vital mechanism (Kirkpatrick, 1994). Kirkpatrick (1994) has established four level of training evaluation, namely, reaction, learning, behavior and results. Evaluation in reaction level measures how those who participate in the training program react to it. Learning can be defined as the extent to which participants change attitude, improve knowledge and increase skill as a result of attending the training program. The third level, behavior, can be defined as the extent to which change in behavior has occurred because the participant attended the training program. Finally, result can be defined as the final results that occurred because the participants attended the program.

Besides gathering knowledge and skills through training program, supervisors may also gain education from their experiences. According to Shuford and Spencer (1999), human responses to conflict are learned from their job experiences. They added, new behaviors are best learned with experiences. In Kolb's learning style, experiential learning consist an intuitive preference for learning through direct experience, emphasizing interpersonal relations and feeling as opposed to thinking (Harris & DeSimone, 1994). Experience in handling grievances may helps supervisors in managing employees' grievances effectively. Because each of the employees' dissatisfactions have its own uniqueness, by using experiences in handling previous cases, supervisors will more confident in selecting the better strategies in resolving those dissatisfactions with just, equal and ethics.

From the discussion above it is concluded that skills and abilities in managing grievance are important in creating satisfaction among the employees which direct to harmonious working environment. Besides patience and listening skills, supervisor must have a good knowledge on employment contract, terms and conditions of employment as well as employment acts. Training and experiences are seen as vehicles to drive supervisors to gather the appropriate skills to choose the right styles in managing grievances.

There are no study being performed in investigating the effect of training and experiences on grievance handling styles, especially in unionize organization. Hence, this study tends to examine the effect of training as well as experiences in grievance management on grievance handling styles selection.

5. Research Methodology

The objective of this study is to investigate the effect of training and experience on the selection of appropriate grievance handling styles. Based on the objective, this research is categorized as causal type of research and classified as a correlational research. Zikmund (2003) defined causal research as a research conducted to identify cause -and-effect relationships among variables when the research problem has already been narrowly defined. According to Gay and Diehl (1996), correlation research is a research to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables.

Population of the study involved managers at a telecommunication company in Peninsular Malaysia who have experiences in handling their subordinates' grievances. In determining samples of the study, this study employed disproportionate stratified random sampling as sampling framework. The researcher first indicated sampling frame and followed by stratification of samples. Once the stratified samples have been determined, random sampling procedure was employed to identify the respondents. This study involved 150 heads of department who had experiences in handling their subordinates' grievances. All respondents have been trained in grievance resolution.

6. Research Instrument
6.1 Grievance Handling Styles

This study utilized Rahim's (1983) styles in handling interpersonal conflict i.e. integrating, compromising, dominating, obliging and avoiding to measure styles in handling grievances. Rahim and Magner (1995) have constructed Rahim's Organizational Conflict Index (ROCI-II), the instrument used to measure five styles in handling interpersonal conflict.

This instrument is considered as the best-known questionnaires that can be used to describe the five styles in handling interpersonal conflict (Munduate, et al., 1999). The test-retest reliability of ROCI-11 ranged between .60 and .83 at $p <.0001$ (Rahim & Magner, 1995). These values showed that the internal consistency or the reliability of the instrument was satisfactory.

6.2 Grievance Handling Training

This research evaluated the effect of grievance management training on the selecting styles in handling subordinate's grievances. The absence of systematic instrument in measuring the effect of training has been indicated by Rothman (1997) in his study on action evaluation in conflict resolution training. Parallel with this statement, Ogonor (2003) has adapted training evaluation instrument published in Training the Trainers Manual in Conflict resolution as the instrumentation to measure the impact of training on the conflict resolution abilities. Therefore, this present research utilized the supervisory training evaluation constructed by Kirkpatrick (1994) to determine the impact of supervisory training program on shaping respondents' skills and ability in selecting appropriate grievance handling styles. There are seven items constructed by Kirkpatrick (1994) in measuring supervisor's behavior and results towards grievance handling.

6.3 Experiences in Handling Grievances

In this research, measurement for grievance handling experience was constructed through items that have been used in previous studies. Items that representing experiences including length of service (Rollinson, 2000), length of time in present job (Rollinson, 2000), total of grievances handled by managers (Hook, et. al, 1996 and Rollinson , et. al, 1996) and total of grievances settled at their stage (Hook, et. al, 1996 and Rollinson , et. al, 1996). These items are clustered as ratio data.

7. *Data Analysis*

7.1 Respondents' Profile

From the total of 150 respondents, 65.7% were male while 34.3% were female.

7.2 Factor Analysis

Results from factor analysis as indicated in table1showed that only three grievance handling styles were reliable to be studied for further analyses. Those styles were integrating, compromising and dominating styles.

Rotated component matrix as exhibited by table 1 has generated 2 components for training. Factor 1 comprised by items including "*I frequently refer to provisions in contract of employment and collective agreement when confronting with my subordinate's grievances*", "*I always settle my subordinate's grievances*" and "*I have been able to satisfy my subordinate's complaints before they reach the grievance stage*" which were representing behavioral change while items in factor 2 which include "*There has been a change on number of grievances in my department*" and "*The degree of seriousness of grievance cases in my department has change*" describing training result.

Table 1 : Overall Results From Factor Analysis

Variable	KMO Value	Bartlett's test of Sphericity (sig)	Eigenvalue	Cumulative Eigenvalue %	Reliability Test (α)
Grievance Handling Styles a. Integrating b. Dominating c. Compromising	.819	0.00	5.455 2.073 1.372	41.958 57.904 68.456	.926 .827 .858
Training a. Behavioral Change **b.** Grievance Training Result	.718	0.00	2.656 1.111	53.114 76.324	.730 .831

7.3 Hypotheses of the Research

The hypotheses for this research are as follow:

    H1: Grievance handling training is significantly influences grievance handling styles.
    H2: Experience in handling grievances is significantly influences grievance handling styles.

8. Findings and Discussion

8.1 Styles of Handling Grievances among Managers

Descriptive analyses were carried out to identify the most preferable grievance handling styles among managers. The mean values for the three grievance handling styles performed by respondents are shown in table 2.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviation for Integrating, Dominating and Compromising Handling Styles

	Integrating Style	Dominating Style	Compromising Style
Mean	3.4005	2.4279	3.1194
Standard deviation	0.43331	0.51559	0.62173

In general, respondents preferred some styles over others. The respondents reported that integrating style was the first preference when confronting with the aggrieved party. Compromising and dominating styles became second and third preference. This result showed that in handling grievances, besides considering their views and thought, managers also taking into account their subordinates views and opinion.

8.2 The Relationship between Grievance Handling Training and Styles of Handling Grievances.

Managers in understudied organization were trained to handle their subordinates' grievances through supervisory training and management training. Table 3 shows that 73.1% of heads of department have been trained in grievance handling. This total showed that majority of respondents were tailored with knowledge, skill and ability in grievance resolution. The remaining 26.9% of respondents were untrained on grievance handling specifically.

Table 3: Total of Respondents Attended Grievance Handling Training

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	73.1
No	18	26.9
Total	**67**	**100.0**

Table 4 shows that training program in handling grievances brings higher impact on behavioral change compared to training result. It is shown by Table 4 where mean for behavioral change is higher than training result.

Table 4: Mean Values for Behavioral Change and Training Result

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Behavioral Change	3.1493	.38175
Training Result	2.9627	.52450

The correlation between these dimensions with grievance handling style is presented by table 5. As shown in table 5, behavioral change was positively and significantly correlated with integration, dominating and compromising styles. Relationships between behavioral change and integrating; and behavioral change and compromising were recorded as strong with r values were .569 and .550 respectively. Relationship between behavioral change and dominating style was moderate. For training result, only its relationship with compromising was positively significant. This relationship was considered as moderate as its r value was .325. The relationship between training result and other grievance handling styles were not significant and weak.

Table 5: Correlation Results between Training and Grievance Handling Styles

	Behavioral Change	**Training Result**
Integration Style	.569(**)	.122
Dominating Style	.323(**)	.150
Compromising Style	.550(**)	.325(**)

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Correlation analysis of this study has resulted that behavioral change was significantly correlated with integrating, dominating and compromising styles. As mentioned, training is an activity to teach managers to select appropriate style to handle grievances. Training was important in performing dominating style to give knowledge to managers on company's policies and regulations with a little background information on the system for administering and promoting personnel. Because of in performing dominating style, no discussion will be conducted with aggrieved employee. This particular style not considered views and opinions from others. Therefore, knowledge regarding company's policy and employees' terms and conditions of employment is needed to produce a fair grievance resolution result. In performing compromising style, training was important to equip managers with knowledge on the organization's statutory provisions including company's policy and collective agreement. Training is also important to give managers skills in formal and informal communication. This is due to managers who applying compromising style tended to resolve grievances by seeking middle position through referring to company's rules, regulations, norms and terms and conditions of employment. In addition, managers who performed compromising style also used formal and informal communication to reach for mutual resolution outcome.

In implementing integrating grievance handling style, managers relied on facts and information collected from aggrieved employee and statutory documents published by the company. This is because in integrating style managers tended to use win-win approach where aggrieved employee will satisfy with grievance resolution result and the company will receive benefit in reducing conflicts in organization. In using integrating style as a style for grievance resolution, employees' participation was essential in order to get as much valuable facts as possible from the employees' point of view on grievance issue. Therefore, training was vital in integration style of handling grievance to reinforce managers to work in a team and gave them knowledge to integrate team participation activities to company's development. These discussions showed the plausible explanation regarding the relationship between behavioral change and grievance handling styles.

Result from correlation analysis also exhibited that training result was correlated significantly with compromising style. This result implied that the grievance rate will be reduced when managers applying compromising style in handling grievance. This is because in implementing compromising style, managers used give-and-take approach. As defined by Rahim (1983) and Mouton and Blake (1964) managers who utilizing compromising style always search for a middle ground in grievance resolution. They will resolved grievances referred to them by examining information gathered from company's statutory provisions and point of views from aggrieved employee. Managers who applied compromising style always seek for majority agreement in their attempt to construct grievance resolution outcome. These activities will make aggrieved employees satisfied with grievance resolution result and as a result it will solve their dissatisfaction. Therefore, the grievance rate will reduce.

8.3 Relationship between Experiences in Handling Grievances and Styles of Handling Grievances.

Table 6 exhibits correlation analysis between experiences and grievance handling styles. This table reveals that experience in handling grievances is only significantly correlated with dominating style and the relationship is categorized as moderate ($r = .335$). This result exhibits that the more managers handling their employees' grievances; the more significant they utilize dominating style.

Table 6: Correlation Results between Grievance Handling Experiences and Grievance Handling Styles

	lexperience
Integration Style	.167
Dominating Style	.335(**)
Compromising Style	-.035

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

This study has exhibited that experience in handling was positively and significantly related to dominating grievance handling style. This relationship showed that the more experienced the manager in handling grievances, the more possibility he selected dominating grievance handling style. Normally when managers have experiences in handling grievances, they will know what style that appropriately be selected to resolve a particular grievance. Generally, if issue of the grievance involved work and working environment, integrating or compromising grievance handling style may be used. On the other hand, dominating grievance handling style will be used to resolve dissatisfactions regarding legislative issues. In addition managers may dominantly use to employ results from previous cases to resolve present grievances. Usually results from previous cases were mutually accepted by employees.

8.4 The Influence of Grievance Handling Training on the Selection of Grievance Handling Styles

To examine the influence of training on grievance handling style, regression analysis was performed. Table 7 showed that training result was the significant predictor for integrating style but the direction of the influential was negative. This result has indicated that when managers performed integrating style, the resolved grievance rate will decline. Follow are the possible explanations to explain the influential of training result on integrating style.

Table 7: Coefficients Table for Integrating Style

	Standardized Beta
Behavior_Change	0.138
Training_Result	-0.303*
Lexperience	0.154

* p<0.05
a. Dependent Variable: Integrating_Style

It was common in training session particularly in conflict handling management, managers were urged to use integrative approach or win-win situation to reach satisfactorily result. They were trained to conduct open discussion with employees so that the participation concept can be implemented in grievance negotiation. In managing grievances, open discussion is encouraged to gather views and opinions from aggrieved employees regarding grievance issue as well as conveying information regarding company's policy and terms and conditions of employment to the employees. However, in understudied organization, managers were responsible to solve any grievance referred to them within seven working days. Unfortunately, resolving grievances via integrating style needs longer time as open discussion is performed. Besides, in handling grievances through open discussion, good information and facts are hard to collect. This is because aggrieved employee always gave information so that he can get what he wants, although the information may be not true. Therefore, in implementing open discussion, managers need to filter and eliminate junk information. Hence, many grievances will be left unresolved within seven working days if managers choose to perform integrating style.

The negative influence of training result on integrating grievance handling style in this study has supported findings from previous studies on conflict resolution. Stevahn (2004) has indicated that integrating style in conflict resolution was not easy to implement. He coded that integrative negotiation was always been encouraged in training session for conflict resolution. Nonetheless he found that even though training participants scored significantly higher on classroom achievement through tests that designed to assess their knowledge and conceptual understanding on integrating style, unfortunately they fail to use this style to resolve conflict promptly or necessary in real cases. Ogonor (2003) has exhibited that after training session, only fifty percent of respondents able to sustain integrative conflict resolution in real conflict handling. It was observed that trainees only excited in resolving conflict base on simulation cases. When it comes to reality, the level of mastery in integrative negotiation process fell short of the expectation of the trainees. Both studies have investigated the impact of supervisory training in enhancing managers' knowledge, skill and abilities to select appropriate conflict handling style which is similar with this present study. Therefore, finding in this study has supported the fact that integrating handling style activities needed a longer period of resolution and not practical to resolve grievances at initial stage.

In this study it was also found that behavioral change through grievance handling training was significantly influenced the dominating grievance handling style. This result has implied that in grievance handling especially on issues that related with company's statutory provisions, managers at the organization have utilized their legislative knowledge gathered from training to perform dominating style to reach a fair and mutual grievance resolution result. Therefore, in resolving issues regarding legislative, they will make a decision by referring to statutory documents for instance company's policy, collective agreement and employment acts. Employees will mutually accepted results from dominating grievance style as along as managers used appropriate statutory provisions as the reference in grievance resolution process. Rahim (1983) suggested that in dominating conflict handling style, managers not considered views and opinions from subordinates. This is because, normally subordinates were less knowledge on company' rules and regulation and terms and conditions of employment. If discussion was conducted on issues that were beyond employees' knowledge, a longer time period has to be spent to reach mutual grievance solution. They needed time to organize their intelligent efforts to resolve problems that arise. Hence, in resolving legislative grievances, managers will refer to lawsuits to decide a fair result. Thus, training is an avenue to expose managers to company's legislative provisions.

Furthermore, managers performed dominating grievance handling style when they saw that the structure of established authority will be weakening if they do not dominantly manage the problem. This is because employees always rely on their manager's authority and knowledge to resolve their dissatisfactions. If the manager cannot resolve the grievance fairly and satisfactorily, employees will refer their grievance to conciliation process as stated by Section 18(1) Industrial Relations Act 1967 of Malaysia. Therefore, through training managers will be exposed with appropriate knowledge to handle grievances especially regarding legislative issue. With these knowledge managers will be able settling employees' grievances and maintaining their status and authority.

The influence of training on the utilization of dominating style was in line with study conducted by Fisher (1997b). Even though Fisher's (1997b) study has examined styles that have been performed in solving conflict in political environment, these styles were similar with the styles performed by managers in grievance resolution process. In his study on conflict resolution training on international scene, Fisher (1997b) has found that dominating style was used by law makers in resolving legislative issues. Resolving legislative issues through dominating style may reflect the leadership capability. Therefore it supported the finding in this present study where managers used dominating style on issues regarding company's policy and employment regulations in order to avoid employees to perceive that their managers were incapable to resolve grievances. This perception will jeopardize heads' of department status and authority. The usage of dominating style may reflect heads' of department capability base on their authority and status in resolving grievances on statutory issues in order to gain respect from subordinates (Fisher, 1997b). If the managers fail to get respects from their employees in resolving grievances involving lawsuits, the employees may transform their grievance into dispute by referring their dissatisfactions to Industrial Relations Department, Ministry of Human Resource under Section 18(1) Industrial Relations Act 1967 of Malaysia.

Besides influencing dominating style, behavioral change was also significantly influenced the selection of compromising style in handling grievance (refer table 8). In performing compromising style, managers always search for middle ground because they were moderately concerned for their aggrieved subordinates and for themselves. Therefore, in handling grievances, managers who used compromising style tended to seek majority consensus on grievance resolution result. Majority consensus is important to maintain fairness on grievance resolution outcome. To reach this outcome, viable information on grievance issues were vital to evaluate facts for constructing grievance resolution alternatives. In performing compromising style managers used formal and informal communication to convey company's rules and regulation, terms and conditions of employment, precedent cases and company's tradition. These channels of communication were also used to collect information from aggrieved employees. The statutory references and information from aggrieved employees were referred to justify the result that they decided in grievance resolution. This result will be communicated to aggrieved employee for mutual agreement purposes as this particular style always seeks for majority consensus.

Table 8: Coefficients Table for Compromising Style

	Standardized Beta
Behavior_Change	.234*
Training_Result	-.096
Lexperience	-.026

* p<0.05
a. Dependent Variable: Compromising_Style

Training was given to managers who performed compromising style in handling conflict to teach them on company's tradition and policies so that they will be more knowledgeable on company's policy and collective agreement. Managers will probably using this knowledge to resolve any problem arise. Besides giving knowledge on statutory provisions, training was also a tool to expose to managers to formal and informal communication skill. These skills were important to convey information as well as collecting employees' arguments that related to grievance issue. Employees will satisfy with the result from grievance resolution process that considered their point of views. Therefore, training is an important tool to give knowledge on company's statutory provisions as well as communication skills and abilities to managers so that they can perform compromising style in handling grievances. Thus, in this research has found that behavioral change was a significant predictor to compromising style in handling grievances. This result has supported conclusion made by Hornik and Tupchiy (2006) in their study on the impact of culture on training. They have concluded that collectivism culture, a culture that believes with merging with in-groups (compromise) was positively associated with learning outcome. Ogonor (2003) has exhibited that there were significant differences before and after conflict resolution training.

Before training, respondents were less forgiving, willingness to take responsibility, listen to opponents' views and render services to opponents. However, after attending training on conflict resolution, the respondents were more compromising in handling conflict. They showed their willingness to utilize the critical core skills of trust for opponents, maintaining their integrity and commitment, forgiveness, taking responsibility for action toward the opponents, viewing issues from opponents' point of views and willing to offer services to opponents. Therefore, previous studies have also exhibited that managers were more compromising after they attending conflict resolution training. With the discussion on the effect of training result and behavioral change on grievance handling style, this study has reached its objective to examine the influence of training on grievance handling style.

8.5 The Influence of Grievance Handling Experiences on the Selection of Grievance Handling Styles

Parallel with the finding in correlation analysis, this study has exhibited that experience in handling grievance was found as significantly associated with the selection of dominating style (refer table 9). Two situations can be illustrated to show this relationship. Firstly, managers may handle grievances that caused by variety of issues. Some of the issues may have been happen before. Therefore, if managers found that issues in the present grievance were similar with cases that have been happen before, they will refer to precedent results in their attempt to resolve grievances. Secondly, most of the grievance issues in the organization were related to rules and regulation and terms and conditions of employment. This type of grievance will be either settled by managers according to employment lawsuits or refer to the higher stage in grievance procedure. As revealed in previous sections, if issues of grievances were involving legal aspects, dominating grievance handling style will be used. Managers will refer to company's rules and regulations, terms and conditions of employment or suitable statutory references. Discussion with aggrieved employees on legislative issues may direct to lawsuits violation because employees always wanted managers to be lenient which may direct the managers breaching several company's legislative provisions.

Table 9: Coefficients Table for Dominating Style

	Standardized Beta
Behavior_Change	.322*
Training_Result	-.159
Lexperience	.183*

* p<0.05
a. Dependent Variable: Dominating_Style

The significant influence of experience on dominating grievance handling style resulted in this study has supported finding by Shuford and Spencer (1999) and Knight (1986). Shuford and Spencer (1999) have evaluated the outcome of experiential conflict resolution training involving staffs from Philadelphia Prison. They found that 84% of the trainees tended to use their experiences resolving problems with their co-worker, superior and family in their attempt to resolve workplace conflict. Shuford and Spencer (1999) also concluded that learning through experience was more effective as they mentioned that human responses to conflict are "learned from life experience". Knight (1986) has found that reference on previous grievance settlement influenced managers' grievance resolution behavior. He added issues of grievances that were frequently referred to previous grievance settlements were issues related to rules and regulation for example discipline, subcontracting and layoff. Knight (1986) has concluded that in grievance resolution, supervisor might simply use previous grievance settlement as a means of dismissing dissatisfactions rather than treating them.

Therefore, in settling grievances involving legislative issues or issues that similar with previous cases, managers may used their experiences and applying dominating grievance handling style in grievance resolution process. Hence, this study has reached its objective to evaluate the influence of experience on grievance handling style.

9. Conclusion

This study has revealed that training result was the significant predictors for the integrating grievance handling style. In training session, integrating grievance handling style was always being encouraged to managers to be performed in handling grievances. They were exposed with employees' participation concept and how to conduct effective grievance discussion. In integrative grievance resolution training, managers were taught on how to implement brain storming, generating alternatives by evaluating valuable information and performing effective grievance negotiation. Even though activities involved in integrative grievance handling were good in order to reach fair, satisfied and mutual grievance resolution outcome because it considered views and opinions from aggrieved employee , however these activities were difficult to practice and need some times to execute. Therefore, in order to resolve grievances within times limit given in the grievance procedure, managers will not execute integrating grievance handling style.

Besides integrating style, dominating style was another style employed in grievance handling among managers. Normally, dominating style was performed to handle issues of grievance involving company's rules and regulations and terms and conditions of employment. In dominating style, managers have decided the grievance resolution result without discussing with aggrieved employee or union representative. Communication between head of department and aggrieved employees only occurred to convey information and facts regarding company's policy and collective agreement. This is due to this particular style was highly concerned for self and low concerned for other. Hence, views and opinions from employees were not considered in deciding grievance resolution outcome. From multiple regression analysis result, it was revealed that in the understudied organization, behavioral change and experiences in handling grievances influenced the dominating grievance handling style among managers.

As mentioned, issues of grievance may involve company's policy and terms and conditions of employment. Managers performed dominating style to solve grievances regarding these issues because by referring to documented statutory provisions, decision made through dominating style was seen as fair and ethical. As indicated by Blake and Mouton (1964), training for dominating grievance handling style was conducted to expose to managers on provisions included in company's policy and collective agreement. Therefore, managers enriched their knowledge on company's policy and terms and conditions of employment through training to help them to make a fair grievance resolution outcome. Hence, result from multiple regression analysis showed that behavioral change from training was a significant predictor for dominating grievance handling style.

Besides training, managers tended to refer to their experiences in handling grievances to solve grievances referred to them. To grievances that involved legal issues, they will refer to company's policy and collective agreement. In addition, if the symptom or the situation of the present grievance was similar with the precedent case or previous case, managers will use dominating style and followed this result as the result for grievance in-hand. Usually, results from previous cases were accepted as fair and well received by employees. Hence, as presented by multiple regression analysis result, experience in handling grievances was a significant predictor to dominating style.

Training session can enhance heads' of department abilities to convey information regarding company's rules and regulations, terms and conditions of employment and result from precedent cases if the situation and symptom of the present grievance was similar with previous cases. When managers can tolerate with aggrieved employee in grievance discussion and served the aggrieved employee with validated facts and information, result decided from grievance resolution will be seen as fair and ethical. Therefore, behavioral change after training session was significantly influenced compromising grievance handling style.

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