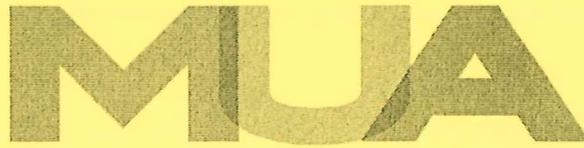


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POSTGRADUATE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS  
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP  
DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

HCO 504: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

DATE: 21<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2022

DURATION: 3 HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 60

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write your registration number on the answer booklet.
2. **DO NOT** write on this question paper.
3. This paper contains **FOUR** questions.
4. Question **ONE** is compulsory.
5. Answer any other **TWO** questions.
6. Question **ONE** carries **30 MARKS** and the rest carry **15 MARKS** each.
7. Write all your answers in the Examination answer booklet provided.

## QUESTION ONE

Read the Case Study below carefully and answer the questions that follow:

### TEAM WORKING

On Monday afternoon, a member of the organization's newly established Incident Response Team was visited by a supervisor who wanted to discuss a situation in his section. The Friday before he had been walking to his car after work and noticed a group of employees congregating under a tree on the premises. They were obviously enjoying a few beers and were grilling meat on a small charcoal barbecue. They called him over and he accepted one of the offered beers and took a seat in the shade.

About an hour later, two of the workers began to horse around and show off their boxing skills. One employee misjudged his aim and, instead of merely coming close, actually made contact and bloodied the other worker's nose. The injured worker swore and started throwing blows as if intending to cause harm. The two were pulled apart and everyone told them to cool down. The gathering continued and during the banter back and forth the bloodied employee had commented, "You're lucky they pulled me off, or I'd have kicked your butt." Everyone laughed.

This morning at work, the supervisor had heard the workers teasing that employee about being "beaten up." This seemed to be taken in good humor at first, but one of the men kept laughing about it and telling all the employees who had missed the fun about what had happened. Over a few hours a number of the other employees had told him to "drop it already," but he seemed unwilling to do so. The supervisor noticed the butt of the jokes seeming to get more and more sullen about the ribbing. One of the other employees came up to the supervisor and warned him that if he didn't do something there might be trouble.

The supervisor talked to the harasser and told him to knock it off, which ended the teasing. The other employees seemed to appreciate the intervention. The supervisor mentioned the situation while having lunch with the Human Resources Manager. He

was surprised when the Human Resources Manager said that the "I'd have kicked your butt" comment on the prior Friday was a violation of the company policy against verbal threats and that he wanted the employee fired under the "Zero Tolerance" clause of the workplace violence policy.

The supervisor felt that this was ridiculous and wanted the Incident Response Team to decide what should be done.

The Incident Response Team met and considered the situation. Some members argued that "Zero Tolerance" required firing of both the employees whose horseplay had gone too far. Others argued that the situation simply had been a brief spate of alcohol-fueled temper that had resolved itself before the gathering had broken up.

There was also a lot of debate over the supervisor allowing the employees to drink on the premises after work, as well as his own participation in the drinking. The legal advisor to the team said that any threat, no matter how unlikely to be carried out, should result in firing. Otherwise, the managers involved might be personally liable if the situation ever developed into violence.

The discussion also involved the conduct of the worker who could not let up teasing on Monday. The team also considered that the "boxing" itself possibly violated the company's rule against horseplay. The Industrial Relations member of the Incident Response Team said that, due to the after-hours nature of the activity, and the fact that a supervisor had failed to prevent the horseplay, there would be no way any discipline would go uncontested by the union.

After listening to all views, the organization's senior executive separately called in the two employees from the Friday incident. They were both surprised that anyone would think that the words spoken could have been mistaken for anything but good-natured ribbing. Both said that they continued to have a good relationship and thought the whole matter overblown. They also agreed that the employee who kept bringing up the incident on Monday was a loudmouth whom no one took seriously, and that the supervisor's verbal correction had been all that was necessary.

It was decided that the entire section would be retrained on the company house rules relating to remaining after hours on premises, and the alcohol and horseplay prohibitions. The supervisor met with senior managers who pointed out how his lack of proper supervision had set the stage for what could have become a major liability for the company, either through fistfights or vehicle accidents arising from employees being allowed to drink on premises before driving home. He acknowledged his failures and accepted the written reprimand without dispute.

The employee who had made the "kicked your butt" comment was verbally counseled that such comments, even in jest to friends, could be misconstrued by others and cause concern.

The employee who had taunted his coworker on Monday, was counseled to consider how his words could have been irritating to everyone he worked with. He apologized and said he would not do it again.

**Required**

- a) Will "Zero Tolerance" in this organization require firing of all violators of the workplace violence or safe workplace policy? Explain (6 Marks)
- b) Are the supervisors properly enforcing work rules in order to prevent situations conducive to potential violence or other injury? Discuss (6 Marks)
- c) Assess if the Incident Response Team consist of diverse disciplines and perspectives to allow for all aspects of situations to be addressed. (6 Marks)
- d) Does the team have a single leader who can listen to conflicting views of members and make decisions as to what course of action to take in the absence of consensus? Explain (6 Marks)
- e) Examine the measures that the management of this organization can put in place in order to improve industrial and employee relations. (6 Marks)

**QUESTION TWO**

- a) Highlight the benefits of green management in Kenya (6 Marks)
- b) Discuss the three main parties involved in employer-employee relations in Kenya (9 Marks)

**QUESTION THREE**

- a) Illustrate the stages in the process of negotiation (9 Marks)
- b) Examine the influence of technological developments on the context of employment relations (6 Marks)

**QUESTION FOUR**

- a) Examine the strategies that you would use to ensure a healthy employee relationship in your organization. (9 Marks)
- b) Evaluate the aims and objectives of collective bargaining (6 Marks)

