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THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: CONSEQUENCES, POSSIBILITIES, DIFFICULTIES, AND FUTURE ORGANISATIONAL PATHS

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Abstract

All organisations have been profoundly shaken by the COVID-19, which has made things difficult and complex for managers and human resource management (HRM) professionals. These professionals must come up with creative solutions to keep their businesses running smoothly and assist their staff in overcoming this unprecedented crisis.

There are few studies discussing how this crisis has affected HRM. This analysis of the general literature attempts to extend the reach of management research by examining the COVID-19's effects on human resource management. It highlights the primary difficulties and chances brought about by this new pandemic and provides managers and HRM professionals with

information on potential future organisational paths that may result from these opportunities.

Keywords: *remote work, work from home, COVID-19, crises, Human Resource Management (HRM).*

JEL Classification: J81, J88, M12, M54, I18, O33

Introduction

The world has been rocked by the unprecedented COVID-19 health catastrophe, which has caused widespread dread and anxiety. It has had a significant effect on workers, organisations, society, and economies. The outbreak of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, marked the beginning of this crisis. The virus spread quickly, and on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organisation declared a global pandemic (WHO, 2020).

These nations have put in place a number of non-pharmaceutical measures, like social separation, in an effort to slow the COVID-19 virus's rapid spread. People were placed under quarantine, lockdown procedures were implemented, schools, colleges, non-essential companies, and non-governmental organisations were temporarily closed, travel was restricted, flights were cancelled, and social gatherings and large public gatherings were outlawed (Brodeur, Grey, Islam, & Bhuiyan, 2020; Gourinchas, 2020).

In addition to these steps, the COVID-19 pandemic had caused a notable slowdown in global economic activity (Brodeur et al., 2020; Gourinchas, 2020), which had resulted in furloughs and layoffs (World Economic Forum, 2020), raising the unemployment rate in numerous nations. According to Kretchmer (2020), "The current G7 jobless totals vary widely, from 30 million in the United States to 1.76 million in Japan." Gourinchas (2020) claims that COVID-19 has created a situation in which 50 percent or more of the workforce may not be able to work in the near future.

In an attempt to recover from the economic shock, businesses have begun to reopen in the midst of the pandemic (Major & Machin, 2020) under extraordinary rules and a new functioning that involves physical distancing in the workplace (Shaw, Main, Findley, Collie, Kristman, & Gross, 2020) and whose end is unpredictable. As a result, it is clear that this pandemic has created a complex and demanding environment for managers and human resource management (HRM)

professionals, who must come up with creative solutions to maintain their business's operations and assist staff members in overcoming the difficulties of this extraordinary circumstance.

There are not many studies on the effects of COVID-19 on HRM, its difficulties, and its prospects for HRM in organisations in this context, while managers and HRM practitioners require pertinent data to help them navigate this crisis successfully and efficiently in order to support their staff and keep their business afloat. In actuality, organisations typically lack the necessary resources to handle crises when they arise (Wang, Hutchins, & Garavan, 2009).

This is why it is crucial that the scientific community help organisations by giving them pertinent knowledge about this new pandemic. Therefore, the main objectives of this study are to examine how COVID-19 has affected HRM, to pinpoint the major obstacles and possibilities, and to offer suggestions for future developments in this field. Given the dearth of studies on this subject, the scientific goal of this work is to increase the scope of management research.

Methodology

This work is a general assessment of the literature with an educational goal, looking at pertinent and recent studies that looked into how COVID-19 affected HRM. Studies looking into this influence are quite rare. As a result, we began looking for publications that looked at the connection between COVID-19 and HRM in general. Next, we looked for articles that looked at the specific effects of the pandemic on each HRM function and practice, such as staffing (recruitment) and remuneration. Using a mix of terms relating to coronavirus OR COVID-19; human resource management; HRM; pandemic and HRM functions (e.g., compensation and staffing), we searched Google Scholar, Ebsco, and Semantic Scholar for papers. The process of finding articles was done by hand. Articles released between December 2019 and February 2021 were the focus of our search. Articles about epidemiology have been omitted. All of the articles that were examined for this work are included in the "References" section.

Literature Review

COVID-19 and Human Resource Management: Consequences and Obstacles

HRM is "the study of how individuals are hired, developed, and managed in organisations." (Taylor & Armstrong, 2020). COVID-19 has had a major impact on

it, posing serious difficulties for managers and HRM professionals. In relation to strategic HRM and working conditions, as well as HRM functions—specifically, staffing, performance management, training and development, pay management, safety and health management, and employee relations—this impact and these problems are examined in this section. Although each HRM function is explained separately, they are all connected. This implies that modifications made to one HRM function will have an impact on the other (Mondy & Martocchio, 2016).

COVID-19 and the Strategic Management of Human Resources

According to Wright and McMahan (1992), strategic HRM is the vertical relationship between HRM functions and organisational strategy as well as the horizontal coherence between HRM functions. According to Chapman, Sisk, Schatten, & Miles (2018), Navío-Marco, Solórzano-García, & Palencia-González (2019), and Schuler (1992), its primary goal is to efficiently use human resources to support the organization's strategic needs. Strategic agility is necessary to guarantee the accomplishment of the organisational goals during a crisis (Liu, Lee, & Lee, 2020). According to Liu, Lee, and Lee (2020), organisations must possess the ability to plan and distribute their resources, coordinate the necessary mechanisms, and make appropriate use of their organisational knowledge and resources. In this particular context, the COVID-19's uniqueness and complexity provide a serious obstacle that could jeopardise the accomplishment of organisational objectives.

Baert, Lippens, Moens, Sterkens, and Weytjens (2020) state that traditional economic models in establishments are primarily developed using data from the perspective of "normal times." Predictions concerning "abnormal times" are so difficult. This may imply that forecasting matters pertaining to the operations of the corporation, such as the planning and distribution of resources, may be a challenging task. In actuality, COVID-19 has caused ambiguity. While many economists believe the effects of this pandemic will persist until 2021, some authors (Regmi & Lwin, 2020) go so far as to anticipate the COVID-19 endemic (Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020). Even with the recent invention of several vaccines, nobody now knows when this virus will cease or if its effects on work patterns in organisations will be temporary or permanent (Bartik, Cullen, Glaeser, Luca, & Stanton, 2020). (Yu et al., 2021). Thus, for managers and HRM practitioners, carrying out strategic planning or putting the first one into practice can be difficult.

While having clear workplace guidelines during difficult times helps to reduce employees' stress and to increase their motivation and confidence (Wong, Ho, Wong, Cheung, & Yeoh, 2020), most organisations in this case were unable to provide their employees enough information about their management plan or their intended reactions towards the pandemic (Elsafty & Ragheb, 2020). According to Elsafty and Ragheb's (2020) study, staff retention is strongly correlated with having access to information and updates regarding the pandemic. However, given the novelty of this pandemic, it may be challenging for organisations to attain this goal if they are unable to obtain this information, particularly when they are in a reactionary and survival mode. To maintain the organization's longevity in the COVID-19 era, it is imperative to enhance organisational resilience, notwithstanding its challenges (Ngoc Su, Luc Tra, Thi Huynh, Nguyen, & O'Mahony, 2021). In fact, organisations must create creative strategies to deal with disruptions that endanger their survival, even in the midst of the uncertainty this epidemic has created (Ngoc Su et al., 2021). In fact, organisations must build creative strategies to deal with disruptions that endanger their survival, even in the midst of the uncertainty this epidemic has created (Ngoc Su et al., 2021).

Conditions of Work

According to the ILO (2020), working conditions are "the core of paid work and employment relationships." "A wide range of topics and issues are covered, including working time (hours of work, rest periods, and work schedules), compensation, and the physical and mental demands that are present in the workplace." (ILO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on workplace conditions. In fact, the majority of businesses have adopted remote working policies that mandate employees work from home in order to maintain business continuity (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020a, 2020b; Gourinchas, 2020; Koirala & Acharya, 2020). For instance, whereas Twitter employees were granted the option to work remotely permanently, Google declared that its staff will remain remote until at least Summer 2021 (Leonardi, 2020). However, the percentage of workers who work from home is still relatively low (Gourinchas, 2020). This is primarily due to the fact that remote work is not appropriate for manufacturing industries (Koirala & Acharya, 2020) and cannot be used for all job positions (Bartik et al., 2020).

For businesses whose operations prevent them from adhering to these kinds of working standards, there were two options available in this situation. Employers should decide whether to fire staff members or mandate that they be physically

present, wearing personal protective equipment, and according to physical distancing protocols (i.e., allowing two minutes between people) (Blustein, Duffy, Ferreira, Cohen-Scali, Cinamon, & Allan, 2020). According to a 2020 study by Adams-Prassl, Boneva, Golin, and Rauh, workers who are unable to complete their work from home are at a higher risk of losing their jobs. In such cases, HRM professionals are advised to determine which job roles are capable of being completed remotely, which ones may be performed in an office setting, and which positions require layoffs as a result of the pandemic-induced crisis. Consequently, managers and HRM professionals face substantial hurdles as a result of these abrupt and dramatic organisational changes.

Furthermore, they may have a major impact on workers' mental health (Hamouche, 2020), their perception of the person-environment fit (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020), and their experience with their jobs, workspace, and interactions with coworkers and managers (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020a). Work schedules for distinct employee groups have been implemented, and strict protective measures (such as physical separation and the wearing of protective masks) have been used to preserve physical presence in workplaces (Akbarpour et al., 2020). Ensuring adherence to these protective measures and creating work plans that take into account the circumstances of the employees present the main challenges in this situation.

As for remote working, it seems that managers and HRM practitioners have faced major challenges. First, to ensure that employees working from home have the necessary tools to perform their job (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020b; Hamouche, 2020). Actually, remote working requires the availability of technological tools which will facilitate communication between employees and managers, such as Zoom, Microsoft remote desktop, team viewer, and Microsoft team (Prasad & Vaidya, 2020), that cannot be afforded by all organizations, considering that the financial capacity varies from one organization to another. Secondly, to guarantee efficient communication, oversight, assistance, performance evaluation, and remuneration restructuring for remote workers (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020b). Additionally, managers who are managing remote teams for the first time require assistance from HRM practitioners (Caligiuri, De Cieri, Minbaeva, Verbeke, & Zimmermann, 2020). Lastly, HRM practitioners should be aware that working remotely may cause employees to become more isolated because of the lack of peer support, one-on-one communication, and workplace interaction. These factors can all be stressors that can negatively impact an employee's mental health (Prasad & Vaidya, 2020).

Given the potential for family distractions and the various tasks that they must play when working from home, it can also be psychologically taxing for these workers (Prasad & Vaidya, 2020). Furthermore, the growing usage of information and communication technology (ICT) may create expectations regarding employees' constant availability by creating a sense of perpetual urgency (Molino et al., 2020). Given that employees frequently utilise their emails when working from home, this could also result in an increase in the amount of information handled by them (Leonardi, 2020). According to several writers, employees who work remotely are seeing a rise in technostress associated with their usage of ICT (Molino et al., 2020). Employees' psychological well-being may be harmed by this, particularly if they choose to communicate only via email and isolate themselves.

Creating virtual socialisation activities, such virtual lunch or coffee breaks, is one of the many HRM practitioners' initiatives to support their staff members (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Maurer, 2020). These procedures unquestionably aid in supporting workers throughout this trying time when they are separated from one another and their place of employment (Hamouche, 2020). They also pose a significant challenge to organisations because, in addition to being implemented in an environment of unanticipated change, these practices are novel to managers and staff, who have not received prior training or psychological preparation for such adjustments. This could increase their perceptions of person-environment misfit and dissatisfaction if they long for the in-person interactions they had before the pandemic outbreak (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). Additionally, virtual contacts may have an impact on the socialisation process, which is acknowledged as being crucial in assisting staff members in learning the implicit knowledge associated with the company culture and in fostering its growth (Asatiani, Hämäläinen, Penttinen, & Rossi, 2021).

Recruitment

According to Ployhart (2006), recruitment also known as staffing is "the process of attracting, selecting, and retaining competent individuals to achieve organisational goals." COVID-19 had a significant impact on it, changing the way that it functioned in organisations (Campello, Kankanhalli, & Muthukrishnan, 2020). The majority of COVID-19's effects on industries were asymmetric (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020; Giupponi & Landais, 2020). The majority of COVID-19's effects on industries were asymmetric (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020; Giupponi & Landais, 2020). During the pandemic, several sectors had a severe fall in business, forcing some of them to temporarily close their doors (Bartik et al., 2020). Conversely,

other industries saw a rise in revenue (Giupponi & Landais, 2020). As such, the effects of COVID-19 on staffing vary depending on the organisation.

Due to the pandemic, organisations that were having financial difficulties have resorted to downskilling, which involves hiring fewer people for high-skill positions relative to those for low-skill positions in an effort to cut costs and maintain operations (Campello, Kankanhalli, & Muthukrishnan, 2020). Alternatively, they have frozen or reduced hiring altogether, or they have let go of staff members (Campello, Kankanhalli, & Muthukrishnan, 2020; Giupponi & Landais, 2020). In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic caused millions of individuals to lose their jobs (Blustein et al., 2020; Elsafty & Ragheb, 2020). Cheng et al. (2020) noted that the return of employees to their physical workplace during lockdown is mostly responsible for the increase in employment activities following the companies' reopening in several US states. However, the chances of reemployment significantly decrease for workers who took a longer leave of absence from their place of employment.

Performance Management

The definition of performance management is "a continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing individual and workgroup performance and aligning performance with the organization's strategic goals" (Aguinis, 2019: 8). Making sure that worker performance is in line with the organization's strategic goals is essential (Ismail & Gali, 2017). Employees must continue to work well in order to keep the business afloat in the face of a catastrophe such as COVID-19 (Sembiring, Fatihudin, Mochklas, & Holisin, 2020). But it appears that the COVID-19 pandemic has also changed how companies handle performance. According to some authors, the complexity and novelty of COVID-19 caused most organisations to become overwhelmed with the challenges it presented, including how to measure employee performance and the disruption to performance-based pay. As a result, some of these organisations reduced or even abandoned performance management (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2020). Given the changes to working circumstances during this crisis, it can sometimes be difficult to gauge how well staff are performing. Additionally, a variety of COVID-19-related issues could affect how well employees perform.

Within this framework, Prasad and Vaidya's (2020) study found that occupational stress factors (role ambiguity, role conflict, career, and job-control) and workplace isolation—which have emerged as a result of COVID-19, primarily among employees working from home—as well as a lack of communication, role

overload, and family distractions are significant predictors of employees' performance. Additionally, managers' comprehension of what it takes to manage a remote team affects how well their staff performs when working remotely (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020b). According to some authors, managers may be reluctant to allow remote work because they believe it will have a negative impact on workers' performance. This could result in the adoption of micromanagement, which workers may interpret as a sign of their lack of trust (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020b), which could exacerbate tensions between workers and their supervisor.

Training and Career Development

In times of crisis, like pandemics, training is crucial (Devyania, Jewanc, Bansal, & Denge, 2020; Hamouche, 2020). It aids in the development of the necessary skills for workers (Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020); raises awareness of COVID-19, lowers the chance that the virus will spread, and guards against mental health problems (Quaedackers et al., 2020). Supporting workers as they make the switch to remote work is also helpful. Since some employees lack the digital skills necessary to handle the changes brought about by ICT use, it is necessary to train them in its use. This will help to facilitate their work and allow them to communicate with their manager and peers while they are not in the office (Greer & Payne, 2024). In order for organisations to meet the demands of the new "distance economy," reskilling and upskilling their staff is a challenge, according to Przytuła, Strzelec, and Krysińska-Kościańska (2020).

The primary challenge for HRM practitioners in this situation may be creating a training program that is tailored to the new reality of the company and the employees, as well as selecting the appropriate training techniques while taking physical distance measures and the need for employees to start working as soon as possible to maintain business operations into account. This implies that managers and HRM professionals should look beyond the conventional approaches to training. In this instance, Devyania et al. (2020) advised modifying staff training curricula to guarantee a sustained shift to the new working practices. Managers' comprehension of the virtual supervision of staff members is also essential to the effectiveness of remote working (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020b).

In this situation, HRM professionals should take a proactive approach by assisting and educating these managers on how to lead a remote team, helping them get beyond these obstacles, and assisting them in adjusting to the demands of working remotely so they can better support their colleagues (Hamouche, 2020). In addition to training, COVID-19 has presented substantial obstacles for professional

advancement within companies. Some authors (Akkermans, Richardson, & Kraimer, 2020; Baert et al., 2020) claim that COVID-19 has caused a major career shock. Based on an analysis of the effects of COVID-19 on career outcomes and aspirations among a panel of 3,821 employees, Baert et al. (2020) found that employees were fearful of losing their jobs in the near future as a result of the COVID-19 issue. Furthermore, a few of them anticipated that if this crisis had not occurred, they would have missed out on a promotion that they were due to earn.

Compensation Management

The term "compensation management" describes the internal and external benefits that workers obtain for carrying out their duties. It includes both monetary (bonuses and base salary) and non-monetary (benefits to employees) rewards (Martocchio, 2017). Salary has an impact on workers' performance, motivation, and retention (Safuan & Kurnia, 2021; Sembiring et al., 2020; Elsafty & Ragheb, 2020). According to Elsafty and Ragheb's (2020) research, there is a substantial correlation between staff retention and financial advantages like bonuses during COVID-19.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, several nations have put laws into place that urge workers and organisations to abide by the stay-at-home directives while also offering financial support during this health emergency. For example, in the United States, the federal government implemented a temporary paid sick leave program that grants employees in both the public and private sectors two weeks of paid sick leave for isolation, COVID-19 treatment, caring for a family member afflicted with the virus, and childcare resulting from the closure of a school or nursery school (Andersen, Maclean, Pesko, & Simon, 2020).

Part-time work, sometimes referred to as short-term compensation, has also been embraced to support the economy and safeguard employment opportunities for businesses and workers. This involves providing workers with a short-term reduction in hours worked, which will aid companies facing a decline in demand in keeping their workforce and preventing layoffs (Giupponi & Landais, 2020). These actions change an organization's policy and strategy for paying employees. Moreover, they could produce a complicated and demanding environment for managers and HRM professionals.

Some scholars claim that paid sick leave may cause workers' absences from work to rise (Maclean, Pichler, & Ziebarth, 2020). However, it also serves to keep workers from reporting absenteeism when they are ill (Schneider, 2020). Furthermore, policies of this kind, like paid sick leave, aid in expanding their

application in sectors where workers have never received such benefits (Maclean, Pichler, & Ziebarth, 2020). This implies that managers and HRM professionals should consider how to maintain them in order to keep workers motivated in the wake of the pandemic. Przytuła, Strzelec, and Krysińska-Kościńska (2020) discussed the significance of intrinsic motivation in this setting, emphasising the need to increase employee autonomy as one way to retain staff.

Safety and Health Management

It is the duty of employers to ensure their workers' safety during work hours. They are responsible for making sure that there are no hazards at work that could hurt employees physically or psychologically or even result in their death. A new workplace risk brought about by COVID-19 has been identified by Hecker (2020), Shaw et al. (2020), and Hamouche (2020) as a major cause of stress for workers and a major problem for managers and HRM professionals. The influence on workers' well-being differs according to the workplace and the individual's professional function (Brooks, Dunn, Amlôt, Rubin, & Greenberg, 2018). In this situation, it is possible to identify two major challenges: how to stop the virus from spreading and shield employees from infection, and how to raise employee understanding of the significance of respect the safety precautions put in place at work.

Guidelines for organisations to follow in order to protect workers have been issued by the WHO (WHO, 2020a); nonetheless, managing employee behaviour may prove difficult, since some individuals may choose to disobey directions to isolate themselves (Gourinchas, 2020). The development of COVID-19 vaccines has been a source of hope for people all over the world, but it has also presented two new challenges for organisations: managing workplace vaccination campaigns and their ability to sponsor and pay for them in light of the financial difficulties these organisations have experienced as a result of the pandemic (Rothstein, Parmet, & Reiss, 2021).

According to several studies (Brooks et al., 2020; Chen, Ning, Yu, Huang, Li, & Luo, 2020; Hamouche, 2020; Qiu, Shen, Zhao, Wang, Xie, & Xu, 2020), COVID-19 poses a serious risk to people's mental health in addition to their physical health. Employees who work from home may find it mentally taxing since they may feel alone and conflicted about their personal and professional lives (Prasad & Vaidya, 2020). Additionally, workers who must be physically present at work may be afraid to return to work for fear of getting the virus or passing it on to their family (Tan et al., 2020). This could raise their stress levels and raise their

risk of mental health problems (Hamouche, 2020), particularly for people who, before the pandemic, were subjected to high psychological demands at work (Quaedackers et al., 2020) or who hold a high-risk employment, like healthcare personnel (Hamouche, 2020). In this situation, identifying risk factors and putting appropriate preventative measures in place at work, including for employees who work from home, provide the most challenges for managers and HRM practitioners (Hamouche, 2020).

Employment Relationship

According to Budd and Bhawe (2010), an employment relationship is "the connection between employees and employers through which individuals sell their labour." From the standpoint of labour law, COVID-19 has presented significant difficulties for both employers and workers (Biasi, 2020; Sagan & Schüller, 2020). Both parties were unable to fulfil their contractual responsibilities as a result of the lockdown and the required company shutdown (Biasi, 2020). The typical connection between an employee and his company has actually changed as a result of the issues brought about by COVID-19 (Leighton & McKeown, 2020; Spurk & Straub, 2020).

Many nations and businesses have adopted work from home policies (Spurk & Straub, 2020). As a result, the lines that once defined the workplace have vanished (Leighton & McKeown, 2020). According to Sachs (2020), COVID-19 has positioned the government more as a planner than a regulator in this context. This presents a challenge for organisations that must modify government plans and regulations to fit their organisational structure while also taking the needs of their workforce into account.

Given the uniqueness of this epidemic, the majority of nations don't only depend on current laws. In order to assist employers and safeguard employees, they have quickly and efficiently modified a number of labour regulations (Sagan & Schüller, 2020; Alhambra, 2020; Mangan, 2020; Sachs, 2020; Sagan & Schüller, 2020). The primary obstacle was how to safeguard workers without jeopardising the economy's viability (Sachs, 2020). A few nations have enacted legislation to regulate and temporarily forbid layoffs of employees in groups (Biasi, 2020). For instance, a decree law forbidding organisations from starting a collective layoff procedure for a duration of sixty days has been issued in Italy (Biasi, 2020). In addition, a number of regulations and legal measures have been implemented to assist workers during the school lockdown and closure. For example, workers were granted paid time off to care for their families. The primary obstacle is that it is still

unknown when nations will be able to declare the pandemic to be at "end" (Spurk & Straub, 2020). This poses a serious problem for figuring out how long workers should be protected, which could damage the rapport between employers, workers, and their representatives (Biasi, 2020). COVID-19 is a unique crisis that has led to unique responses.

Businesses cannot force employees to work remotely, as is the case in France and many other nations. Nevertheless, in many cases, businesses have forced workers who have jobs that can be done from home to adopt this working style (Sachs, 2020). The primary issue in this situation is the potential for disagreements to occur between employers and workers who were not given the option to work from home or who became infected with COVID-19 while at work (Sachs, 2020).

In fact, Sagan and Schüller (2020) state that it is feasible to dispute an employer's compliance with labour rules in the absence of a contractual agreement.

Since the development of COVID-19 vaccines recently, managing the vaccination campaign in terms of application and costs while guaranteeing compliance with national regulations has become the primary challenge for organisations when it comes to employment relationships (Rothstein, Parmet, & Reiss, 2021). This development also calls into question the employer's authority to enforce it on their staff. A strict, aggressive approach may exacerbate the hesitation of those who are still unsure about the vaccine, according to Rothstein, Parmet, and Reiss (2021). Instead of enforcing vaccinations, these authors recommended that employers inform staff members about the advantages of immunisations and help them obtain one by providing time off for immunisations (Rothstein, Parmet, & Reiss, 2021)

Possibilities, Prospective Organisational Paths, and Perceptions of HRM Interventions

In addition to presenting significant problems for managers and HRM professionals, COVID-19 has also created opportunities that should be recognised and understood in order to guide organisations' future activities. In fact, a crisis may present organisations with unanticipated chances, claim Demirkaya and Aydın (2006). We will talk about these prospects and how they relate to possible future directions in HRM in this section.

COVID-19 has prompted conversations about the future of work and tested organisations' inventiveness and inventiveness (Hite & McDonald, 2020). It has expedited the introduction of future-oriented scenarios and the disruption of HRM (Hite & McDonald, 2020). Additionally, it has forced businesses to reconsider their

HRM plans and move past the conventional approaches to managing human resources by highlighting new IT as a vital ally for their continued existence and long-term viability. In this regard, new laws have been passed in a number of nations to assist organisations through this abrupt and unplanned change. For instance, new laws in Germany have been passed to allow video conferencing in two domains (Sagan & Schüller, 2020), to aid in the adoption of remote work within businesses.

Consequently, the adoption of remote working appears to be the new norm in offices at the time. Nonetheless, other writers assert that it is too early to say with certainty that every company that has embraced remote work will do so going forward, even after COVID-19 (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020b). Given that this is their first time implementing the work organisation, they are likely evaluating its efficacy before making a choice. As a result, they are yet unsure of how it may impact workers' output and performance (Aitken-Fox et al., 2020b). However, it appears that remote work and virtual meetings will continue, albeit less intensely than during the height of COVID-19, according to a recent report released by McKinsey Global Institute. The study evaluated the long-term impact of COVID-19 on labour demands, occupations, and workforce skills in eight countries (China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States) (Lund et al., 2021).

Despite its drawbacks, remote work gives workers the chance to try new ICT, have flexible work hours, reduce commute times, and maintain job control (Prasad & Vaidya, 2020). Additionally, it gives businesses the chance to maximise the utilisation and reduce the expenses of their resources, such office space. In fact, business sectors in certain nations—like Korea, for instance—see room for expansion in the non-contact industries, which include online education, telecom, and remote support services (Liu, Lee, & Lee, 2020).

Additionally, COVID-19 gives organisations the chance to improve employee autonomy, modernise their digital competencies, and extend the scope of their competency development. In addition, the epidemic has made new technology an attractive strategic ally for businesses. It has aided in the survival of companies and reduced the gap between workers and their bosses while maintaining worker safety. It has encouraged managers' and HRM practitioners' innovation and made the shift from conventional in-person socialisation techniques to virtual ones—such as virtual meetings, lunches, and coffee breaks—easier (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020). Maintaining staffing levels in organisations while adhering to physical separation regulations has also been made easier by it.

The administration of health and safety in the workplace has also benefited from modern technology. The choice to keep workers at home and shield them from infection risk while they continue to work for the company has been implemented with its assistance. Additionally, it has aided medical professionals—such as psychologists—who have persisted in providing telemedicine services to the public while honouring physical segregation laws. For example, during the pandemic, mental health services have been offered in China through a variety of channels, including hotlines, online consultations, online courses, and telemental health services (Gao et al., 2020). (Zhou et al., 2020).

Lund et al. (2021) suggest that COVID-19 could hasten the implementation of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) in industries that include significant human interaction, like healthcare and personal care (e.g., gyms and hair salons). Therefore, in order for organisations to be able to continue operating during extreme crises, it is imperative that they grasp ICT and make it available to all of its members. While maintaining physical distance and employee safety, several authors emphasised the significance of utilising AI for HRM during a health crisis and suggested doing so as a useful tool to avoid operations and management procedures from being disrupted (Devyania et al., 2020).

In a similar spirit, Liu, Lee, and Lee (2020) suggested the creation of predictive models that account for risk factors and uncertainties in proactive supply scheduling and planning. These models may assist decision makers in developing a variety of dynamic scenarios that can be automated through the use of artificial intelligence. During this pandemic and beyond, the use of new technologies also supports data analytics that can assist HRM practitioners in optimising and improving HRM functions and practices in organisations, such as talent management, recruitment, and workforce planning (AM, Affandi, Udobong, & Sarwani, 2020).

Recognising the potential presented by COVID-19 can assist HRM professionals in creating effective HRM interventions and future plans of action. However, it is crucial to remember that organisations around the globe are still dealing with the widespread effects of this pandemic, which does not appear to be ending anytime soon. Enhancing organisational resilience is definitely necessary. Organisations in this situation must be able to create creative answers in order to successfully absorb and deal with disruptions that endanger their existence (Ngoc Su et al., 2021).

HRM professionals should collaborate with managers and staff to turn COVID-19's challenges into opportunities. They should also reevaluate their HRM

functions and practices, such as performance management and compensation, and modify them to fit the new working conditions that the COVID-19 crisis has brought about for employees. By redefining the new trends in HRM practices, organisations need to create new foundations, according to Przytuła, Strzelec, and Krysińska-Kościańska (2020). Actually, after operating primarily remotely for almost a year, organisations need to reassess their situation, examine the new HRM trends brought about by this unanticipated catastrophe, and determine whether they still make sense.

Organisations should choose to adopt a hybrid workplace model in light of the unpredictable nature of the current situation and the high degree of uncertainty surrounding its end (AM et al., 2020; Kaufman, Lovich, Bailey, Messenböck, Schuler, & Shroff, 2020; Przytuła, Strzelec, & Krysińska-Kościańska, 2020). This model is adaptable enough to enable the organisation to quickly and effectively adjust to the demands of this new situation and beyond. HRM professionals must modify job roles and concentrate on job redesign inside the company. Here, Lund et al. (2021) proposed that in order to improve an organization's operational flexibility and agility, it would be better to highlight the essential tasks and activities associated with a job rather than the job itself.

Workers should be given the organisational assistance they need to learn the skills they'll need for this pandemic and beyond, as well as career trajectories that will improve their employability and provide opportunities for upward mobility (Ngoc Su et al., 2021). These kinds of interventions ought to improve employee motivation and retention while also cutting down on recruitment-related expenses (Lund et al., 2021). In order to help employees learn how to adapt to the uncertainty that can be generated by an unexpected crisis and to thrive in a dynamic environment, some authors even go so far as to suggest that organisations should reinvent themselves by integrating entrepreneurship competencies among their employees (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020; Liu, Lee, & Lee, 2020).

Given that entrepreneurship is based on exploration, evaluation, discovery, and the ability to turn obstacles brought on by an unclear context into opportunities, it may be able to assist employees in exploring, evaluating, and taking advantage of opportunities that arise in a dynamic and unstable environment (Carnevale & Hatak, 2020).

Furthermore, managers and HRM professionals should be compelled by the new technology's crucial role in the epidemic to investigate efficient methods of incorporating it into HRM and customising it to their organization's needs. Furthermore, since not every employee—including managers—has the necessary

technological competencies, they must determine the individual training needs. Employee participation is necessary to make sure that this organisational reform is successful. Maintaining contact with them should also assist in lowering their stress levels and boosting their confidence in the company (Hamouche, 2020).

Contribution and Practical Implication for Organisations

In the world of business, crises are unavoidable. Nobody could have predicted, nevertheless, the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has accelerated the disruption of conventional HRM techniques and presented serious challenges for managers and HRM practitioners who lacked the knowledge, tools, and skills necessary to handle the pandemic's complexity and novelty. In addition to these difficulties, COVID-19 has created opportunities that companies need to be aware of in order to appropriately guide their future HRM initiatives. This basic literature study can assist managers and HRM practitioners in understanding the primary opportunities and difficulties associated with COVID-19. It offers pertinent and helpful information. They ought to be able to create an intervention plan that is tailored to the requirements of their companies and workforce with the aid of the insights this paper offers regarding the future directions in HRM.

Conclusion and Future Studies

However, there are some limitations that should be taken into account while evaluating this paper's contribution. First off, the fact that our study is a general assessment of the literature with an instructive goal raises the chance that the literature was chosen subjectively. Nevertheless, the most referenced publications are available in the databases we have used, which include Google Scholar, Ebsco, and Semantic Scholar. Furthermore, a thorough analysis of the literature is not necessary for this paper's goal or useful nature. Secondly, COVID-19 was still active at the time this study was written. As such, it is impossible to pinpoint the long-term opportunities and problems with accuracy. To find these potential and problems, longitudinal analysis should be the focus of future study.

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