Role of Human Resource Management in Shaping an Organization Post Covid

By

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Abstract

Human Resource (HR) management has played a critical role in helping firms adapt to the enormous changes brought on by the COVID-19 epidemic. The purpose of this study is to investigate how HR management has influenced businesses in the wake of the COVID pandemic. The study uses a qualitative research approach and gathers information from human resources managers across sectors through semi-structured interviews. According to the results, HR management was crucial in easing the shift to remote work, monitoring employee satisfaction, and reshaping the company's ethos. To further guarantee conformity with health and safety laws, HR management has participated in modifying policies and procedures. Researchers found that HR management played a significant role in determining how businesses responded to the epidemic. Human resource management is shown to be crucial in building resilient organisations and guaranteeing their survival through challenging times.

Keywords- Human Resource Management, Organisation, Work-From-Home, Covid-19, technology, health and well-being.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed everyone's lives in just one day all over the world. People and organisations have felt the shock of a lockdown and the fear of not knowing what will happen next. This pandemic has created a complex and difficult environment for managers and people who work in human resource management (HRM) **(Gigauri,2020)**. They had to come up with creative ways to keep their business going and help their employees deal with the challenges of this never-before-seen situation. And effectively managing the same situation in the future.

When the crisis first broke, HR was instrumental in organising the COVID-19 reaction at the company level. By demonstrating the advantages of investing in adaptable and reliable HR processes and structures, HR has been the driving force in keeping the workforce and company engaged, productive, and resilient. Notwithstanding how difficult the COVID-19 issue has been, it has also given HR a rare chance to rebuild and take the initiative in promoting organisational stability and strength. The moment has come for HR to rethink not just its own future but also the future of the corporation by reimagining work, workforces, and environments now that we have moved past the response phase. To counter these herculean challenges, there aren't many studies on the effects of COVID-19 on HRM, its challenges, and its possible opportunities for HRM in organisations. However, managers and HRM practitioners need information that will help them get through this crisis effectively and efficiently so they can help their employees and keep their company's business going. In fact, most organisations aren't prepared enough to handle crises when they happen. This is why it's important for scientists to help organisations by giving them information about this new pandemic.

So, the main goal of this research is to find out how COVID-19 affects HRM and what their role in shaping the Organisation post covid. To figure out what are the biggest problems and opportunities are, and to give an idea of where HRM is going in the future. From a scientific point of view, the goal of this paper is to expand the scope of management research, since there aren't many papers on this subject.

Literature Review

COVID-19 has pushed companies to be more creative and innovative, while also encouraging dialogues about the future. It has sped up the HR department's future scenario preparation and execution. It has encouraged firms to reconsider their HR strategies to move beyond the old methods of managing human resources, by placing new information technology as a vital partner to thrive and to assure the sustainability of their organisation as their are large percentage of employees looking to adopt work-from-home during and after the pandemic.
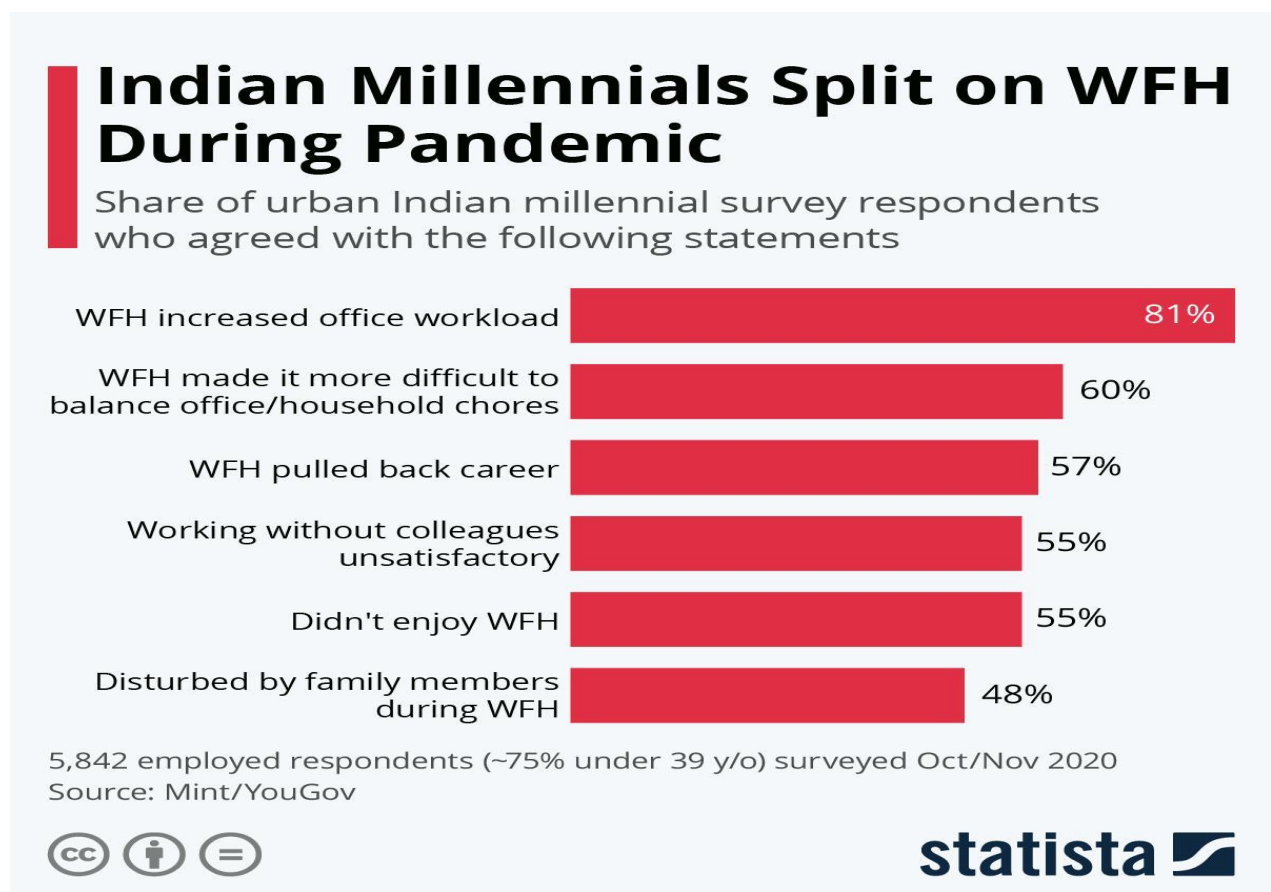
Figure 1: *Employees choosing Work-From-Home after Covid-19. Adapted from Statista (2020).*

Around 61% of HR professionals reckon their job has changed dramatically because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and 43% think their job has changed completely because of the current crisis**(ADP, 2020).** Now the role of HR has expanded exponentially. Now they have had to tailor changes in the workplace very carefully as it benefits both employees and organisation at the same time. They also deal with challenges like staggering work schedules, relocating employee work stations, mapping routes through offices, and writing mask policies, which are uncommon before the pandemic or we can say they are very new to the HRM. They have to balance and communicate those policies to employees and audit compliance perfectly.

In particular, human resources have recently been given the responsibility of playing a fundamentally significant role in contributing to the performance of organisations both during and after the epidemic. Facilitating and smartly managing the above mentioned difficulties faced due to the Covid-19 by HRM are all critical contributions that HR can make because of the uniquely skilled contributions they bring to the table" **(Brower, 2020).**

Changes in Role of Human Resources Management (HRM)

1-Recruitment and the Staff Selection

The COVID-19 pandemic has given Human Resources Management (HRM) a lot to contemplate when selecting employees and staff. Because of the pandemic, many companies have had to change to remote work, which has also changed how they hire people. HRM must figure out how to use new virtual recruitment methods and tools, such as virtual interviews, online assessments, and video conferencing platforms, to make sure the hiring process stays efficient and effective. Second is safety rules; as HRM has had to change the way it hires people to ensure the safety of everyone involved **(Van Barneveld, 2020).** For instance, HRM must follow rules like keeping a safe distance from people, wearing a mask, and cleaning surfaces during interviews. Third, screening candidates has also become a challenging task for HRM. They are required to screen candidates carefully to make sure they are right for remote work, have the right skills, and have the right technology and resources to work well from home.

There is also ample of Talent shortage seen during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. A pandemic has changed the job market, with some industries seeing a big drop in the number of people they need to hire and others seeing a rise. Since there is more demand for certain skills, there is less talent in some areas. The pandemic has caused a lot of economic instability, and many businesses have had to freeze hiring, give furloughs, or let people go. HRM has to deal with these changes while keeping the recruitment process strong.

2-Training and development

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought HRM training and development issues With remote work becoming the new normal, firms must discover innovative methods to conduct training and development programmes online **(Charalampous, 2020).** It presented challenges such as making equal training access to all employees, engagement, and progress tracking difficult. Several organizations have budget difficulties due to the epidemic. Due to the additional expense of remote delivery, HR departments have struggled to engage in training and development programmes. Moreover, the epidemic has changed the corporate landscape, making it difficult for HR departments to offer appropriate training and development programmes. HR must swiftly adjust training programmes to stay current. Engaging and motivating remote workers throughout training sessions may be difficult. HR departments must develop innovative ways to encourage and interest staff in training.

Human Resources Management has also faced difficulties with remote training and development. As it requires technology and a reliable internet connection. Technological issues can slow training and limit programme efficacy. HR departments must equip workers to solve these concerns.

3-Resolving the Attrition

Resolving the Attrition is another key part of employee experience that has gotten increasingly difficult to navigate in recent years. Before the epidemic, if a manager needed to discuss a problem or deliver bad news to an employee, they may have done it in a private one-on-one chat in the workplace. In a remote or hybrid work setting, this may no longer be viable.

Moreover, video conferences fall short in terms of intimacy, and it can be difficult to decipher what someone is trying to communicate with their body language. It will be necessary for HR to work out how to handle circumstances like this and educate managers on the new models.

4-Health and Safety:

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it much harder for Human Resources Management (HRM) to keep their employees safe and healthy. HRM has to make sure that the workplace is safe for their employees. It includes rules like keeping a safe distance from people, wearing masks, and cleaning the workplace often.**(Clayton & Hoyle, 2020)** HRM has to make sure that employees follow these rules and do what needs to be done to make them stick. During the pandemic, remote work is becoming the norm, so HRM needs to know how to manage a remote workforce well. This means making sure employees have access to the resources and tools they need to do their jobs, managing communication channels, and helping employees who are having trouble with the challenges of remote work.

The pandemic has also had a considerable effect on employees' mental health. HRM has to give employees the help and resources they need to deal with the stress and worry that the pandemic has caused. This could mean giving people access to counselling services or starting programmes to improve health. Taking care of employees who have to miss work because they are sick, in quarantine, or taking care of family members who are sick with COVID-19. HRM has to deal with employee absences while making sure the business keeps running smoothly. Regulations about the pandemic are always changing, and HRM needs to be able to respond quickly to these changes. This means keeping up with the latest rules and regulations, putting in place new policies and procedures, and making sure employees know about these changes.

Top Factors Affecting Human Resource Management
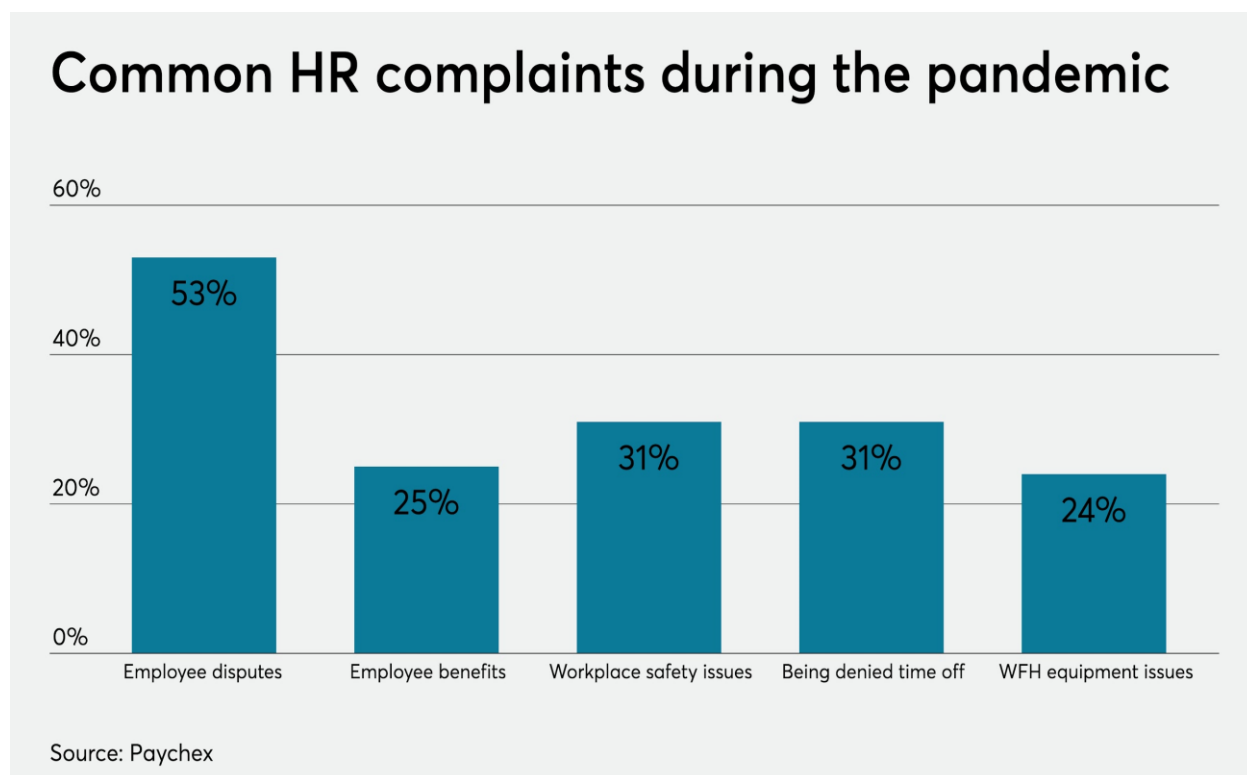
Figure 2: *Challenges faced by HR during and after Covid-19. Adopted from Paycheck (2021)*

1. Engaging the Workforce.

Employees are inspired to do their best by an upbeat and fruitful work atmosphere created through the process of "engaging the workforce." Effective Human Resource Management (HRM) is essential to a productive and engaged workforce because it is responsible for developing and enforcing programmes, policies, and practises that encourage participation and dedication from all workers. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the workforce engagement adversely affected due to the difficulty in performing the simple tasks which Covid-19 have turned into challenging like the recruitment and selection, training and development, Performance management which are performed very easily in the office by the HRM.

2. Attracting Talent to the Enterprise.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, Human Resource Management (HRM) faces new and difficult issues in the area of employee recruitment and retention. As a result of the pandemic, many companies have had to lay off or furlough staff, resulting in a smaller talent pool. As a result, there is a smaller pool of qualified candidates from which HRM can choose. Secondly the HR departments are finding it harder to recruit and retain top personnel as a result of the widespread use of remote work**(Jarvenpaa & Välikangas, 2020).** Working remotely can be lonely and make it tough for new hires to integrate into the company's larger goal and values. There are a lot of firms having financial issues, and that means that certain HRM departments may not be able to provide competitive pay and benefits to their employees. This may make it more challenging to entice talented individuals to join the organisation.
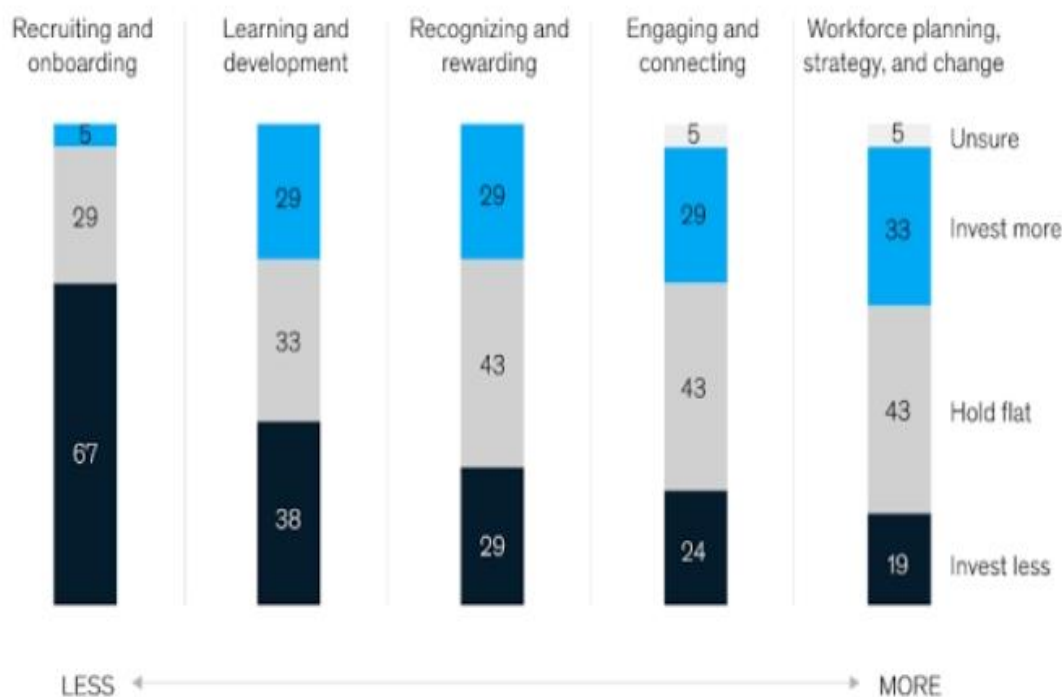
Figure 2: *Organisation looking to hire less permanent employees. Adapted from Mackinsey and company (2022).*

3. Managing Relationships.

Human resource management has faced serious issues in dealing with the COVID-19 epidemic as it pertains to dealing with employees. As there is a rise in the number of employees who are performing their job through remote work. It also posed a challenge for HRM to deal with employee engagement, motivation, and productivity. There may be communication hurdles that need to be broken down if workers are feeling alienated and cut off from their coworkers. Secondly, The pandemic has also gaslighted existing inequalities prevailing among the employees in the workplace. It became the first hand responsibility of HRM to ensure that all employees feel valued and included, regardless of their background or circumstances. This includes making efforts for diversity and inclusion and resolving any instances of discrimination or bias.

4. Talent Retention.

Talent retention refers to the HRM (Human Resource Management) strategies and actions used to retain qualified and talented employees inside a business. To maintain employee engagement and motivation, HRM develops a variety of programmes and policies that foster a healthy work environment, offer career development possibilities, and guarantee employee happiness.

The COVID-19 epidemic has made talent retention more difficult for human resource management. The pandemic has compelled many businesses to downsize or reduce compensation in order to survive, resulting in lower employee morale and job insecurity. The transition to remote work has also presented HRM with new challenges, including preserving team cohesion and tackling mental health issues. Moreover, since the pandemic has left many employees feeling exhausted and overwhelmed, businesses must provide greater assistance and flexibility to retain their top performers. COVID-19 pandemic has made talent retention more challenging for HRM due to economic issues, challenges associated with remote work, and increasing employee burnout and stress. In these unique times, HRM must thus adapt to these difficulties and develop new tactics to retain talent.

5. Diversity in the Workplace.

The presence of people with varying experiences and perspectives in the workplace is what we call "diversity." That everyone is different and that valuing those differences may improve decision-making, boost creativity, and foster a more welcoming environment at work are all central to the concept of diversity. Covid-19 has presented HRM with a number of difficulties when it comes to dealing with workplace diversity. HRM has had to adapt to the new reality of remote work by developing strategies to promote equality and diversity in the digital workplace. This involves making sure that employees from all walks of life have the same access to virtual meetings and other events. In addition to the language barrier, Covid-19 highlighted the cultural gap that makes it challenging for HRM to properly connect with employees from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Human resource management has had to adapt by providing translation services and other sorts of assistance to employees from a variety of cultural backgrounds in order to foster effective communication.

The rise of remote working has the potential to amplify the effects of unconscious prejudice. Human resource management (HRM) has had to develop strategies for teaching workers how to identify and combat unconscious bias, which is especially challenging in an online setting. The epidemic has shown how vital it is for businesses to foster a welcoming environment for all employees. Human resource management must address the issue of how to make people of different cultures feel welcome in online settings

6. Embrace Inevitable Change.

HRM now has tremendous challenges in managing remote workers, including keeping tabs on productivity, maintaining open lines of communication, and supplying sufficient support **(Lewis, 2020).** Second, the HRM has addressed issues like the security of workers by adopting social isolation, cleaning up the area, and giving PPE to those who need it. Especially in large businesses, monitoring for compliance with these steps can be difficult. Employee morale has plummeted as a result of the epidemic, and HRM departments must do extra effort to maintain high levels of productivity. Human resource management needs to get innovative to counteract the isolation and loneliness felt by distant workers. Changes to sick leave policy, telecommuting options, and health and safety regulations are only a few examples of the legislated responses to the epidemic. Human resource management must adapt to these shifts and monitor regulatory developments to maintain legal observance.

7. Employee Health and Well-Being

In light of the unpredictability of the Covid-19, many employees are experiencing a steady deterioration in the quality of their lives while working in their places of employment. It became a constant problem for HRM, which needs to be tackled very carefully. Deterioration in employees Work-life balance highlighted the health issues like persistent feelings of exhaustion, a lack of interest in, and disengagement from one's work. Job burnout has become more prevalent as a result of these new practices and changing work environment pressures due to the COVID-19. This has led to an increase in the prevalence of job burnout ((**Demerouti, Mostert, & Bakker, 2021).** In addition, being constantly inundated with negative media reports of COVID-19 can lead to rumination, which is the habitual and inactive consideration of one's distressing feelings and the factors that may contribute to them. Rumination can be a contributing factor in the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Now Covid-19 presented the challenge in front of HRM to carefully assess and understand the challenges faced by employees in maintaining his Work-Life Balance. It became very thin, especially the women who are already disadvantaged and there is a gender gap in terms of performing the household. According to the International Labor Organization, women contribute 75 percent of the world's unpaid work, or 16.4 billion hours every day. Two billion jobs are equivalent to this. There are 381 million people (66.5% women) who perform paid care employment, accounting for 11.5% of all jobs worldwide. It's something big international corporations need to think about carefully when they craft their policies and regulations. These things need to be analysed carefully by HRM and also helps their employees in maintaining a healthy work life balance between their professional and personal life.

Conclusion

Human resource management has played a crucial role in building enterprises in the wake of the COVID-19 epidemic, which has presented hitherto unseen problems to businesses around the world. As the epidemic hit, businesses had to adapt how they operated, which meant revamping their approaches to human resource management. Human resource management has played an important, multi-faceted role in moulding organisations in the wake of the COVID pandemic. Human resources departments have been essential in minimising the transmission of the virus in the workplace by enforcing regulations and procedures to protect the health and safety of all employees. Companies have also played a significant role in enabling remote work arrangements, supplying the technology and assistance staff need to perform their jobs efficiently from home.

Furthermore, HR departments have been accountable for managing employee engagement and retention during times of uncertainty, supplying workers with the resources and support they need to keep working productively and happily. Human resources has also played an integral role in overseeing programmes designed to reskill and upskill workers as their employers adapted to shifting market conditions and evolving business needs. Human resource management will continue to play a vital role in moulding enterprises as we go forward into a post-pandemic era. Human resources departments will need to adjust to employees' shifting expectations and give more flexible work options to compete for and keep the best talent. They will also need to ensure the emotional well-being of their staff as they face the ongoing difficulties of the pandemic. Furthermore, HR will need to keep driving innovation and change within firms, utilising new technology and techniques to boost efficiency and productivity. Human resources will need to collaborate closely with other parts of the company to forecast future trends and prepare for them.

The COVID-19 epidemic has shown how important human resource management is in transforming organisations. Human resources departments have historically been leaders in controlling workplace risks, fostering a positive work environment, and encouraging employee participation in strategic initiatives. Human resources will continue to be essential in influencing the future of employment as we move towards a post-pandemic society.

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