

CONSEQUENCES ON HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES DURING COVID-19

Angurbala Mishra

Research scholar, Siksha 'O' Anusandhan Deemed To be University-751030,
Bhubaneswar, India
e-mail: angurbala.mishra@gmail.com

Subhasmita Biswal

Associate Professor, ITER, Siksha 'O' Anusandhan
Deemed To be University-751030, Bhubaneswar, India
subhasmitabiswal@soa.ac.in

DoI: 10.23862/kiit-parikalpana/2021/v17/i1/209018

ABSTRACT

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, international business has been distinctly contrived. Human resource management (HRM) is one of the core management functions in the corporate world. Proper functioning of human resources is crucial for high yielding and effectiveness in every organization especially during times of pandemic distress. Organizations are now experiencing new practices that many were not prepared for. Therefore, HRM practices need to be modified, re-established and practiced. The HR department must be conscious about in what way they comply themselves to changeable circumstances. The study aims to theoretically assess the consequences of the Corona virus pandemic on HRM practices such as recruitment and selection, training, compensation and performance management. Through the literature review, the study found that recruitment and selection practices dropped dramatically due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Training programs that were preplanned before the outburst had been revoked to prevent employees from contacting the disease. Due to a lack of facilities, online training could not be used by all organizations. During this crisis, organizations should adopt e-HRM to minimize employee physical interactions, employee engagement and review of HR policies.

Keywords : COVID-19 pandemic, Human resource management practices, Consequences.

Introduction

Corona virus was firstly discovered in December, 2019 in the Wuhan city of China (Gondauri, Mikautadze & Batiashvili, 2020). World Health Organization declared this disease as a global health emergency in the end of January 2020 (Yuen, Ye, Fung, Chan & Jin, 2020). The virus spreads from one person to another when people come to close contact through respiratory droplet that can be expelled in the air by an infected person when he coughs or sneezes (Ramesh, Siddaiah & Joseph, 2018). To control the spread of corona virus many measures have been taken by the government like lockdown, quarantines, self-isolation and discouragement of human being's movement. These measures affect many businesses because employees are experiencing new ways of life. Business firms now experiencing new practices for which many of them were not prepared for and never saw it coming. As Human Resource Management (HRM) directly deals with people in the employment, more effects of corona virus are expected in HRM practices. There are so many HRM practices. Out of many for this paper we have selected some practices like recruitment and selection, training, compensation and performance management. The recruitment and selection process is always done when there is shortage of manpower in the organization. For the recruitment and selection process, the recruiter meet with their potential candidates for assessment.

As a result to avoid the spread of the virus , social distancing is encouraged. Therefore, almost all business firms have adopted work from home. Work from home may also pose challenges in managing human resources specifically on the issue of performance management. Some business firms instead of hiring people, they tend to slow down their operation. The main focus of the paper is to conceptually analyze the consequences of the Corona virus pandemic on HRM practices .

Objective of the study

The main focus of the paper is to conceptually analyze the consequences of the Corona virus pandemic on HRM practices like recruitment and selection, training, compensation and performance management.

Rationale of the Study

- The consequence of the disease on Human Resource Management practices has not been identified much. This encouraged the researcher to write this paper.
- HRM practices endorse an organization to accomplish its aspirations periodically by invoking positiveness amid workers. It also helps in minimizing wastage and forging optimal utilization of resources.
- During pandemic effective HRM practices teach the individuals to adjust with updated technology and develop the spirit of working virtually.

Literature Review

In the world of business, Human resource management (HRM) is one of the basic principles of administration. Because performance of any business firm relies in which way this resource is managed through HRM practices (Mwaniki & Gathenya, 2015). HRM is considered to be a driver of any business (Bose, 2015). HRM deals with acquisition, development and maintenance of competent employees at workplace. Whenever a business firm is encountered by a crisis, normally employees are significantly affected (Athamneh, 2018). Numerous strategies are adopted by the business firm to encourage employees to achieve organizational performance positively. It is crucial for the HR department to adapt a turbulent environment and also take care of employees in this situation. Because if employees are not affected by the crisis, then they are able to keep producing and carry out their work in a better way (Simoes, 2013). During the time of crisis, organizations start losing prime employees either through downsizing or through employees intention to leave because of panic situation (Vardarlier, 2016). During crisis, due to organizational inability employee recruitment poses a significant challenge (Vasa, 2010). Presently, COVID-19 is a unique kind of crisis. So, to deal with this crisis, specific strategies should be adopted by the organization. In a regular basis, organizations tend to train their employees for enhancing their potentialities successfully (Rodriguez & Walters, 2018). Protecting employees

from the outbreak of COVID-19, off line mode of training is discouraged. But some organizations can not opt for online mode of training, so they are more likely to reduce the training programmes for their employees.

For any organization, individual and organizational performance is one of the top most priority. Through performance management, employees put their efforts towards achievement of organizational goals. Effective result-based management approach supports in assessing and upgrading equally solitary and organizational production (Kumar, 2019). Due to stress, crisis situation can negatively influence employees performance (Halkos & Bousinakis, 2012). During COVID-19, upholding assessments could bring on failing analytical performance of firms because whenever exceptional performers unable to accommodate with appreciation and opportunities, there is an increase in undesirable turnover (Wilken, 2020). During crisis management, incentives can be used as a motivating tool for employees.

Due to COVID-19 outbreak business firms were not interested in hiring new staff. The reason behind is that organizations avoid unnecessary spending on hiring due to slow down in business operations. Due to COVID-19, employee training had been severely affected. Safeguarding employees from make contact with the virus, organizations cancelled training programs which have been scheduled before. To minimize employee physical interactions, organizations

should adopt e-HRM practices (Mwita K.M., 2020). Establishments are more and more engage with the adoption of technological instruments to recognize, hire and preserve workers (Blatch-Jones et al., 2020). Widespread implementation of computer based tool for enrollment is repository/portal sorting, which in turn be reckoned effectual and meeting enrollment target. Very few digitized retention tools are usually used SMS or email reminders . The most crucial manifestation for e-training is the possibility to exercise it in any circumstances from far away (Gordon, 2020). Frequent use of e-digitized devices are defined as constructive in various fields: protection and transparency, comprehensiveness and appointment, interpersonal relationship (Blatch-Jones et al., 2020). HRM plays several roles in relations with people and work management in tandem with organizational strategic decisions. During crises and uncertainties, its contribution towards organization is also appreciable (Gulua, 2020). Thus, with the intention of improving situation in an organization during pandemic, HRM should constantly communicate with employees. At the same time, HR managers also should be encouraged and supported by top-management in their efforts during the crisis.

Performance management is a continual procedure of recognizing ,calculating and enhancing the performance of single person and teams and lining up performance

with the deliberate targets of the establishment (Aguinis, 2019b). Due to COVID-19 pandemic, performance management has been critically interrupted. Stuck into residual manner, many establishments are downsizing and indeed thoroughly desisting their conventional tendency to evaluating pursuance. At the time of COVID-19, several establishments are deliberately splitting persuance from remuneration determinations. Establishments endure financial difficulties, general guidelines are also fluctuating and it holds short period of time for the enforcement actions to implicate. Because establishments regulate their preferences, wage earners job roles and day-to-day actions as well supersede substantially because primitive work projects are abandoned or deferred, line of product are removed and the normal manner workers carry on work has become inconvenient. These modifications provide the conventional strategies to evaluate employees performance which will be informative and effective. Evaluating persuance with the conventional assessment formats concedes a substantial period of time, that prolongs a hierarchy of pressure to employees and managers. Therefore, there is a necessity of performance benchmarking instrument that are small, more accurate and eventually quite extensive.

Employees are the backbone of an organization and their presence is more crucial for the development of the organization . It is obligatory for an establishment to allocate their

workers well which can fulfill their personal and professional needs. To satisfy these needs organizations should remunerate the employees well and timely motivate them. Because encouragement acts as a prime mover which allows a worker to become temperamental, effective and constructive. If the employees are more encouraged, then it could enhance their potentiality and degree of satisfaction which eventually enhances the excellences and production capability of the organization in specific. Employment regulations and assistance at the time of crisis are continuously a sigh of relief which assists the workers to retrieve their self-esteem and enthusiasm. It enhances the degree of enthusiasm of workers and stimulates their needs consequently (Eliza Wong & Kin, 2020). During outburst of COVID-19, establishments should not cut and run in allocating interim healthcare provisions to its workers. Unfortunately, during this tough times some organizations apply pay cut principle because they could not get benefitted as much.

Consequences of HRM practices during COVID-19 crisis

During the time of any crisis, HRM practitioners support and manage employees with a unconventional hi-tech human resource resolutions such as e-learning interferences and online performance management. Organizations should establish adequate practices to handle a decline in profits by the way of adopting

suitable recruitment schemes and assist workers to work from home when establishments are enclosed. Any type of crisis is exceptional and unconventional, which sometimes needs company policies to be impulsively developed or revised. COVID-19 outbreak forced many to adopt working from home concept. HR department can harmonize with head of the department to establish regulations on who are working from home and with IT department to check the suitable remote work systems are in place to enable it. HR department is accountable for gathering and preserving data connected with workers, involving demographic profile of workers within the organization. Sometimes this information is saved in a centralized database like Human Resource Information System (HRIS). HRIS permits user-friendly to information which could be helpful in crisis situations such as which employees have first aid training, who to conduct in case of an emergency and employee counts by department or location.

Research Methodology

This is a conceptual paper. Most of the data have been collected through secondary sources such as research articles, publications, journals, websites etc.

Findings

Recruitment & Selection

This paper attempted for a

comprehension of the degree/ level to which COVID-19 had influenced employee recruitment and selection practices in the establishments. From the literature it was discovered that organizations were not anymore passionate about recruiting more people to evade inessential expenses. Because the normal operations of business were slowing down. Many organizations were not encouraged the employee recruitment and selection due to prevent physical interactions. Physical interactions can cause the spread of COVID-19. Organizations can adopt digital platforms for employee recruitment and selection. But for this process so many steps should be followed. Before joining some organizations, face to face evaluation with candidates and physical verifications of forms and certificate are required .

Training

For facilitating employees with training during COVID-19 is a bigger challenge for the organization. Due to the pandemic off-line training cannot be possible. The only way is to adopt online platform to train the employees. Again online training would not be effective due to the fact that many employees were not trained how to use the technology and many of them had not used it before. During off-line training , employees are compensated with financial benefits, but this facility is not applicable in online-training. Therefore employees do not prefer online-training.

Performance Management

COVID-19 formed some difficulty for employees to accomplish previously set targets. Many organizations adopt the new norm of working from home. As employees are working far from the organization, it is challenging for the organization to monitor their performance.

Compensation

Some organizations offer their employees to take leave without pay and some of them are applying pay-cut policy. Some organizations are not able to pay salaries to their employees.

Conclusion

The role of human resource departments is to serve as a mediator between the organization, the employer and the employee. HR managers are to perform their functions without being employee or employer prone but to ensure the welfare of both parties in the context. Human resource management practices are not immune to COVID-19. The effective implementation of HRM plays a critical role in organizational performance. The outbreak made employee recruitment and selection process more difficult for organizations. Employee training programmes were decreasing or cancelling. Performance management had been challenged since previously set goals seemed not possible to be achieved in the standards expected. There is a need to measure performance which is easy, applicable,

fact-filled/insightful, versatile, far-reaching and understandable . Due to this outbreak many organizations were increasingly failing to meet their financial obligations. Therefore, organizations should consider

adopting e-HRM to facilitate HR practices smoothly. This will help to avoid unnecessary interactions which can result to spread of COVID-19. Organizations should also review the HR practices.

References

Athamneh, S., (2018). HR Planning for Crisis Management. Human Resource Planning for the 21st Century.

Aguinis H., (2019b). Performance management for dummies. Upper saddle river, NJ: John Wiley and sons.

Blatch-Jones, A., Nuttall, J., Bull, A. et al. (2020). Using digital tools in the recruitment and retention in randomised controlled trials: Survey of UK Clinical Trial Units and a qualitative study. *Trials*, 21(1): 304.

Bose, T. (2015). Emergence of HRM as a Business Driver: Mechanism towards Corporate Growth. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management* Ver. I, 17(2), 2319–7668.

Eliza, L Wong & Kin, F (2020), Workplace safety and coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: survey of employees. *Public Health and Care Facility*, 12(2).

George Halkos, Dimitrios Bousinakis, (2012). “Importance And Influence Of Organizational Changes On Companies And Their Employees,” *Journal of Advanced Research in Management, Association for Sustainable Education, Research and Science*, vol. 0(2) ,89-102.

Gondauri, D., Mikautadze, E., & Batiashvili, M. (2020). Research on COVID-19 virus spreading statistics based on the examples of the cases from different counties. *Electronic Journal of General Medicine*, 17(4).

Gordon, R. M. (2020). Psychodynamic Distance Training and Treatment: The China American Psychoanalytic Alliance Research. *Psychoanalytic Inquiry*, 40(1): 56-63.

Gulua, E. (2020). Trends, Challenges and Opportunities of Human Resource Management. *Innovative Economics and Management*, 7(1), 51-67.

Joel Rodriguez, Kelley Walters, (2017). The Importance Of Training and Development in Employee Performance and Evaluation. *World Wide Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*. 3(10): 206-212.

Kumar, P. (2019). Relationship between Performance Management System (PMS) and Organizational Effectiveness (OE): Manufacturing enterprises in India. *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, 16(3), 77–86.

Mwaniki, R., & Gathenya, J. (2015). Role of Human Resource Management Functions On Organizational Performance with reference to Kenya Power & Lighting Company “ Nairobi West Region. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 5(4), 432–448.

Mwita Kelvin M., (2020). Effects Of Corona Virus Pandemic (Covid-19) On Selected Human Resource Management Practices In Tanzania. *East African Journal of Social and Applied Sciences* . Vol.2, No. 2(2), 252-259.

Naveen Ramesh, Archana Siddaiah , Bobby Joseph, (2020). Tackling Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID 19) in Workplaces. *Indian J Occup Environ Med*. 24(1):16-18.

Simoes, M. M. B. (2013). Human Resources Management in Crisis: Effects on the Employees. (October), 65.

Vardarlier, P. (2016). Strategic Approach to Human Resources Management During Crisis. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 235(October), 463–472.

Vasa, H. (2010). The Impact of Economic Crisis on HRM Practices in Estonia. *Marketing Management*.

Yuen, K. S., Ye, Z. W., Fung, S. Y., Chan, C. P., & Jin, D. Y. (2020). SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19: The most important research questions. *Cell and Bioscience*, 10(1), 1–5.