

**The Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic
and Rebuilding the Workforce for The Hotel Trinity at Hull**

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Essay on the impact of Covid-19 and rebuilding the workforce

The Covid-19 pandemic affected the hospitality industry around the world adversely. Because of the lockdown enforced by the UK government on 26 March 2020, hotel businesses had to shut down their operations. As restrictions of lockdown had begun to relax in 2021, hotels started reopening their operations. The essay will evaluate the impact of Covid-19 on employment and rebuilding the workforce of the Hotel Trinity. The Hotel Trinity is a 3-star hotel in Hull, UK. It promises to provide quality hotel services at a reasonable price. As the UK government is relaxing restrictions, it started its operation. But the challenge is to retain a talented workforce while the payroll is high. The ongoing impact of Covid-19 on employee resourcing and development will be the main focus of the essay. The essay will analyze Hotel Trinity's present employment practices, the efficacy of the practices in terms of the business objectives, the current labor market in the UK, and will make suggestions for retaining a talented workforce. The PESTLE analysis of the Hotel Trinity will also be conducted. .

The tourism industry is one of the most adversely affected industries by this pandemic around the world. The current situation and the uncertainty about the future of the hospitality industry created by this pandemic make it less attractive for the workers. As of June 2019, over 8% of total employment in the UK was from the tourism industry (Economic Insight, 2019). A report suggests that there is a drastic decrease in jobs in the travel and hospitality industry in the UK in 2020 producing nearly 3.96 million jobs whereas it was 4.27 million in 2019 (Statista, 2021). The pandemic made many jobs redundant in the tourism sector and made the sector an unsecured one. People are now looking for more secure areas for career development. In this situation, many workers are not willing to return to this industry because they are concerned with job security and pay, and hoteliers are facing difficulties in filling vacancies. As the pandemic reduces the appeal of this sector in the job market, recruiting a talented workforce is become difficult for the tourism industry.

The pandemic has changed the typical work environment and has created a big disruption in the workplace. The evaluation and analysis of the Covid-19 pandemic on the employee life cycle will help the Hotel Trinity to understand the areas are needed to be focused on

with priority. The employee lifecycle (ELC) model visualizes the stages of the relationship shared by staff and an organization (Nagendra, 2014). The employee lifecycle model is illustrated below:

Recruitment is the process of attracting and selecting the right people for a certain job position. In the recruitment process, a job analysis is conducted to define the job's purpose and role, person specification. An employer can recruit from external or internal sources. Internal recruiting poses some advantages such as saving cost, employee familiarity with the company culture, increasing employee motivation, etc. but it may cause vacancies, skills gaps in the organization. Workforce planning is a tool for analyzing current employees and determining the initiatives that have to be undertaken for future staffing planning. The selection process is used for shortlisting applicants according to the requirements of the job position. Application forms help an employer to shortlist candidates by comparing the employee capability and job requirements. Considering the impact of the pandemic, the Hotel Trinity has to change employment policies in terms of employee flexibility, employee health protection, employee remuneration, job security, etc. to attract the talented workforce and its changed policies have to be clearly communicated in its job description.

Onboarding helps employees to be acquainted with the new workplace, but the pandemic has changed a lot of things in the onboarding process (Nurmi and Varis, 2021). Many companies shifted to new ways of onboarding such as online onboarding which poses several disadvantages for employee engagement. In this regard, continuous support from management is needed as newbies face challenges in handling jobs in this pandemic time. In workplace onboarding, there needs to follow several rules and regulations such as prescreening employees during entering the organization, maintaining personal hygiene, wearing the mask, maintaining social distancing, etc. to protect the employees from Covid-19. The Hotel Trinity has adopted a new online portal system to provide employees with the best experience in the onboarding process. Personnel such as cooks, financial managers, front-desk staff, HR employees make up the Hotel Trinity portfolio of highly skilled employees (Vaiman, Collings and Scullion, 2017). In this setting, the hotelier's commitment to continuous employee development is critical to retaining skilled

workforce members. Employee skills, behaviors, knowledge, levels of engagement are the crucial factors for Hotel Trinity's talented workforce management. The pandemic has affected employee development in the tourism industry along with other industries (Mikołajczyk, 2021). Expectations changes in the workplace necessitate the use of tools and training in the hospitality industry. Now, workforce development is not only mere organized activities targeted at changing employee behavior but also developing a culture targeted at creating lifelong individual development (Johnson, 2019). The changes caused by the pandemic in the hospitality industry have induced companies to use technology to tackle the crisis. The incorporation of technologies in employee training makes it possible for arranging training for remote workers (Fake and Dabbagh, 2020). The human resource development policy enforced by the UK government needs to be reviewed to build an effective employee development strategy. Employee development policy within an organization helps in building a bond between the management and the employees (Cormier et al., 2020). The Hotel Trinity's employee development policy focuses on extending career paths with a personal development plan which ensures that employees learn skills and knowledge needed in performing their job.

Recent data about the UK labor market indicates that the market is recovering. Reports say that in the quarter of May to July 2021, the rate of employment was 75.2% which was 0.5% higher than the quarter of February to April 2021 (Ons.gov.uk, 2019). But the recovery situation in the tourism sector is not satisfactory. Around 70% of employees in this sector furloughed due to this pandemic and 1 in 5 employees are not returning to this sector creating a shortage of talented workers in this sector (Race, 2021). The disruption created by this pandemic in the tourism industry causes employees to leave this sector. The reasons for job leaving can be the lack of job security, seasonal job, low pay, etc. in this sector (Suhail, Mat and Hassan, 2021). The separation stage of the employee life cycle is critical for any organization because the high employee turnover rate can affect badly the other employees and their performance of the business organization. Understanding why employees are leaving can help employers find solutions to this problem. Interviewing the employees who left the organization can help to find out the root causes. The Hotel Trinity is experiencing team shortages for serving customers in

this pandemic and the team shortage makes it challenging for them to meet the highest customer service standards.

The ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has increased the payroll cost for the business sector. The UK government has taken a furlough scheme (job retention scheme) to protect the business sector and the scheme has ended on 30 September 2021. Under this scheme employees whose employers fail to afford their remuneration and who couldn't able to join work, the government pays them. The end of the furlough scheme may make many jobs redundant for the tourism industry for avoiding the cost associated with payroll. The Hotel Trinity had to make some positions redundant in this pandemic time. Higher compensation pays, taking measures for employee health protection, bringing changes in the workplace, etc. make the labor cost high. As payroll is incurring a huge cost to a business, building a talented workforce will be difficult for the tourism sector businesses. The tight talent market created by this pandemic needs higher compensation payments to employees (Lord, 2020). The pandemic forced many businesses to choose from higher employee payroll and a talented workforce. Realizing a low payroll cost while maintaining a talented engaged workforce for maintaining the profitability of the tourism business poses a big challenge for the hotelier.

Many factors affect hospitality sector operation and growth (KARA, 2018). Macro environmental factors can influence the decisions made within a hospitality business organization. PESTLE analysis is the tool for analyzing macro-environmental factors in which a business operates including political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental factors (Feys and Probert, 2015). PESTLE analysis can help Hotel Trinity in making better decisions in rebuilding employment.

Political factors: The government decisions during this pandemic regarding the tourism industry pose both advantages and disadvantages. The government's imposed Covid-19 travel restrictions has forced tourism businesses to close their operations. Government's furlough scheme where the government provides wages support to employees whose employers don't afford to pay wages during this pandemic. The Hotel Trinity had to shut down its operation for a long time and several employees of the Hotel Trinity enjoyed the benefits.

Economic factors: The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted the entire economy of the world. It reduces GDP growth, disposable household income, tax revenue of the UK (Sawyer, 2021). This economic slowdown influences the profitability of the tourism sector, and the situation is forcing businesses to reduce costs. High inflation increases the price of commodities and equipment used in the hotel operation. The economic downturn due to the low GDP growth, low disposable income reduced the profit of the Hotel Trinity and increases operation cost.

Social factors: Work-life balance, Social trends, Culture, Demographics are the main features of the social factors. The social crisis created by this pandemic brought many social changes. Now, society encourages maintaining social distance. Social trends create new demands in the hospitality industry. The Hotel Trinity encourages employees and guests to maintain social distance. The Hotel Trinity continuously has to adjust its services with social trends.

Technological factors: Implementation of innovative technologies in hotel operation helps in maintaining impersonal contacts between the guest and staff. By using social media, the industry can reach its customers with less time and cost. The Hotel Trinity's mobile application made it possible for the guest to take hotel services impersonally. It uses social media to present its new hotels.

Legal Factors: The HSW Act, 1974 compels employers to take care of the employees' health and welfare. The UK government has "The National Minimum Wage Act 1998" to ensure fair wages for the workers. If not maintained, the government can close the business operation and The Hotel Trinity has to comply with the law in setting wages for its employees.

Environmental factors: In the pandemic situation, people have been very conscious of the environment. People prefer companies that have fewer impacts on environmental deterioration. According to the Companies Act, 2006 CSR is not compulsory for business organizations. But hospitality industry should conduct CSR activities to create a good image in society. The Hotel Trinity works as a very responsive member of society and it has set a goal of reducing the carbon emission of the hotel chain by 26%.The CSR activities of the hotel chain are one of its core competencies (Gigauri, 2021)

Because of the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the hospitality industry is facing a crisis in maintaining profitable operations. Reviving the industry needs strategic moves (Rahman and Faheem, 2021). Maintaining a talented workforce is a challenging task in this situation. As the furlough scheme (job retention scheme) in the UK ends in September, it may cause many jobs to be redundant. The reports about Hotel Trinity's current employment practices reveal that it cuts 1500 jobs as of January 2021. Strong retention strategies are needed in this situation for rebuilding the workforce. Retention strategies develop rules so that a company by following those rules can retain a talented workforce, reduce turnover, and secure high employee engagement. So, retention strategies can help Hotel Trinity in retaining a talented workforce for ensuring the availability of competent personnel during this pandemic time. Organizational changes such as ensuring flexible work hours, home office facilities, top management support, employee-favored organizational culture are needed to optimize the employee life cycle. The Covid-19 pandemic impacts the mental health of the people (Njiri, 2020). So, keeping Hotel Trinity's employees motivated and engaged in the workplace needs support from the top management

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