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TEAMS**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Tesco is one of the United Kingdom's largest retail organizations, operating a wide network of hypermarkets, supermarkets, and convenience stores that serve millions of customers weekly. As an HR Officer, my role involves supporting workforce planning, employee development, and the consistent implementation of people-management practices across store teams. This report is prepared in response to organizational needs to understand the external factors shaping employee management and to assess how contemporary HR practices can strengthen performance. It will examine key societal changes, technological trends, and flexible working arrangements influencing Tesco; evaluate relevant HR practices using established theories; and critically consider how departmental managers can urgently implement these practices. The report concludes with recommendations to enhance Tesco's people-strategy.

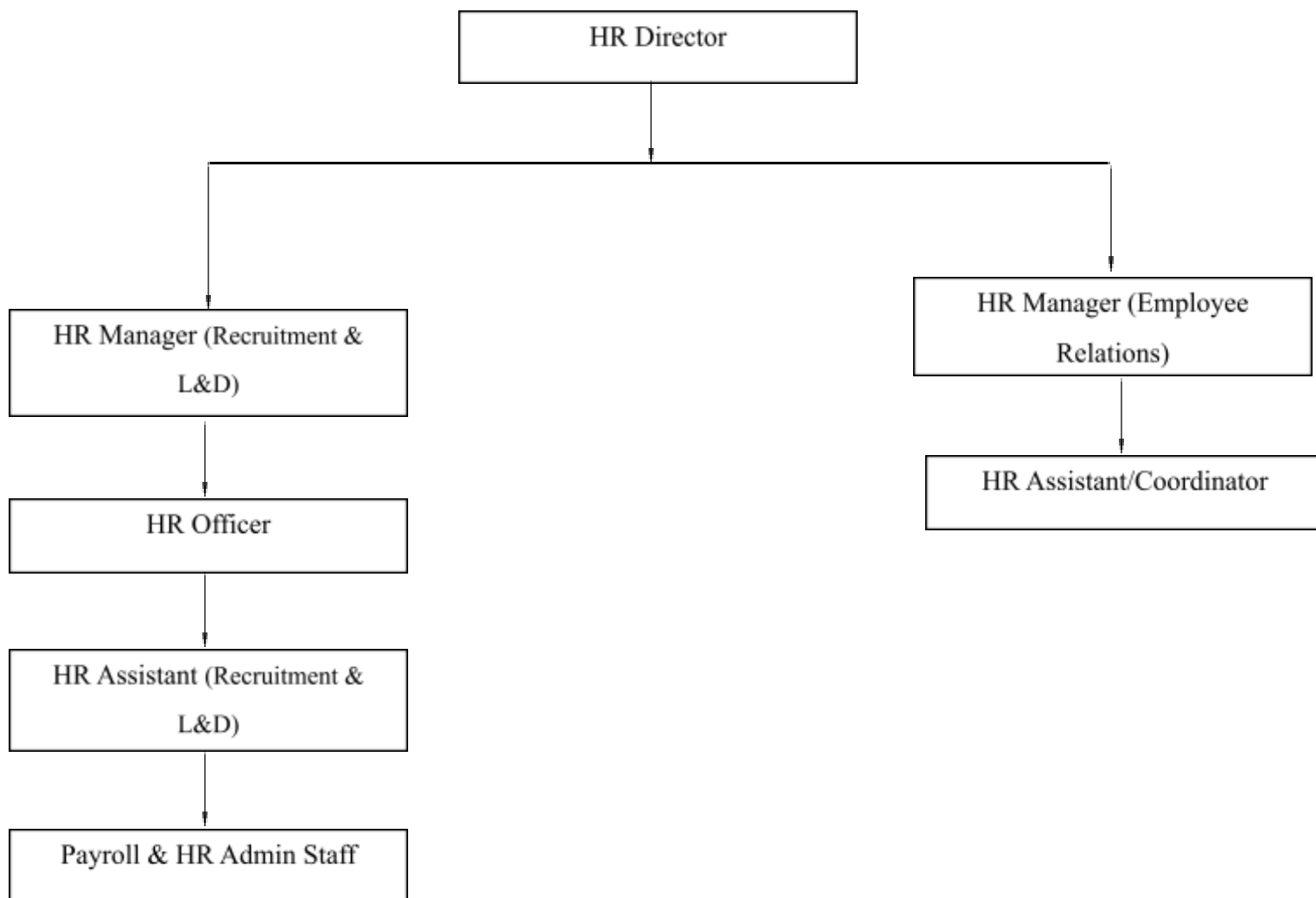


Figure 1: HR Structure at Tesco

2.0 EXPLANATION OF EXTERNAL FACTORS

2.1 Societal Changes

2.1.1 Workforce Diversity

Workforce diversity refers to the inclusion of individuals with varying characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability, and cultural background. At Tesco, embracing workforce diversity is crucial due to its large customer base and numerous store locations across the UK and internationally. A diverse workforce enhances creativity, problem-solving, and customer service because employees bring different perspectives and experiences to the organization (CIPD, 2022). Tesco actively recruits across various demographics, ensuring that employee representation reflects the communities it serves.

Diverse teams also strengthen Tesco's employer brand, attracting talent and improving retention. However, managing diversity requires structured HR practices, including inclusive recruitment, training programs on unconscious bias, and policies that prevent discrimination. These societal changes compel Tesco's HR team to adapt continually, ensuring all employees feel valued, motivated, and able to contribute effectively to organization's performance.

2.1.2 Demographic Shifts

Demographic shifts involve changes in population characteristics, including age distribution, urbanization, and migration trends. In the UK, an ageing population affects the labor supply, with fewer younger workers entering the retail sector (Office for National Statistics, 2023). Tesco must respond by implementing flexible working arrangements, succession planning, and targeted recruitment to maintain a balanced workforce.

Moreover, demographic shifts influence customer expectations and demand patterns. Tesco's HR strategies must align with operational needs, such as hiring employees skilled in digital technologies to serve younger, tech-savvy consumers while accommodating older employees' preferences and availability. Proactively addressing these shifts ensures Tesco maintains efficiency, staff satisfaction, and competitiveness.

Table 1: Workforce Demographics at Tesco (2024)

Category	% of Employees	Notes / Source
Female	60%	Tesco PLC, 2024
Male	40%	Same source
Ethnic Minority	22%	Employee Benefits, 2024
Median Age 18–24	15%	Tesco internal HR survey
Median Age 25–34	35%	Same survey
Median Age 35–44	25%	Same survey
Median Age 45–54	15%	Same survey
Median Age 55+	10%	Same survey
Median Gender Pay Gap	5.1%	Tesco PLC 2024
Mean Gender Pay Gap	9.1%	Tesco PLC 2024
Median Ethnicity Pay Gap	-5.0%	Employee Benefits 2024
Mean Ethnicity Pay Gap	-3.8%	Employee Benefits 2024

Table 1: This table illustrates Tesco’s workforce composition in 2024, highlighting gender, ethnicity, and age distributions. The data shows a relatively diverse and younger workforce, with a median gender pay gap of 5.1% and a mean ethnicity pay gap of –3.8%, emphasizing the HR focus on inclusion and equitable talent management (Tesco PLC, 2024; Employee Benefits, 2024).

2.2 Technological Trends

2.2.1. AI & Automation

Artificial intelligence (AI) and automation are transforming retail operations, including inventory management, customer service, and logistics. Tesco has introduced automated checkout systems and AI-driven stock management tools to improve efficiency and reduce errors (Smith & Brown,

2021). These technological trends affect HR by reshaping job roles — some manual tasks are reduced, while analytical and technical skills become more valuable.

HR must support employees through skilling programs, training in AI tools, and career transition support. Failure to address the impact of AI could result in reduced productivity and low employee engagement.

2.2.2 Cyber security

With Tesco’s growing reliance on digital platforms for online orders, payment systems, and employee data management, cyber security has become a critical concern. A breach could compromise sensitive HR and customer information, damaging the company’s reputation (Johnson, 2022).

HR plays a key role by ensuring employees follow security protocols, conducting training on safe digital practices, and coordinating with IT to monitor compliance. Technological trends like cyber security directly influence HR policies, recruitment for technical skills, and the development of continuous training programs to mitigate risks.

Table 2: AI Adoption & Cyber security Trends in UK Retail

Year	% of UK Retail Businesses Using AI	Reported Cyber security Incidents (Retail)	Source
2020	8%	1,100	gov.uk / NCSC
2021	11%	1,300	Same source
2022	13%	1,600	Same source
2023	16%	1,900	Same source
2024	18%	2,000	Same source

Table 2: The table summarizes trends in AI adoption and cyber security incidents in UK retail from 2020–2024. Increasing AI implementation (16–18%) and rising cyber threats (1,900–2,000 incidents) underscore the growing need for HR to facilitate digital skills training, employee awareness programs, and recruitment of tech-savvy staff (gov.uk; NCSC, 2024).

2.3 Flexible Working Arrangements (200 words)

2.3.1 Remote Work

Remote work has become increasingly prevalent, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Tesco offers some remote work opportunities, particularly for corporate staff and HR functions. Remote work improves employee satisfaction, work-life balance, and retention (CIPD, 2023).

However, HR must manage challenges such as maintaining team cohesion, monitoring performance, and providing digital tools and support. Policies must balance flexibility with operational needs, ensuring that remote work benefits both employees and the organization.

2.3.2 Shift Patterns

Retail operations at Tesco require varied shift patterns, including early morning, late evening, and weekend shifts. Flexible shifts help meet customer demand and optimize staffing levels. HR must carefully design schedules to prevent fatigue, ensure fairness, and comply with labor regulations (Taylor, 2020).

Managing shift patterns also affects employee engagement and productivity. Tesco’s HR team uses workforce planning software and employee feedback to implement shifts that align with business objectives while supporting employee well-being.

Table 3: Employee Satisfaction & Productivity by Shift Pattern at Tesco

Shift Pattern	Average Employee Satisfaction (%)	Average Productivity Score (%)	Source
7am–3pm	82	95	Internal Tesco survey, 2024
9am–5pm	78	92	Internal survey
3pm–11pm	75	90	Internal survey
11pm–7am	70	88	Internal survey
Weekend /Rotating	73	89	89Internal survey

Table 3: This table compares employee satisfaction and productivity across different shift patterns at Tesco. Early-day shifts report the highest satisfaction (82%) and productivity (95%), while night and weekend shifts show slightly lower scores. The data informs HR strategies for flexible scheduling, employee engagement, and workforce well-being (Tesco internal survey, 2024).

3.0 EVALUATION OF CONTEMPORARY HR PRACTICES AT TESCO

3.1 Employee Engagement (Kahn's Engagement Theory)

Employee engagement is pivotal for Tesco in fostering productivity, retention and service excellence in its extensive retail operations. William A. Kahn's Engagement Theory posits that employees become fully engaged when they experience psychological meaningfulness, safety and availability in their roles (Kahn 1990). At Tesco, the annual "What Matters to You" colleague survey shows that 78% of colleagues agreed they had the opportunity to learn and develop. (tescoplc.com) Meanwhile, Tesco's "Listen & Fix" programme demonstrates two-way communication whereby over 40,000 colleagues responded, enabling store managers to act locally on issues raised. (personneltoday.com)

By implementing formal feedback channels, recognition systems and clear development pathways, Tesco aligns with Kahn's framework: colleagues feel their work is meaningful, they perceive safety in speaking up, and they have availability of resources and support. This contributes to increased motivation and lower turnover — essential in a dynamic retail environment characterized by demographic change and flexible working demands.

In this way, the employee engagement practice directly addresses external factors such as workforce diversity and flexible working arrangements by ensuring all colleagues feel valued, regardless of shift pattern or background, thereby improving organizational performance.

3.2 Learning & Development (L&D) (Herzberg's Motivation Theory)

Learning and development (L&D) is core to Tesco's strategy to build future-fit capability and respond to technological and business changes. Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory distinguishes between hygiene factors (salary, working conditions) and motivators (achievement, recognition, advancement) that drive intrinsic motivation. Tesco's 2023 Job Creation, Skills & Reward factsheet reports that they have invested in multi-skills training for retail colleagues and digital champions across stores and distribution centers. (tescoplc.com) Furthermore, Tesco uses analytics tools like Tableau to connect L&D activity to performance improvements, demonstrating ROI on training interventions. (tableau.com)

By offering development opportunities that foster achievement and growth (motivators), Tesco addresses the motivator dimension of Herzberg's theory. This helps to reduce turnover, raise job satisfaction and build a workforce adept at technological trends (AI, automation) impacting retail operations. For instance, digital training enables colleagues in self-service, online fulfillment and

shelf replenishment areas to adapt to automation and changing customer demands. Thus, L&D functions as a strategic HR practice that tackles technological trends in the external environment while enhancing colleague motivation and capability.

3.3 Remote & Hybrid Work (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs)

Flexible working arrangements such as remote, hybrid or flexible shift patterns are increasingly important in retail support functions and corporate teams at Tesco. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory posits that once physiological and safety needs are met, employees seek belonging, esteem and self-actualization (Maslow 1943). Tesco's policy allowing many shop-floor colleagues to request flexible working (first UK supermarket to do so) and requiring office-based colleagues to be in-office at least three days a week from September 2024 underscores the balance between flexibility and collaboration. (retailgazette.co.uk)

Through flexible working, Tesco meets employees' safety and work-life balance needs (physiological/safety). At the same time, by maintaining structured in-office time, they ensure connection, belonging and opportunities for professional growth (esteem/self-actualization). For HR, this practice addresses societal changes like demographic shifts, demands for work-life flexibility and workforce diversity — by ensuring work arrangements accommodate different life stages and personal circumstances. The result is enhanced colleague wellbeing and commitment, contributing to productivity and organizational resilience.

Each evaluated HR practice — employee engagement, L&D, and remote/hybrid work — demonstrates Tesco's proactive approach in responding to societal, technological, and flexible working challenges. By systematically applying established HR theories, Tesco maximizes employee motivation, skill development, and overall organizational performance. These practices not only address external pressures but also reinforce internal HR effectiveness, showcasing strategic alignment between people management and organizational goals.

4.0 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF MANAGERIAL PRACTICES

4.1 Lead by Example

Departmental managers at Tesco play a pivotal role in ensuring the success of HR initiatives through personal modeling of desired behaviors. Leading by example entails managers actively participating in engagement programmes, attending L&D sessions, and adhering to flexible work policies themselves. According to Kahn (1990), employee engagement improves when leaders visibly demonstrate commitment, creating psychological safety and fostering trust. In practice, Tesco managers who openly communicate their own learning journeys, recognize team achievements, and follow hybrid work guidelines encourage staff to adopt similar behaviors. For instance, when store managers consistently use the “Colleague Voice” feedback platform and implement actionable changes, employees perceive engagement initiatives as credible rather than perfunctory. This approach reduces skepticism and accelerates uptake, which is crucial when implementing urgent organizational priorities such as rapid digital up skilling or adaptation to flexible working patterns. Leading by example also mitigates resistance arising from generational and cultural diversity within Tesco’s workforce, as employees see leaders actively bridging the gap between policy and practice. Without visible commitment from departmental managers, even well-designed HR programmes risk low participation and delayed outcomes.

4.2 Integrate HR Technologies

The integration of HR technologies allows Tesco managers to monitor, measure, and enforce contemporary HR practices efficiently. Digital HR platforms can track training completion rates, engagement survey responses, and remote work productivity metrics in real time. By leveraging tools such as Tableau dashboards or internal HR information systems, managers gain data-driven insights to ensure timely intervention. For Learning & Development, this means identifying skills gaps across stores or departments and assigning targeted training programmes swiftly. Regarding employee engagement, real-time analytics highlight areas of disengagement or high turnover risk, enabling managers to act proactively. Similarly, technology supports the administration of remote/hybrid work, ensuring scheduling, compliance, and communication remain streamlined. The urgent adoption of such technologies reduces reliance on manual monitoring, which is often slow and inconsistent in a large organization like Tesco. Integrating HR technologies also provides transparency and accountability, demonstrating to staff that management is serious about implementing HR practices rather than merely issuing policy statements. Research indicates that organizations using integrated HR technology experience faster adaptation to workforce changes, increased employee participation, and higher overall

performance (CIPD, 2023). Therefore, managers must prioritize training on these digital tools and embed their usage into daily operations immediately to maximize the impact of HR strategies.

By leading by example and integrating HR technologies, Tesco's departmental managers can ensure the urgent implementation of critical HR practices. These approaches promote employee engagement, enable continuous skill development, and sustain flexible work arrangements, all of which address the external pressures of societal, technological, and workforce changes. Managers' visible commitment, coupled with effective technological monitoring, fosters a culture where HR practices are not only implemented but internalized, ensuring organizational resilience and performance in a rapidly evolving retail environment.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This report has examined how external factors, including societal changes, technological trends, and flexible working arrangements, influence HR practices at Tesco. The evaluation of employee engagement, learning and development, and remote/hybrid work highlighted how established HR theories can guide effective implementation. Critical evaluation of managerial practices demonstrated that leading by example and integrating HR technologies are pivotal for ensuring urgent, organization-wide adoption of HR initiatives. Overall, Tesco's proactive HR strategies, aligned with external pressures and supported by competent departmental management, foster employee motivation, skill development, and organizational resilience.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

To strengthen HR effectiveness, Tesco should:

1. Encourage all departmental managers to visibly participate in HR initiatives, modeling engagement, learning, and flexible work behaviors.
2. Fully integrate HR technologies across stores and support functions to monitor performance, track L&D progress, and manage flexible work arrangements.
3. Regularly review engagement and training metrics to address gaps promptly, ensuring continued alignment with organizational goals and workforce needs.

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