

LOCATION SWANSEA

LLEOLIAD ABERTAWE

LEVEL 7

LEFEL 7

**EXAMINATION PERIOD
AUGUST 2020**

**CYFNOD ARHOLIADAU
GORFFENNAF 2020**

MODULE TITLE: LEADING, MANAGING AND DEVELOPING PEOPLE

MODULE CODE: BMHR7008

TIME: 48 HOUR OPEN BOOK EXAM

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:

A copy of the article (section 1) will have been provided three weeks prior to your exam.

Answer all questions in section 1.

Answer either question A or B for each question in section 2.

You should answer a total of 8 questions, 4 in section 1 and 4 in section 2. You cannot pass the exam if you do not answer 8 questions

All questions in section 1 are marked out of 20 and questions in section 2 out of 10.

Maximum word count: 4,500 words.

This is an open book exam and you may refer to any sources whilst completing your answers.

Your answers (clearly labelled and in one document) should be uploaded to Turnitin by 12pm on Thursday 13th August 2020.

Academic honesty is required. In the main body of your submission you must give credit to authors on whose research and ideas your work is based. Append to your submission a reference list that indicates the books, articles, etc. that you have used, cited or quoted in order to complete this assessment. You should complete this task on your own and without collaboration with others.

SECTION 1:

Article:

In their seminal work *Engage for Success: enhancing performance through employee engagement* MacLeod and Clarke (2009) set out four enablers of engagement in the workplace. Since then there has been ample debate centred around the concepts that are closely aligned to engagement; commitment, motivation, satisfaction, discretionary effort and so the list goes on. Some authors even go as far as to say 'engagement' as a term does not exist, take this extract from *The Future of Engagement: Thought Piece Collection. What is employee engagement and does it matter?: An evidenced-based approach*. **Briner (2014)**.

Imagine this, I approach a senior HR manager of a large organisation and ask if we can arrange a meeting to discuss a wonderful new and proven idea about how they can motivate and retain their employees. They are very busy, but agree. I start the meeting with a more truthful account of this idea. I tell them that in reality it has no agreed upon definition and that there is no evidence about whether it can be measured in a valid or reliable way. I then tell them that the idea is actually quite similar to if not precisely the same as a lot of other ideas that have been around for about 50 years. Finally, I let them know that there is at the present time absolutely no good quality evidence that shows that if you implement this idea it will produce the desired results – though there are plenty of people and organisations with vested interests who will happily tell you their neat anecdotes and 'success stories'. Very soon that HR manager will get pretty annoyed with me for wasting their time on this not-so-new and pretty unhelpful idea and quite rightly show me the door. Wouldn't you do the same?

The idea of employee engagement¹ (henceforth just engagement) shares exactly the same characteristics as the idea described above. However, rather than showing engagement the door, many HR practitioners (and some HR academics) have invited it in, sat it down, given it a nice cup of tea, asked it to stay for as long as it wants and given it a prominent role. What's going on? Whatever your personal views about engagement my goals here are simple: To stimulate a more balanced, deeper, more critical and more evidence-based approach to how we think about and use engagement in organisations.

Problem 1: Defining engagement:

The one thing everyone knows about engagement is that nobody agrees what it is. For example, McLeod and Clarke (2009) stated: 'There is no one agreed definition of employee engagement – during the course of this review we have come across more than 50 definitions'. Not only are definitions numerous but, more importantly, they are very different (see Robertson-Smith and Marwick, 2009). Some definitions focus on employee behaviour (eg, discretionary effort), some on employee attitudes (eg, commitment), some on employee feelings (eg, enthusiasm), some on the conditions of work and what the organisation does (eg, provides support), some on various combinations of these, and yet others define engagement as a situation in which one of these things, such as attitudes, causes another, such as behaviour. In other words, when it comes to defining engagement it appears that almost anything goes. From a practical (and academic) perspective the absence of agreement about what something means – and an absence of concern about that lack of agreement – is not funny or weird or cute or unfortunate or inconvenient. It's a confused, confusing and chaotic mess that is almost bound to lead to messy and undesired outcomes. It means that whenever we talk about or think about or try to measure 'engagement' we are almost certainly saying different things, understanding different things, measuring

different things and doing different things but believing quite incorrectly they are all the same.

David Guest got it pretty much right when he said: '...the concept of employee engagement needs to be more clearly defined (...) or it needs to be abandoned' (McLeod and Clarke, 2009). Since that time, far from increased definitional clarity this definitional chaos has continued and perhaps even worsened...

More recently, the CIPD Profession Map now refers to 'employee experience' under specialist knowledge as opposed to 'employee engagement' and in HRZones' *HR predictions for 2020* Perry Timms wrote 'e is for energy not engagement' **Timms (2020)**. Therefore, one can assume the debate under the very loose heading of 'employee engagement' is set to rage on a little longer. Given recent macro factors affecting the entire workforce not only across the UK but across the globe, I purport an engaged workforce is going to be a pivotal factor for any business or organisation to pull forward in the next twelve months. Drawing on recent literature, business examples and academic viewpoints answer the following questions.

ALL answers should be justified as far as possible using appropriate theory and evidence

Section 1

Read the attached article. Answer all three of the following questions, taking care in each case to fully justify the arguments you make.

1. In light of the above, critically evaluate the term employee engagement, providing your own underpinning evidence for the points you make.
2. Demonstrate your breadth of knowledge with a critical analysis of examples of employee engagement in practice. In so doing, discuss businesses/organisations that are reputed to have best practice examples of employee engagement or indeed the contrary.
3. Referring to relevant theories/models of change management discuss the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on the UK workforce (including relevant evidence and statistics to underpin the points you make). Make predictions of the future impact on employee engagement in the next 12 months.

Section 1 (continued)

Answer either a or b

- a) Evaluate Megatrends and Big Tech developments to describe what should be the priorities of HR in driving forward positive employee engagement in the next three to five years.

OR

- b) Explain the interplay of *culture* and *employee engagement*. Drawing on relevant literature set out what culture is, how it can impact on business performance and the role that culture has in determining how engaged a workforce is.

Section 2 (Not based on the article)

Answer either A or B in each section.

To communicate your answers more clearly, you may use whatever methods you wish, for example diagrams, flowcharts, bullet points, you need to provide an explanation of each.

2.1

- a. David Ulrich's Business Partner model has attracted much debate since its inception in 1997. Provide a SWOT analysis of this particular HR Model.

OR

- b. During the *CIPD Festival of Work* **CIPD (2020)** Professor Andrew Scott predicted that 100% of jobs will be impacted by technology in the coming years. Set out the ways in which HR can properly support this transition.

2.2

- a. During the *CIPD Festival of Work* **CIPD (2020)** Mary Towers of the TUC stated that '*4 million people are currently employed in insecure work in the UK*'. Dr. Rochelle Hayness stated in the same conference that '*contingent workers have been hit the hardest during the COVID pandemic*'. '*During the period 9 April to 20 April 2020, the OPN found that 45% of adults in employment said they had worked from home at some point in the last week*' **ONS (2020)**. With all of this disruption in mind set out your views on the challenges associated with working not *from* home but working *at* home in these difficult circumstances and how have employers responded to this.

OR

- b. Compare and contrast the culture at two or more businesses/organisations, underpinning your work with academic theory/models.

2.3

- a. The following quote from Eades; '*The most important job of a leader today is to elevate others*' is a simplistic summary of the tremendously complex topic of leadership. Drawing on the work of others put forward your own views to either support or contradict this statement. **Eades (2020)**.

OR

b. Mullins states corporate social responsibility (CSR) is ‘...broader responsibilities which are both internal and external to the organisation.. **Mullins (2019)**. The CIPD state :

Corporate responsibility (CR) is concerned with the sustainability of an organisation over the long term. At its core, corporate responsibility seeks to add value to an organisation's activities by ensuring they have a positive impact on society, the environment and the economy. The traditional model of CR includes the workplace, marketplace, community and environment.

CIPD Factsheet, Corporate Responsibility an Introduction **CIPD (2019)**.

Deloitte go one step further with their views that CSR has now progressed to ‘*social enterprising organisations*’ in their *Human Capital Trends* report **Deloitte (2019)**.

With all of this in mind critically evaluate the current business climate from a CSR perspective.

2.4

a. Adams in her HR Disrupted book predicted the following capabilities were the future requirements of the HR professional;

1. *Get clever with how we use data to influence people.*
2. *Become the go-to experts on human beings*
3. *Be willing to set the example*
4. *Get comfortable with giving away control.*

Adams (2017).

To what extent do you agree with Lucy Adams? Set out your views on how these capabilities are relevant, consider the applicability in different sectors, and sized organisations. Underpin your views with supporting evidence.

OR

b. In the current throws of a global pandemic and with a recession around the corner ‘burn-out’ is a significant concern for many employees. *Google* recognised this as a threat to the wellbeing of their employees some years ago and instigated a ‘*Dublin goes dark*’ project, whereby everyone was encouraged to leave work at 6pm, hand in their laptop and not work after hours. *Innocent* smoothies have a ‘*last-leaver-pulls*’ lever in a bid to deter late workers. Explain the complexities of ‘burn-out’. What reasonable steps can an employer take to safeguard their employees from burn-out? **Bock (2016)**.

Reference List

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Deloitte. (2020) *Leading the Social Enterprise: Reinvent with a Human Focus*. Global Human Capital Trends Report. U.S: Deloitte.

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