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Assessment 1

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Introduction

This epidemic of Covid-19 has had a profound impact on the office's culture. Because of the worldwide shutdown and flight prohibitions, many people's preconceived notions about business and corporate relationships have been completely turned. Most tasks may now be completed without being physically present in a workplace (Gender, 2018). They don't have to go to and from the office. Others have switched from traveling to staying at home with minimal impact on their businesses. Organizational leaders must decide which transformation they want to keep and prevent as they adapt to working during a pandemic and plan for the restoration. The rapid pace of change is problematic. Their aggregate norms of conduct characterize everyone within an organization's culture (Olusegun and Tinuke, 2020). Office culture changes slowly. It adapts gradually over many years, accumulating little inspiration and rare insight. In recent months, organizations worldwide have discarded their basic working assumption, "how things get done around here," in recent months.

Executives may replace implicit office messages with specific remote directives. Leaders may help set the stage for work or endeavor. Regular check-ins may be required to assist personnel in growing. Leaders can build trust. They may empower their staff to own their duties and do them well. Occupying a small space may be counter. It may not be possible. It's time to shine. Similarly, remote work may seem cheap but has hidden cultural costs (Morshed, 2022). The lockout has resulted in social isolation for many. Prisons use solitary confinement as a punishment. Leaders may respond by collaborating with their teams. "Mental health awareness" was a slogan before the outbreak. Not anymore.

Flexible working concerning diversity and inclusion at work

The COVID-19 epidemic underlined the need for flexible work arrangements and incredibly remote employment. After multiple governments issued stay-at-home directives that only permitted important industries to keep their physical facilities open, underprepared businesses were compelled to adopt flexible work arrangements (Smith, 2022a). After social isolation restrictions are lifted and companies resume operations, employees' desires for flexible work hours and remote work possibilities will become more frequent. Work schedule flexibility is becoming more common now that many firms have discovered the advantages of telecommuting or working hours other than the conventional 9 to 5, which do not impede productivity.

In the absence of an epidemic, flexible work arrangements may help with recruitment and retention, boost company diversity, encourage ethical behavior, and support the organization's efforts to be socially responsible (Sarah, 2020). Employers may use telework to save money, enhance attendance and productivity, and raise employee morale.

Opportunities and challenges

Increasing numbers of employees in the United Kingdom are placing a high value on work-life balance and flexibility when evaluating employment offers. More than half (55%) of companies anticipate a rise in the number of employees who work from home or remotely part-time (Akbar, 2021).

On the other hand, flexible work arrangements may need a paradigm shift for many organizations, especially smaller ones that lack the necessary resources to use them effectively. Flexible work alternatives benefit both employers and employees. Among these advantages are:

- Aiding in the search for new employees.
- Increasing the sense of purpose and fulfillment among employees.
- Keeping track of when employees are showing up to work and finding ways to cut down on missed days.
- Retaining the best workforce possible.

- Increasing output
- Work-life balance for employees may be improved.
- Maintaining a low ecological footprint, It is possible to reduce carbon emissions and the "footprints" of new office buildings by implementing specific flexible working arrangements.
- Maintaining operations even in an emergency, such as a natural catastrophe or pandemic.

Managers responsible for putting flexible work arrangements into practice need to remember several things:

- Making programs relevant to the genuine requirements and desires of employees.
- They inform as many individuals as possible about flexible work schedule benefits.
- Exercising prudence when deciding to discontinue a program that no longer serves the needs of employees. Even if just a few employees have used a perk, its elimination might harm morale. Unproductive initiatives should be phased out over time by employers.

Managing the transition from a conventional workplace to one with more flexible work arrangements may also produce or bring to light several management difficulty areas, including:

- Management's reluctance to implement new ideas.
- Nearby prejudice.
- Concerns about how work is monitored and controlled.
- As a team, we had to deal with a wide range of schedules.
- Retaining the safety and security of employees and their information.

Flexibility in the workplace isn't a silver bullet for minority workers, but it may help alleviate mental toil while working in a predominantly white environment.

It's not uncommon for employees of color to experience conflict and incivility. If something occurs in person, there is a mounting impact on the workers to suffer it or overlook it, but in a remote setting, there is more flexibility to shut your laptop and walk away, and there are fewer chances for occurrences to occur in the first place(McCann and Vorley, 2021).

People don't have to change their habits or look to fit into a dominant culture. Instead, they can be themselves ultimately, and interactions are much more work-focused(Korunka, 2021).This

trend has been spearheaded by an online platform that connects businesses with college students and recent graduates from a variety of backgrounds.

Byron Slosar, CEO and founder of HIVE Diversity, a platform that works with a rising number of businesses, said that talent comes first, followed by location. Companies are widening their search for talent outside their office's zip code, and they are hiring individuals who would have been excluded from those opportunities in a pre-pandemic atmosphere (Lui, 2020).

In July 2021, HIVE Diversity recruited Alexis McLaughlin as executive vice president of business development. McLaughlin worked as an engineer officer in the United States Army for eight years and as a finance professional for around three years before joining HIVE Diversity. McLaughlin has worked from home in Austin since joining the company last year. McLaughlin, who is black and LGBTQ, alleges she was "mistaken for a man all the time" when driving to her previous job because she wore a tight suit (Gender, 2018).

HER IDENTITY IS UNMISTAKABLE when I use my pronouns – she, her, hers – on the screen during a video discussion.

"I don't feel the need to correct people as often as I used to, making relationships seem more genuine." While the majority of corporate leaders questioned by Microsoft say their firm presently requires or aims to push people back to full-time in-person work over the next year, employees are left wondering what hybrid work will look like in the coming months or if it will disappear entirely (Kelliher and Menezes, 2021). Subramanian adds, "Analyze how proximity bias might manifest in a hybrid workplace and what employees of color need as we transition to this new normal."

Management must be deliberate in setting expectations for their employees and determining how flexibility will be implemented in reality," she says. As a manager, you must focus on outcomes rather than hours spent. To that end, Subramanian advises employers to regularly survey their workforce to learn how they feel about returning to work and what they need to be successful. Additionally, she says, "Transparency will be increasingly crucial as firms grow progressively more scattered," she concludes. With the support of these talks, businesses are better able to prioritize equality and inclusion in creating a roadmap for the future of their work (Hynes, Aquino and Hauer, 2022).

Flexible Working and Inequality

Even though employees have a legal right to seek flexible work schedules, they are not guaranteed it. If your company has a legitimate business reason for rejecting your request, they are within their rights to do so. It may lead to dissatisfaction and even confrontation with your job. A 12-month waiting period applies if an employer rejects your application (Daniel, Irene and Sarah, 2021). If you are given flexible working, you will probably have to make significant modifications to your work habits, and these changes will be permanent unless you have a receptive employer! These adjustments will affect you, your job, coworkers, and even your loved ones. Working from home may seem like the perfect solution for some employees. However, this is not always the case. Because of this, it might be difficult for family members to appreciate or comprehend that you're still at work, even when you're at home (Banerjee and Singh, 2021). You won't be able to meet friends for coffee, do chores, or run errands as easily as you would if you were working. As a result, it may be difficult to maintain a clear distinction between work and home while working from home. (Banerjee and Singh, 2021). With an "I'll just get this done" approach, you might easily fall into the trap of working into the night rather than enjoying your spare time. As a result, you may find it challenging to ignore coworkers or your boss who believe it's appropriate to contact you during non-work hours. Work suddenly takes up the day that you had hoped to spend relaxing (Smith, 2022).

Working from home requires a high level of self-discipline. Procrastination is ubiquitous, and it's all too easy to postpone getting down to work. The day passes in a blur since you have no one to keep an eye on you. This might lead to additional evening hours spent compensating for missing work hours when you should be enjoying time with family (Akbar, 2021). The ease with which you engage with your colleagues (who may work from home or in the office) may vary depending on your situation and career. Technical difficulties, on the other hand, should not be neglected. It may be surprising how difficult it is to cooperate with colleagues that work differently or at different hours than you, and you may learn that you must be very organised to manage communications, collaboration, planning, and delivery (Sodha, 2022).

While working from home enables you to be at your desk by 7 a.m., distraction-free, and in your jammies, you also lose out on the energy and creativity that comes from teamwork. You may feel uninspired and alone if you are not surrounded by the support, company, and general energy that

comes with collaboration (Almeida, 2022). This may have an effect on your motivation and, in certain cases, the quality of your work. According to research done in the United States of America, employees who work from home have a higher risk of developing depression. Don't underestimate how much you'll miss the birthday cakes and end-of-week drinks that were formerly such a big part of the social component of work.

Part-time work accounts for a significant share of gender salary disparities in businesses. Women who work part-time are less likely to rise in their occupations as rapidly as men who work full-time (either purposefully or unintentionally) and earn much less during their careers than men who work full-time (Christian, 2022).

Part-time work accounts for a significant share of gender salary disparities in businesses. Women who work part-time are less likely to rise in their occupations as rapidly as men who work full-time (either purposefully or unintentionally) and earn much less during their careers than men who work full-time (Macdonald, 2021). Again, anecdotal data shows that flexible work arrangements may make people more vulnerable to redundancy in specific firms. Any criteria for redundancy selection must be objective and non-biased. Therefore terminating someone for working flexibly would be unfair and perhaps discriminatory. Whatever the advantages of flexible working are for you, you mustn't forget some of the disadvantages for your firm (Smith, 2022b). Transitioning to a new way of working and supervising may be difficult for some supervisors since the idea of not being able to see what someone is doing may be strange to them. Employers are gambling when they approve a request for flexible working hours. To make flexible agreements work, both parties must be willing to compromise. If not handled properly, flexible working may result in inefficiencies, a decline in quality, and a communication breakdown. Numerous businesses offer flexible work arrangements, which give them more flexibility over when and where they work, and numerous governments are granting workers the freedom to seek flexible employment (McCann and Vorley, 2021). Much of the debate about flexible working has focused on whether it improves people's work-life balance. Flexible working may enable employees to tailor their job demands to their family's needs.

Given that women are often the principal caregivers and do household duties, it is believed that women would seek and profit the most from such agreements. According to some experts, the ongoing salary disparity between men and women may be explained by women giving off access

to flexible employment for more compensation. Others argue that female-dominated occupations pay less because they have more access to flexible work arrangements and favorable conditions(Leatherbarrow and Fletcher, 2018).

If this is true, and flexible work arrangements are made available to those who desire and need them, women and female-dominated workplaces should benefit from increased access. However, the findings of researchers studying gender inequalities in access to schedule control and those evaluating(Sodha, 2022) how female-dominated firms and professions perform in offering flexible work arrangements are somewhat mixed. Additionally, most research concentrates only on the percentage of women in a firm or profession, excluding sectoral or job position variances. Additionally, the majority have been located in the United States and have relied on data from the 1990s or earlier(Francis, 2022). This begs the issue of whether similar tendencies exist in Europe, despite its distinct institutional and moral foundations. We may also anticipate variance throughout Europe, given the diversity of national circumstances. Schedule management has gained in popularity in Europe over the last several decades, and employees' work-life balance needs are garnering significant attention. As a result, a review of current data is required(Almeida, 2022).

Conclusion

Our office's culture was forever changed by Covid-19. The majority of work may now be done remotely, without the need for an actual physical presence in the office. Although remote employment may seem a bargain, it comes at a cultural price. They must choose between allowing and stopping certain types of transformations. There is an increasing trend toward workers working from home or remotely part-time, with more than half of UK businesses expecting an increase. According to an annual Office for National Statistics poll, employers and employees benefit from flexible work arrangements (ONS). People don't have to fit into a dominating culture in a mixed workplace. So, people are free to be who they are, and the conversations are a lot more work-oriented. Employers should conduct a poll to get an idea of how their employees feel about returning to work. The more dispersed companies get, the more critical it will become to have open and honest communication. If your employer denies your request for flexible working hours, you must wait for one year. Working with coworkers who have various schedules or work at different times may be difficult. Working from home increases the risk of developing depression, according to research. Part-time workers have a lower chance of promotion than full-time workers. Employees may be able to adjust their work schedules to fit their family's requirements via flexible working arrangements. Because women tend to be primary caretakers and housewives, it is expected that they would be the most interested in and benefit from such deals (Macdonald, 2021). Some analysts claim that women earn less than males since flexible work schedules are more common in female-dominated fields.

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