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1. INTRODUCTION

People management also states human resource management and it can include the training, recruitment, and management of the workforce. To manage the people effectively, the company and human resource management departments require to identify the motivation factors for people and also explore different ways to emphasize identified motivation factors in diverse situations. The overall discussion aims to identify the potential impact of flexible working by considering a business case to evaluate the concepts in favour and against. This report will include the scenario in which a new human resource manager is appointed for a retail company in the UK that employs around 1000 employees at different locations or retail stores.

2. FAVOUR FLEXIBLE WORKING CONCERNING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

2.1. Business case

The organization is dealing as a grocery retailing sector that operates its business across different locations in the UK with 1000 employees. They focus on people management by adopting the policy of flexible working to promote diversity and inclusion in an organization. In the overall process, human resource management have a vital role in succeeding the policy in the workplace which will be discussed further.

2.2. Policy

The diversity and inclusion policy is a fundamental policy that is critical to employee engagement. This policy is important in companies to focus on equal treatment as well as an equal opportunity (Abt et. al., 2021). This policy promotes a diverse as well as a description and harassment-free working environment. It highlights the best practices and values that the organization prioritizes to external and internal stakeholders. This policy should include the process for making complaints of the description in the workplace as well as how organisations can monitor or access the effectiveness of policy as well as best working practices.

2.3. Flexible working environment and its advantages

Workplace flexibility is important because that emphasizes the ability and willingness to adapt to the change of business and organisation in any aspect. A company needs to ensure that needs or requirements should be met of employees and employers. Most organizations adopt this flexible working environment-based policy such as Working from home and relaxing in punch in or punch out and others to increase the retention rate and engage the employees towards the organizational goal (Weideman and Hofmeyr, 2020). The flexible working environment does not mean that people can take leverage in work and performance. It means people can improve their performance and increase efficiency towards the work in their comfort zone or getting some relaxation. Moreover, Covid-19 is major external issue that arise in 2019 which affected the business and its process. Due to restrictions and government regulations, retailing organizations were not able to work with employees at the workplace because they has to maintain social distancing from each other (Weideman and Hofmeyr, 2020). It also affected the performance and overall process of the workplace. Thus,

in that scenario organization focused on a flexible working policy to manage the employees with their performance rates.

There are different benefits which are associated with the flexible working concept which also promotes diversity and inclusion among employees.

- **Enhance employee engagement:** The flexible working environment is significant to creating satisfaction at the workplace. The satisfied employee at the job is more productive towards the work. Moreover, due to covid-19 company adopted the communication platforms such as Zoom, Google meet, and teams to become more transparent with each other (Weideman and Hofmeyr, 2020). These tools or channels assist in sharing information and ideas through conference calls and group texting. The adoption of effective communication channels assisted in engaging the people through video conferencing calls and virtual group projects related to operations and marketing strategies. An enhanced employee engagement allows people to diversify their ideas and lifestyles in order to improve the company's culture (Choo et. al., 2016). Moreover, virtual team building is also effective where different people and team members put their perspectives towards the ideas. Furthermore, a flexible working environment drives better creativity and innovation which also promotes diversity and inclusion because each team member has a different thought process and skills and contributes as an individual toward common organisational goals.
- The flexible environment assists in improving the work culture in an organization as one of the greater reasons that businesses, as well as employees, are desiring flexible working schedules (Khan et. al., 2019). It is because this boosts engagement and morale at workplaces for better improvement and growth. Moreover, by allowing the workforce to have a work-life balance and company also encourages them to create a positive environment among employees (Khan et. al., 2019). A healthy environment increases the ability of the employees the work and gains knowledge.
- **The flexible working environment diverse the employees or team,** as diverse teams have been proven to be productive as well as creative. The flexible working environment-based arrangements at the workplace allow employees of all backgrounds that included and also to cooperate in an effective manner (Chung et. al., 2020). The different people with different mindsets avail more talents in the workplace and also gain more ideas to improve the performance rate.
- **Better retention rate at the workplace:** The flexible working environment is important nowadays to retain employees by providing employee satisfaction with monetary and

non-monetary benefits. Employees need to encourage and motivated towards the work to grow the business. Along with that, satisfaction among employees is more important to sustain a company in long term (Chung et. al., 2020). Furthermore, in the current scenario, most people prefer the Work from the home policy because they believe that organizations should focus on work and performance rate rather than the availability of employees at the workplace. Thus, the company also adopted this policy and they provide Work from home to employees as per their performance rate to create a flexible environment and provide relaxation for them.

- **Better recruitment:** In the current scenario, people are aware of the workplace environment because they are active on social media platforms and professional channels. Thus, the company has the opportunity to attract the maximum rate of candidates for the job by ensuring about flexible working environment policy and diversity in the workplace (Chung, 2020). Furthermore, most people have concerned about the workplace environment as they want to join an organization where they enjoy working in a comfort zone.
- **A flexible working environment motivates and encourages the employees:** In the current scenario, motivation and encouragement among the employees are the most important part to enhance productivity and performance (Chung, 2020). Motivated employees can contribute to organizational growth effectively with creative and innovative ideas (Chung, 2020). Whereas if employees a lack of motivation then it may affect their performance and their perspectives towards the work and organisational goals.

2.4.Role of Human resource management in promoting diversity and inclusion through flexible working

Human resource management has a vital role in promoting diversity and inclusion by focusing on the flexible working environment of the company which is important in many aspects. Being a human resource manager, it is a huge responsibility to make policies to create a flexible working environment for employees (Syed and Ozbilgin, 2019). In this retailing company, the human resource managers focus on work from a home policy which is important to provide relaxation to employees. The covid-19 showcased that employees can work from anywhere at the end company should focus on their performance rate rather than their physical availability at the company.

Human resource managers have a responsibility to engage the employees by conducting activities and sessions where employees can interact with each other and share their ideas on a particular project (Syed and Ozbilgin, 2019). It promotes diversity and inclusion among employees. Human resource managers have the right to provide monetary and non-monetary benefits to motivate and encourage them toward the work and overall performance rate (Syed

and Ozbilgin, 2019). It can include the rewards sessions and bonuses which are important to offer them as per their performance rate.

2.5. Justification

A flexible working environment is important and favourable to promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace as it has different benefits in various aspects. It has a major contribution to team engagement and motivation of the employees. The flexible working environment attracts more candidates from the external environment and retains the existing employees (Weideman and Hofmeyr, 2020). Employee satisfaction is a major factor to promote diversity and inclusion through a flexible working environment. However, some loopholes affect equality and diversity in the workplace.

3. AGAINST THE FLEXIBLE WORKING IN RELATION TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Flexible work environment is which where companies provide working choices to employees in different ways according to the requirements of the companies

There are several issue associated with the flexible working which are arising after adopting this work culture during the pandemic period.

3.1. Changes in company policies

The first disadvantage of flexible working for the company is that it needs to change the existing policies of the company for working and providing flexibility in working. Today some the employees prefer to completely work from home while some want to complete work in the office. While there is some segment of the employees who prefer to work in a hybrid form which will need to formulate a complex policy structure to cover all the aspects of flexible working (Juvonen, 2019). It will further lead to the changing shift of the employees due to working from home creating challenges for the human resource department.

3.2. Lack on engagement

As flexibility in working gives the option to work from home, office, and hybrid which results in the lack of involvement of the employees with their co-workers and company (Juvonen, 2019). It varies important for the everyone working in the company to have certain level of engagement and it cannot happen without physical interaction of employees with each other.

3.3. Effects Employee relation and coordination

Another problem with flexible working is that it makes it difficult for the employees and management to coordinate with each other due to various reasons (Kiehner. 2022). If team members are using flexible working like working from home then they do not develop an understanding which affects the coordination resulting in the decreased productivity of the overall team, sometimes lack of understanding also leads to conflicting situations among the

employees (Kiehner. 2022). So there must be strong relations and understanding between the employees which can be only developed through.

3.4.Effect organization work culture

Flexible working also creates a negative impact on the work culture of the organization which is very important to maintain the values, and ethics of the company. It becomes very difficult for the company and the management to maintain the work culture of the company and work according to and following them (Cox. 2020). It makes it difficult to follow the work ethic the without the physical office working.

So if the flexibility of working is looked at from its negative aspect and the drawbacks that are associated are calculated to it then it will hinder the performance of the employees due to coordination, understanding, and relationship (Cox. 2020). So the human resources department of the organization should cover all of them from every possible aspect and then analyze them in-depth.

3.5.Business case

This business case is based on the retailing sector where they deal in grocery items across different locations with several retail stores. They work with 1000 employees and they face issues with the flexible working environment in the relation to inequality at the workplace. They need to analyze the role of human resources in identifying the major concerns or causes which may arise from the flexible working environment.

3.6.Policy

The diversity and inclusion policy is important to maintain the workforce and their satisfaction level. As per this policy, the company needs to treat legally in terms of offering growth opportunities and involvement in the decision-making process (Abt et. al., 2021). This policy assists in managing inequality among employees by creating a flexible environment through regulating many policies and regulations in the favour of the company and employees.

3.7. Flexible working environment and its impact on inequality

Role of Human resource management in addressing the concerns of equality that can arise in flexible working

The human resource manager has a vital role in managing the inequality among employees by a focus on making policies that fulfil the needs of employees and also enhance the performance of the company.

They engage the employees by conducting regular meetings and programs where each one can communicate and present their ideas for a common goal and project (Chung and Van der Lippe, 2020). The human resource manager makes the policies and modifications as per current trends so that they can increase the satisfaction level among employees to manage inequality.

The human resource manager also measures the performance rate on a monthly and quarterly basis so that they can provide fair treatment to them and also provide internal growth opportunities to maintain quality among the workforce (Chung and Van der Lippe, 2020). The work-from-home policy is most common in the company which also assist them in balancing their personal and professional life appropriately.

4. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that a flexible working environment is an important part to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace which assists in enhancing employee engagement, better retention rate, attracting more people, and motivating the workforce towards performance rate. In the overall process, the human resource manager has a vital role in making suitable policies and conducting some programs to engage the people for common organizational goals. However, at some point in time, the flexible working environment also affects equality and diversity in the workplace which cause a lack of motivation and engagement among the workforce. In that scenario, human resource managers focus on fair treatment and performance rate so that they can provide equal opportunities to promote equality and diversity.

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