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ASSESSMENT 1

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Executive Summary

The report is based on the UK labour market within an organisation and in this regard, a company named Unilever has been chosen. In the next part of the report the current state of the UK labour market has been discussed elaborately. The next part of the report has made a clear discussion through the SWOT and PEST analysis of the UK labour market. A critical analysis of HR strategies in post-Covid and post-Brexit has been discussed in this report. Lastly, the report has provided some recommendations for Unilever to improve its human resource strategies and sustain in the market.

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Introduction

The supply and demand for labour in the United Kingdom is known as the UK labour market. It is covered with various factors like- unemployment rates, employment rates, job vacancies, wages and workforce demographics. The employment rate of the United Kingdom was calculated at approximately 76% in this year's February and it was much higher than September (Altig et al., 2020). Government regulations and policies play a vital role to shape the UK labour market. These are included in labour market flexibility, education, training, immigration and employment protection. However, The Covid 19 had a great impact on the UK's labour market and human resource management ensures that they are effective in addressing new opportunities or challenges. Moreover, the Brexit decision also had a significant impact and several key areas needed to be addressed to deal with issues. The main objective of this report is to discuss the UK labour market and a SWOT as well as PEST analysis will occur utilising the UK labour market. After that, a critical analysis of HR Strategies in post-Covid and post-Brexit will be discussed. Finally, the report will end with various recommendations which can be beneficial for the chosen organisation.

Current State of Labour Market in the UK

The condition of the labour market took a drastic change post-Covid. The number of workers employed based on full or part-time almost halved during this period. The labour force has drastically come down as compared to the pre-covid waves (Costa Dias et al., 2020). There was a large fall in employment during this period which eventually gave rise to unemployment and economic inactivity. Although employment fell for every group of people, mainly it affected the younger generation. On the other hand, after the implementation of the Brexit rule in the UK the new migration rule negatively impacted the labour supply in the low-skill sectors. Work permits are provided to labourers who are high in skill and have a certain amount of salary (Bell and Blanchflower, 2020). All the low-skill labour become unemployed after the implementation of this act. Along with this the pandemic also triggered the inactivity of the labours in the UK labour market. There is a great fall in the labour market due to the Brexit law. Although the labour market faced a drastic negative change post-pandemic and after the implementation of the

Brexit law, currently the labour market of the UK is taking a drastic change and the condition of the labour market is improving.

Therefore, with the passing days the condition of the UK labour market becomes stable. Many organisations started recruiting individuals as per their requirements. The economic inactivity started to decline at a slow but stable speed. The employment rate in the UK is estimated to increase by 0.2% from October to December 2022 (Leaker, 2023). The job market of the UK is rapidly transforming and organisations are seeking skilled labour which creates job opportunities for various people. Organisations are offering fair and increased salaries which is motivating skilled individuals to join the organisation. The changing scenario of the UK labour market is trying to improve the economic inactivity of the country in the recent year. The changing scenario is also helping the organisation to retain its employees in a better way. The employment structure of the labour market climbed up drastically due to the changes brought by the organisation. Although there are many unfulfilled vacancies in the organisation due to certain factors, it is slowly recovering from its previous state. The increase in the basic pay structure in the public sector is also one of the vital reasons to bring a positive change in the labour market.



Figure 1: Current State of Labour Market

(Source: Hungry JPEG, 2022)

SWOT Analysis

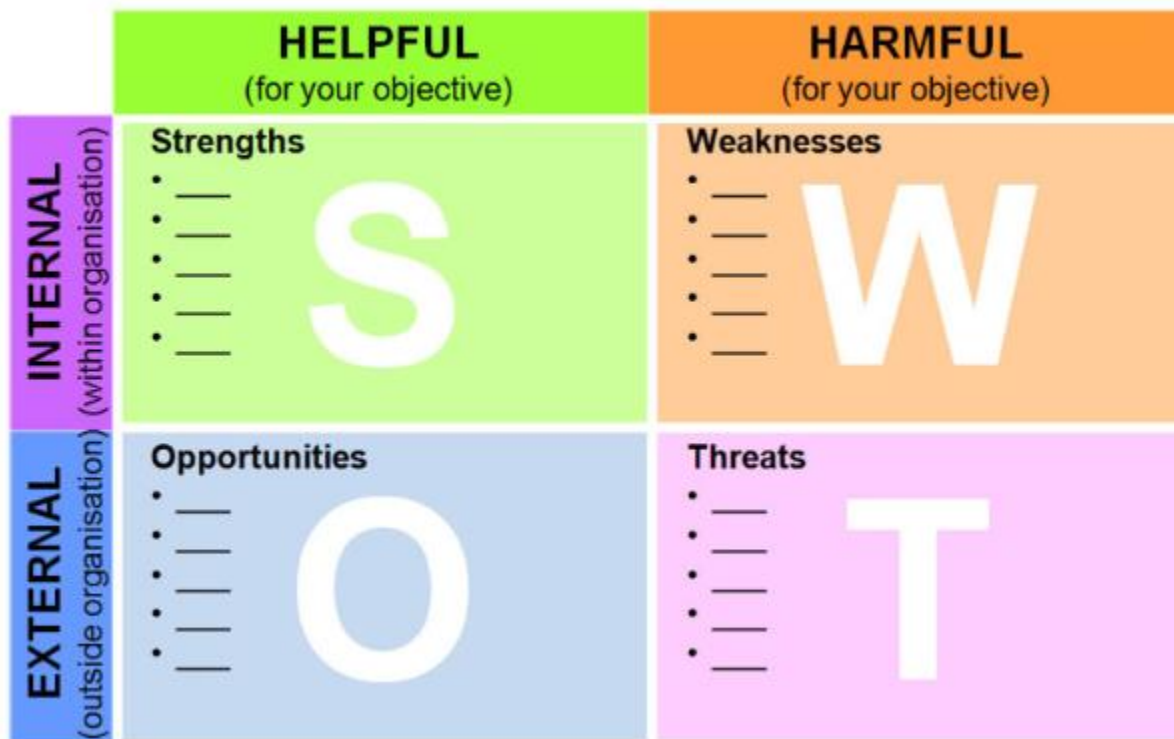


Figure 2: SWOT Analysis of the UK

(Source: Business Documents UK, 2019)

Strengths: The United Kingdom is considered as one of the best countries for trading operations. The minimum GBP of this country is close to 2.19 GBP and that is why this country is acquiring the 6th largest position in the global GDP chart. This figure of the GDP shows that organisations can easily grow as well as earn high profits from the domestic business market (Hudson, 2020). Following this economic support, Unilever has chosen the UK market for starting and continuing business. Evaluating the present condition of the United Kingdom, it has come to be known that Unilever has recruited enough employees after facing the crucial situation of the pandemic and Brexit.

Weaknesses: The United Kingdom is facing the main problem in industrial transportation. Public transportation is comparatively better than industrial ones. The companies need to make a huge investment whenever they choose rails and other options for transporting industrial materials (Przystupa et al., 2021). Due to this reason, Unilever has already invested a gigantic amount at the time of exporting. Post Brexit and pandemic days, this organisation has made collaboration with e-commerce agencies for transporting products throughout the world.

Opportunities: The US is considered as the technological hub across the globe. Similarly, the United Kingdom needs to adopt as well as follow this type of tech culture In their country. In this way, Unilever can transform its business operation completely in the digital platform. Therefore, for upgrading the business operation, this organisation has started to recruit some tech-savvy candidates for enhancing technological development in the upcoming days.

Threats: The United Kingdom has a huge number of competitive neighbours, just like Denmark, France as well as Germany along with other European countries. These competitor countries are rapidly upgrading their technological activities and the economy of the United Kingdom becomes affected. However, to maintain the competition, Unilever needs to enhance HRM strategies for recruiting people who have strong innovative ideas including technical knowledge, mainly after Covid and Brexit conditions in the UK.

PEST Analysis

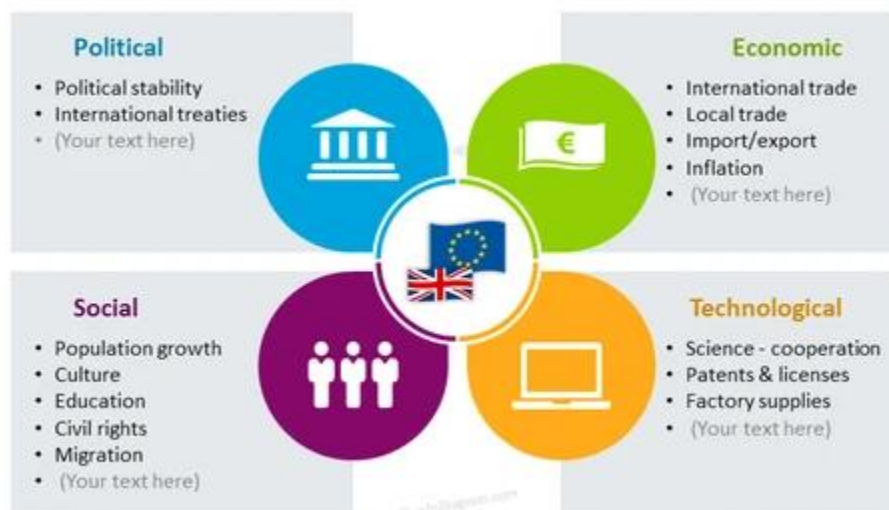


Figure 3: PEST Analysis of the UK

(Source: Locus, 2019)

Political factor: The entire United Kingdom is included with four provinces, such as England, Wales and Scotland along with Northern Ireland. This country is considered one of the most powerful countries across the globe. They have followed modern parliamentary democracy as well as a constitutional monarchy. This country carries high political stability, but after the unpredicted occurrence of Brexit and the Pandemic, it became a part of the political debates (McCann et al., 2023). After Brexit, the EU nations have withdrawn from every deal with the non-EU nations. The trading cost has increased during that time. Later, in the situation of the pandemic, many people were unemployed. These both situations have affected the labour structure of the United Kingdom. Unilever has stopped exporting their materials to non-EU nations after Brexit and also fired many employees after the occurrence of the pandemic. In the recent scenario, they have developed their HRM strategies for recruiting efficient employees and maintaining sustenance in the long run.

Economic factor: The United Kingdom is the 6th largest country for their advanced economic condition. The nominal GDP of this country is nearly 2.19 GBP, which plays a very essential role in the trading concept. The GDP rate has dropped nearly 13 per cent between 2020-21 just for the occurrence of the global lockdown. The Brexit and Pandemic have destroyed many small and medium businesses in the United Kingdom. Nowadays, this situation has developed and the BoE (Bank of England) has given £100 billion for supporting the economy of this country. Unilever has also improved its business operations in post-Brexit and post-pandemic and also developed its talent management activities to recruit more employees.

Social Factor: The multicultural population has been seen in the UK. That is why Unilever needs to manufacture multiple products based on the choices of the customers. After Brexit, this population has decreased just for the division of the EU and Non-EU nations. That is why the variations of the products have also decreased compared to the past. Even during the situation of the global lockdowns, Unilever has to lay off their many employees for balancing the situation with the market. Recently, they are recruiting many employees, especially those who have technological knowledge. Thus, they have become able to develop their business conditions.

Technological factor: Analysing the technological advancements, it has come to be known that the US is the technology hub rather than the other countries. The United Kingdom needs to be a part of technological advancements as early as possible. In the post-covid scenarios, London has recently improved itself on the technological concept (Watts, 2020). Similarly, Unilever has started to transform its business operations in the digital platform. After stepping forward in the digital platform, this organisation has adopted new HRM strategies which are beneficial for the sustenance of the company.

Critical Analysis of Human Resource Strategies in Post-Covid

The COVID-19 pandemic forced various changes within organisations which are crucial to the continuation of business operations. Keeping and shaping job performance in the Covid-19 era was problematic for organisations because it hurt employees' physical and mental well-being (Çetin, 2021). Companies need to reassess their talent acquisition and recruitment strategies and to do that virtual recruitment or remote work needs to be promoted. Additionally, organisations should focus on retaining and attracting talent with specific skills that are in high demand in the post-Covid labour market. Expertise in remote collaboration and the use of digital skills can be effective HR strategies for incorporating. Furthermore, companies need to evaluate the effect of the Pandemic on their existing workforce. It can be included in conducting necessary skills assessments to find out specific skill gaps of the employees. Upskilling or training programmes in the workplace may be conducted in this process and companies need to provide appropriate support as well as resources. HRM specialists need to shape appropriate HR strategies so that they can positively impact employees' job-related attitudes (Pradhan and Shrestha, 2022.). In this way, HR strategies can improve organisation commitment, job satisfaction and work motivation in shaping the UK labour market.

On the other hand, Unilever's HR strategy is to empower its workers by taking charge of their development and careers. Unilever launches its digital platform which is called FLEX and it helps employees to work on projects, assignments or learning opportunities (Islam, 2022). This process is beneficial for employees to improve their knowledge or skills and enhance their networks in the workplace. It is also beneficial for Unilever to match business needs with talents and foster a working culture of diversity or mobility. On the contrary, creating an innovative and

learning culture within an organisation is also helpful for Unilever's employees to experiment or develop new ideas. The company continually invests in various online courses, coaching, webinars, podcasts and tools for employees' continuous development and learning (Zureck, 2021). In this process, Unilever creates a platform called IdeaTrophy which allows workers to vote or submit their innovative ideas in the workplace. This initiative benefits Unilever by driving business profits, fostering collaboration or creativity and nurturing a developed mindset in the office premises. Empowering workers and creating a working-friendly culture of innovation as well as learning helps in recruiting and retaining the workforce of the UK labour market.



Figure 4: Staff training

(Source: Duncan, 2022)

Critical Analysis of Human Resource Strategies in Post-Brexit

After the Unpredicted occurrence of Brexit, the labour market of the United Kingdom has been impacted positively. The maximum number of organisations in the UK have recruited staff, close to 25 per cent from the EU nations in multiple industries. The candidates of the EU nations are highly qualified, and accordingly, they have a high knowledge of professional skills. On the other hand, after Brexit, the employers of the non-EU nations became confused to find out the relevant employees from their part. On the contrary, to run their businesses in a significant manner, these organisations have adopted new effective strategies by analysing every recent factor. These new strategies are focused on employee retention and attracting EU workers again in the businesses along with attracting different talent pools (Atar and Baycar, 2022). Unilever has also followed these above-mentioned strategies to improve its business structure for acquiring success in the upcoming days.

Enhanced employee retention: Close to 7 per cent of the workforce of the United Kingdom has made up for all problems after Brexit. Analysing the research data of the REC (Recruitment and Employment) it has come to be known that a few more employees will choose their previous organisation in the upcoming days. Presently every recruiter is very much aware of fulfilling the vacant positions with the UK workforce. Due to this particular reason, Unilever has recently started to recruit low-skilled employees and then provide training to improve their low skills as early as possible. These UK workers are highly qualified in general but they are not efficient in taking responsibility. Still, Unilever is supporting their employees for enhancing the retention count.



Figure 5: Employee Retention

(Source: Vantage Circle HR Blog, 2019)

Attract EU workers: The EU workers are quite efficient on on-the-job concepts. That is why Unilever tries to attract those EU workers by making up all problems which have occurred during and after Brexit. After the critical scenario of Brexit, there are still some EU citizens who are staying in the United Kingdom with their families. Recently, the government of the UK has introduced a new immigration system, which was announced in January 2021. Unilever tries to attract these people after accepting their every condition. They have the prime intention to enhance the growth of the company and accordingly maintain sustenance in the long run.

Recommendations to Organisation

Some recommendations will be provided to Unilever for developing its HR strategies and they will be discussed below.

- **Embracing remote work:** Remote working has significantly increased in the Covid-19 and post-Covid-19 era which is beneficial for companies as well as employees. Unilever should put more focus on embracing the remote working facility so that the company or employees can save time and money in doing their jobs. Fewer office interruptions and

high autonomy can enhance the efficiency of productivity of the employees (Schall, 2019). In this process, employees will get a better work-life balance and they will have flexibility or freedom in their working hours. Unilever should create more infrastructure and policies to support flexible working arrangements. It can be included in training facilities for working remotely and gathering knowledge about communication tools and IT skills.

- **Upskilling employees:** Unilever should also provide upskilling programmes or policies to its employees (Unilever, 2023). In this process, employees can expand their abilities to stay ahead of the workplace competition. Furthermore, gaining new skills can be helpful for them to grow in their career path. The company will need to invest in training and development programmes to re-skill and upskill employees for the post-Covid labour market. It can be beneficial to achieve Unilever's goal in the target market.
- **Improving talent acquisition strategies:** Updating and reviewing talent acquisition strategies to attract talent should be influential for Unilever. The company can create a positive employer bond and target candidates with sought-after skills so that employees can increase their productivity. Finding and recruiting top talents should be a significant HR strategy for Unilever to align its business goals with employees (Ren et al., 2023). In this way, the company can also save money and time for its long-term success.

Conclusion

Hence, concluding the report, it can be said that The UK labour market plays a crucial role in determining the country's social and economic progress. In this regard, the first part of the report has highlighted the United Kingdom's labour market and it has provided some useful information or statistics about employment. Furthermore, A SWOT and PEST were done based on the UK's labour market. In the critical evaluation part, some human resource strategies were explained in the post-Brexit and post-Covid era. Finally, the report has mentioned some recommendation strategies for Unilever which could be useful for improving employment.

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