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Introduction

The labor market in the United Kingdom (UK) has seen significant transformations due to two exceptional events in recent history: the separation from the European Union (Brexit) and the global COVID-19 pandemic. The above-listed notable occurrences have not just impacted the economic climate, but have also led to considerable changes in the labour market and Human Resource (HR) strategies within the United Kingdom (Smith & Thomas, 2020). In order to have a thorough understanding of the existing challenges and evolving trends within the labor market, it is necessary to conduct a complete study, taking into account the contextual factors that have precipitated these changes. The primary aim of this study is to conduct a thorough examination of the current state of the employment market in the United Kingdom. Examining many indicators, including unemployment rates, job vacancies, wage increases, and sectorial changes, as reported by the Office for National Statistics in 2022, will facilitate the achievement of this objective. Moreover, the primary objective of this study is to offer valuable perspectives on the dynamic patterns observed in human resource (HR) strategies. These strategies encompass various aspects such as remote work arrangements, the cultivation of diversity and inclusion, the incorporation of technology, and the alignment with environmental and social goals (Jackson, Schuler & Jiang, 2014). This inquiry has substantial significance for scholarly understanding and the development of governmental policies and organisational strategies in the post-Covid-19 epidemic era and the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive comprehension of the complexities and progressions that define the current labor market in the United Kingdom, with a focus on four essential categories.

The Current State of the Labor Market in the UK

Economic Overview

Over the course of the last several years, the economy of the United Kingdom has been exposed to a bewildering assortment of changes and difficulties. The pace of growth has been unpredictable, with stages of expansion and contraction driven by variables such as the dynamics of international trade, the debates around Brexit, and the COVID-19 pandemic (OECD, 2021). These phases of expansion and contraction have been driven by factors such as Brexit, the negotiations surrounding Brexit, and the pandemic. Even while there has been

some fluctuation in inflation rates, which has had an effect on consumer spending and has had an impact, interest rates have remained relatively low in order to encourage growth (Bank of England, 2022). Both the aftermath of the outbreak and the unresolved issues surrounding Brexit has contributed to an unstable climate for financial investments. On the other hand, it is clear that the economy of the nation has demonstrated a remarkable capacity for resilience, as seen by the manner in which patterns in the labour market have adjusted to reflect this flexibility. Because of the government's furlough plans and assistance measures, the impact on unemployment has been alleviated to some degree; yet, this has created the stage for a difficult picture regarding the labour market (HM Treasury, 2020).

Employment Trends

Unemployment Rates

The unemployment rate has been fluctuating, reaching its greatest point during the early phase of the epidemic but showing signs of recovery in the most recent months (ONS, 2022). This may be attributed to the fact that the pandemic is still in its early stages. There is still an issue with youth unemployment, with rates that are higher than those of other demographic groups (Furlong et al., 2021). This is a problem that has to be addressed.



Figure: Unemployment Rate (ONS, 2022).

Job Vacancies

There has been a general increase in the number of job vacancies across a range of sectors, with the biggest increase coming in the domains of technology, healthcare, and logistics. Since the economy started to recover, there has been a general increase in the number of job opportunities across a variety of industries. The "K-shaped" recovery has led to disparities among sectors, which has influenced the number of jobs that are now available, as stated by Adams-Prassl et al. 2020.

Wage Growth

The pace of pay growth has not been consistent, which is a reflection of both the rising demand for certain occupations and the economic limitations impacting other sectors. This lack of consistency is a direct result of both factors. There are certain areas of the country in which real wages have not grown over the course of many decades, which makes it challenging to maintain a given standard of life (Plunkett & Gardiner, 2021).

Sectorial Shifts

Conventional sectors, such as retail and hotels, have seen decline and reorganisation as a consequence of the transformation, but the move towards digitization has resulted in expansion in the technological sector. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2021) asserts that this shows a significant realignment of the job market in the United Kingdom.

Impact of Brexit

As a direct and indirect outcome of Brexit, the employment market in the United Kingdom has been dramatically and adversely affected in a variety of different ways. There have been recent changes made to the laws that control work, which have led to the introduction of new rules that have an effect on the job opportunities available to members of the EU (Oliver, 2020). According to Portes (2018), the loss of free movement has resulted in a shortage of labour in sectors such as agriculture and healthcare that are reliant on workers from other EU nations. These industries include healthcare and agriculture. Alterations to the terms of trade agreements have also had an influence on some sectors, such as manufacturing, which has produced changes in supply chains as well as the redistribution of jobs (Springford & Tilford, 2020). One of these industries is agriculture. The long-term impacts of Brexit on workforce availability, pay, and legislation are not yet clear, and they are a topic of ongoing discussion and susceptible to change across a wide range of sectors.

Impact of Covid-19

The labour industry in the UK has been significantly impacted as a result of the epidemic that was induced by COVID-19. According to the findings of a study that was conducted in the year 2020 by Barrero and colleagues, temporary shutdowns in a range of sectors led to quick job losses and furloughs, which had an effect on businesses such as retail, entertainment, and tourism. According to Bloom et al. (2020), the rising frequency of working from home has

had a transformational influence on the culture of the workplace, ushering in both new obstacles and opportunities for organisations and employees. This has led to a significant shift in the nature of the relationship between the two. This transition has almost likely had long-lasting repercussions on the culture of the workplace, which has resulted in a re-evaluation of the work-life balance, office space utilisation, and employee well-being. In addition to this, the pandemic accelerated the shift to digital technology, which had an impact on the demand for certain talents and changed the job landscape. The path that the labor market takes in the post-Covid era will be mapped out according to the manner in which employers respond to the modifications that have been made.

Emerging Changes in Human Resourcing Strategies

Remote Working and Flexibility

According to the findings of a study that was conducted in the year 2020 by Bloom et al., the global pandemic helped accelerate the already-existing trend towards remote working, which has become an integral component of contemporary HR strategy. The variety that remote work arrangements provide, such as full-time remote employment, hybrid models, and flexible work hours, has led to substantial implications as a result of their use. There is an improvement in employee satisfaction as a consequence of a better work-life balance (Kossek et al., 2006), accessibility to global talent pools (Allen et al., 2015), and a drop in operational expenditures (Allen et al., 2015). These benefits come as a result of a better work-life balance. (2017), by Suh and Lee The shift, on the other hand, raises a variety of issues, some of which include the potential for isolation, the challenges associated with maintaining corporate culture, and an increase in the likelihood of being targeted by cyberattacks. The departments of human resources are looking at innovative solutions such as robust cybersecurity processes and online activities for forming teams in order to mitigate the consequences of these challenges.

Emphasis on Employee Well-being

According to Pfeffer (2018), the emphasis that modern society takes on both mental and physical health has resulted in a rise in the significance that is placed on the well-being of workers as a fundamental component of HR strategy. This is true for both employees and employers. According to the findings of a study conducted by Grawitch and colleagues (2006), human resources departments are increasingly introducing all-encompassing wellness

programmes for their employees. These programmes may include assistance for mental health, incentives for physical exercise, ergonomic office designs, and flexible working hours. The adoption of these efforts has been connected to enhanced levels of productivity and worker involvement, as well as lower levels of absenteeism, as stated by Goetzel et al. (2014). In addition, the proliferation of work that can be done from home has necessitated a heightened focus on the promotion of mental health via the use of regular emotional check-ins and online communities dedicated to mental health assistance. Because of the necessity to adapt to the changing requirements of the contemporary workplace, this is a need that has been pushed upon us.

Diversity and Inclusion

According to Nishii (2013), HR efforts have shifted their focus to place a greater emphasis on diversity and inclusion. Because of the emphasis placed on accepting individuals whose experiences and perspectives differ from one another, unique practises have emerged as a consequence of this attention. According to Cox (1994), there has been a significant movement towards the introduction of non-discriminatory employment practises, increased diversity training, mentorship programmes for underrepresented groups, and rigorous anti-discrimination rules. This change has taken place across a broad range of industries and fields. Such programmes are consistent with the objectives of broader society and have the potential to result in a range of beneficial outcomes, such as the facilitation of better decision-making, the development of an organization's reputation, and the promotion of creative thinking (Herring, 2009). On the other hand, in order for these policies to be effective and really inclusive (Roberson, 2006), they need to be implemented and monitored in a very particular manner.

Technological Integration

According to research carried out by Davenport et al. (2018), modern technologies such as AI and analytics are becoming more important to the field of human resources. (Gupta & Sharma, 2020) discovered that using AI technology to assess applicants and even carry out first interview rounds made the recruiting process far more effective. Analytics provide vital insights into employee performance, job satisfaction, and viable areas for growth, as stated by Rasmussen and Ulrich (2015). The development of new technologies has the impact of expediting HR tasks, which in turn increases accuracy and strategic alignment. However, they

also bring concerns with them, such as the privacy of data and the possibility of mechanising human resource operations to an excessive degree. All of these issues need ethical considerations, and it is important to maintain a strategic balance.

Alignment with Environmental and Social Goals

According to Aguinis and Glavas (2012), modern HR strategies are increasingly mirroring societal values, particularly in the areas of ecologically sustainable practices and social responsibility. This trend can be seen across a variety of industries, including healthcare, education, and government. According to Bhattacharya et al. (2008), companies are not only encouraging their workers to participate in environmentally responsible behaviours, but they are also actively employing individuals who are devoted to preserving these ideas. This is a significant shift from the past when businesses just encouraged their employees to engage in ecologically responsible activities. According to Glavas (2016), human resource policies are becoming more interwoven with corporate social responsibility (CSR), which is what drives ethical business practices, community involvement, and sustainability goals. This alignment, as stated by Hansen et al. (2011), not only resonates with employees and consumers, but it also enhances an organization's capability to compete in the industry in which it operates. The adoption of social and environmental objectives within human resource practices is a symptom of a development of corporate identity that synchronizes the goals of the corporation with the requirements of a global society. This age is one in which profit and purpose are merging, and this age is exemplified by an age in which social and environmental objectives are accepted inside HR practices. Currently, we are living in an age in which profit and purpose are converging.

Conclusion

The paper has identified significant developments that are influencing the labor market in the United Kingdom, as well as the evolving alterations in Human Resource strategy within the context of the post-Covid and post-Brexit environment.

The labor market in the United Kingdom exhibits dynamic fluctuations, which are characterised by evolving patterns of employment that are driven by the impact of both the Covid-19 pandemic and the Brexit process (Office for National Statistics, 2021). The enduring consequences of these notable occurrences are anticipated to foster ongoing

development, placing emphasis on telecommuting, adaptability, employee welfare, inclusivity, technology assimilation, and congruence with ecological and societal objectives.

The practice of remote working, once considered a transitory solution, has now become an essential component of work culture, presenting new difficulties and prospects (Bloom et al., 2020). Concurrently, the congruence between HR strategy and social values signifies a more comprehensive transformation in organisational culture and goals (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012).

The implications of these results suggest a future characterised by a growing convergence of work and personal life, a greater acceptance of diversity, a significant reliance on technology, and a heightened awareness among firms of global social demands. In order to maintain competitiveness and adapt to the dynamic nature of the global landscape, firms must prioritise adaptation and innovation (Davenport et al., 2018).

Recommendations

(CIPD, 2020) The government needs to create legislation that encourages the construction of flexible work environments, ensures the well-being of workers, and supports continual skill development in order for businesses to successfully adapt to advances in technology.

The construction of welcoming and diverse working environments needs to be at the top of the priority list for commercial firms, together with the provision of resources for programmes aimed at improving the health and well-being of workers and the implementation of technical advances in order to improve the effectiveness of human resource management. According to Deloitte's research from 2021, "It is recommended to establish partnerships with educational institutions in order to synchronise skill development with the demands of the job market."

It is important to include more stakeholders if we want to encourage collaboration between the private sector, academic institutions, and nonprofit groups. According to the World Economic Forum (2019), the importance of cooperation cannot be overstated when it comes to aligning human resources (HR) strategy with social and environmental goals in order to make a contribution to the realisation of a sustainable future.

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