

# A SYSTEMATIC STUDY OF LITERATURE ON THE CHALLENGES FACED IN THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC: RECRUITMENT PROCESS

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## ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this study is to comprehend the obstacles that the human resource department, in general, and the recruitment process, encountered during the epidemic. My findings were derived from a variety of websites, blogs, and, in particular, published papers, journals, and survey reports pertaining to my issue, as well as MBA program lectures. Following the epidemic, we can see a return to employment in a hybrid sense, with social distance as a necessary. The epidemic is still present, which means we must face the possibility that it could deteriorate at any time. These studies are now an enlightening way to guide us through a situation if it ever happens again, given that no preparations were made prior to the pandemic's outbreak. This knowledge allows us to be prepared for any future crisis that may arise, and it helps us not to be as blind sighted in the future.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, Human Resources Department, Recruitment Process.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As we all know, the world was hit by a pandemic in December 2019 that limited human contact and necessitated social separation in order to stop the spread of the covid 19 virus.

This was something that halted all corporate operations and virtually everything in people's life. During this time, the human resource department received a lot of attention. Maintaining HR tasks was difficult since they necessitate social connection with employees and employers, among other things.

Many obstacles were encountered during the Pandemic, and the HR Department had no choice but to adapt in order to rescue the majority of their employees and accomplish corporate goals by adopting new policies and protocols to adhere to this new life.

The most significant obstacle that the HR team encountered was addressing, educating, and maintaining a safety protocol so that this measure could be understood and implemented properly and quickly. The HR team is responsible for keeping employees at ease in their assigned job posts and teams; nevertheless, unmotivated personnel might cause delays in achieving corporate goals.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The method used to collect and carry out this study is a general systematic review of literature; I have chosen papers, journal articles, and survey reports that best suited the information. I did examine the latest updates on the topic at hand. I provided a sort of descriptive understanding of the crisis of the coronavirus pandemic and how it affected the Human Resource Department as a whole and Recruitment during this time.

### 2.1. Objective of the Study

#### 2.1.1 Broad Objective:

The main objective of this study is to illuminate the challenges faced in the HR department and to understand the strategies that had to be adapted to save the business, employees and mainly how it became possible to Recruit and hire new and retain the old employees to meet organizational goals during the covid-19 Pandemic.

#### 2.1.2. Specific Objectives:

- To identify and understand the steps and measures taken to ensure business continuity.
- To understand the methods used and how the adaption helped the process work.
- To gain a deeper understanding of the HR Department's capabilities during a crisis.
- To determine how the future of this department will unfold from the outbreak to the present day and beyond.

### 3. MODELING AND ANALYSIS

The challenges faced in the human resource department in general-

Challenge	Description
<b>At organization level</b>	Staff safety Remote working Limited work solutions as a result of workflow disruption Reduced salary Reduced employee motivation Additional costs for hiring new staff Disruption of workflow due to death of colleague Disruption of work flow due to infected employee Increased work load Low job independence and job security Increase in working hours due to dismissal of colleagues Complexity of work due to integration of new technology and digitalization
<b>Change in social behaviour</b>	Prohibition of large gatherings Social distancing Decrease demand in services like in tourism, entertainment, aviation, schooling etc.  Mental health problems such as fear, stress, anxiety, depression, anger, frustration and so on. Increase work from home time.

**Figure 1:** HR Department Challenges

The above table gives us an idea of how the challenges can be broken down and understood clearly, all of this occurred due to the pandemic crisis and the economic shock brought about high closure of many companies and increased unemployment rates worldwide. The human resource department had to adapt and come up with new working policies that would work on.

**Methods/Strategies adapted in human resource management during the pandemic:**

Strategy	Description of the strategy
<b>Flexibility and employee's virtual life cycle</b>	Flexibility of contracts Distance working and working from home floating hours and flexibility Open workspaces Virtual work cycle of employees from arrival to departure and conducting virtual interviews Encourage employees to work from home Knowledge of employees on how to work or deliver work in difficult situations Define a regular procedure for separation and determine a boundary between office and home
	Provide sufficient resources such as IT assets to meet the needs of employees to help them work efficiently.

<p><b>Ensuring the availability of adequate resources for employees' home office</b></p>	<p>Provide full logistical support for the transportation of IT infrastructure to new applicants or employees</p> <p>Create a virtual processing program for communication.</p> <p>Connect the customer network to the organization network in the employees' home during the current crisis in order to continue operating the business.</p>
<p><b>Providing employees with training courses to gain new skills</b></p>	<p>Provide online meetings to strengthen skills, share knowledge and distance learning</p> <p>Develop employees' skills by creating a user-friendly virtual platform. For example; encouraging employees and managers to participate in various meetings, so that based on the meetings attended, projects are assigned to employees</p> <p>Use of potential and mutual skills and investing in employees</p> <p>Virtual education of health care methods</p>
<p><b>Participation, development, and promotion of employees' motivation by establishing continuous communication using innovative methods</b></p>	<p>Create a formal communication group on WhatsApp and regular communication between managers and employees</p> <p>Use of group SMS service and sending messages to all employees of the organization</p> <p>Have a slogan; "although we are far from each other, we are in contact with each other"</p> <p>Create a cloud platform that is downloaded via mobile phone, so that employees can find it and read content updated by the CEO. Through this program, employees can be fully connected.</p> <p>Communicate continuously with the company's senior managers about managing work from home as well as supporting the family, so that employees can communicate in the new work environment.</p> <p>Interaction and communication of employees with managers such as virtual tea parties, team games,</p> <p>Provide virtual games on a weekly basis, especially on Fridays</p> <p>Participate in motivational sessions such as Ted lectures</p> <p>Brainstorming</p>
<p><b>Use of innovative methods to support employees and maintain their health and welfare</b></p>	<p>Create a free line to help employees and telemedicine counselling up to seven consultations per month in order to maintain health and safety and reduce stress</p> <p>Hold webinars and virtual sessions on staff fitness; for example, Zumba, yoga, and health talks by experts</p> <p>Helping and supporting employees by identifying where employees live; for example, when employees have to cook for themselves, the company can give them enough time to spend for themselves.</p> <p>Reward active employees</p> <p>Offer additional benefits to compensate employees instead of reducing employee payments, and try to give more benefits to employees. How we deal with employees in these critical situations will make them remember that when they needed the organization the most, how we helped them.</p> <p>Ensure that policies are implemented equally to all remote and in-office workers.</p>

<p><b>Providing innovative fun activities for the employees</b></p>	<p>Virtual communication with employees such as an entertainment club (photography, study, and cooking club.).</p> <p>Create a campaign called: "Let's do it together" in which employees share stories about how to spend time in quarantine, how to help with daily chores.</p> <p>Use of creative employee engagement strategies such as interactive virtual team meetings (where employees are told to tour their home/introduce their family), celebrations such as birthdays, anniversaries, or personal talents (painting, music).</p>
<p><b>Strengthening internal efficiency and talent acquisition</b></p>	<p>Strengthen the internal team to attract and acquire talent. Because hiring a consultant cost more. Instead of paying a consultant, pay the employees.</p> <p>Hiring new members and not postponing offers</p> <p>Outsourcing services</p> <p>Launch of a dedicated business unit focused on the Microsoft business plan to strengthen internal efficiency and reduce outsourcing and also making preparations for the future</p> <p>Periodic feedback from employees</p>
<p><b>Use of staff safety measures and focusing on work condition</b></p>	<p>Use of protective equipment</p> <p>Distribution of protective equipment to employees at their discretion</p> <p>Comprehensive and common organizational department strategies, such as horizontal cooperation within the organization through compliance with health and infection control protocols in the workplace, increasing fresh air conditioning by using high-efficiency air filters to reduce pathogens, methods of separating employees from customers, providing handwashing facilities in the workplace, providing personal protective equipment for employees &amp; customers (face shields, masks), testing the staff, implementing supportive policies, and encouraging employees to use the policies</p> <p>Observance of safety protocols by employees, increasing the availability of testing for employees, responding to new needs in maintaining the health and safety of employees</p>
<p><b>Managers' commitment</b></p>	<p>Transparent and empathetic communication with employees from all levels of management and making new policies, careful planning to protect employees against COVID-19</p> <p>Daily participation of middle managers in COVID-19 pandemic prevention meetings in order to get acquainted with the latest international and domestic COVID-19 prevention approaches</p> <p>Obligation of administrative managers for supervision and monitoring during the working day in order to monitor the implementation of pandemic prevention measures, resolve disputes, obtain on-site feedback and take new measures</p>

<b>Selection and participation of employees in decision-making</b>	<p>some people are more successful in managing stress in uncertain situations and are able to make better decisions. Employees with a high level of tolerance for ambiguous conditions face little stress at work. Employees with the ability to endure difficult situations not only do not back down from stressful situations but also remain positive. Curious employees can grow in situations of anxiety and uncertainty.</p> <p>They can also be creative, open-minded, and adapt to new situations. In this period of global stress and uncertainty, organizations must identify and select the right employees based on these three competencies and benefit from their positive effects in order to grow the organization.</p> <p>Creating an intimate atmosphere with employees and communicating with them by asking questions such as (1) What factors cause your health to be good or bad here? (2) What factors can have a positive and not so positive effect on your health? (3) What factors can contribute to the health of the team/unit/employer?</p>
<b>Strengthening cohesion and sharing experiences</b>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic has created stress and common frustration in the world. Currently, training and providing experience help to reduce ambiguity in different societies and cultures, such as how to use information technology in a comprehensive way or the rules of communication and workflow</p>
<b>Making changes based on organization assessment and data</b>	<p>Decision-making and continuous improvement of the safety, health, and well-being of employees by continuous monitoring, for example, monitoring of carbon dioxide levels in indoor air, and the amount of fresh air in the workplace.</p>

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The HR departments can adapt to almost anything thrown at them, such as this pandemic; for example, the safety of both clients and employees had to be ensured for the success of business continuity, and policies had to be revised to meet the new needs of the business world management during the pandemic. The impact of the recruiting process in the current day, where face-to-face interactions are limited, has led to the adoption of a totally digital and virtual approach, which has become the norm for conducting managerial parts of recruitment and HR practices.

Today, post-covid, it is common practice for all tasks to be completed through the virtual online medium. The recruitment process is typically conducted online and internally up until the point where candidates are invited to the office for the second and third phases of the interview process, where there will be aptitude tests, group discussions, and other face-to-face activities such as the personal interview, which may be conducted via panel interviews, one-on-one interviews, and so on.

The new employee's onboarding process is another element that has changed. This is typically done on the employee's first day during the orientation phase of settling in and assisting them through the acclimatization process to their new workplace and paperwork. During this pandemic, the interviews and onboarding have been modified and adapted to be conducted online.

These are the most significant things that I discovered were impacted and required modification in the online and virtual modes. The organization has implemented zoom, google meet, WebEx, teams, and other meeting platforms as part of its new working system, so the entire process is now conducted online. Additionally, the firm provides its staff with laptops on which all of its systems and software are pre-installed to facilitate remote work.

The second effect is that many businesses have halted all or partly recruitment. As a result of the pandemic causing a significant slowdown in economic activity, job openings have been placed on hold and many existing employees have been let off. As a result, many organizations are retrenching and letting go in order to manage their finances. In many companies, the recruitment process has been put on hold due to the ongoing downsizing. Numerous individuals are

losing their jobs and are unable to find new employment due to the freezing of recruiting and job openings and the general shrinking of corporate activities.

The revised Remote work schedule policy has also been identified as a problem; from forced office closures to social limitations imposed during the COVID-19 epidemic, remote work has become the "new normal" for most organizations. Some organizations have prepared for a smooth transition to remote work, while others have had difficulties with the changes in operations and labor management, resulting in confusion and irritation. Due to the few public spaces, establishing a healthy work-life balance is nearly impossible for employees. Since many of them must work from home, they have little choice but to combine their professional and personal lives.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It is clear that the recruitment process before COVID was much more hands-on. Campus recruitment drives were held and physical programs were given. When it came to the covid case, every step was done over the internet. Our laptops, mobile phones, and PCs became the meeting place, and it was no longer a face-to-face meeting.

The problems were big, but the human resources department became more powerful because they had to change policies and adapt quickly to make things work. They also had to bring in new technology to help with their work practices for a better, easier solution.

I got answers to my questions from this study, and I also learned how the problems that people had to deal with during the pandemic had an effect not only on individuals but also on organizations as a whole.

I think that virtual interviews are better than face-to-face interviews because they save money for both sides and were a great idea during the pandemic.

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