Open Book limited time release ‘take home’ exam

**Title of assessment:** HRM Mock Take Home Examination 2020

**Time allowed**: Students should spend no longer than **1 hour** on this paper. Try to answer the question in 12 hours.

**Word count:** Students should not exceed more than 1000 words for this paper. This does not include a reference list should you choose to include it.

Answer any the following question.

“Critically discuss the opportunities and challenges that the increasing participation of women in the labour market present to organizations and human resource management.”

The number of women participating in the labour market has dramatically increased in some countries since the 18th century, increasing diversity in the workplace. This presents opportunities as well as challenges.

In terms of opportunities, an increasing participation of women in the labour market could increase productivity and wages. However, this depends on the reason why women join the labour force, according to Weinstein (2018). If the reason is that there are more job opportunities, wages would rise as increased demand cause labour participation to shift. However, if the reason is that attitudes about work have changed, this would increase competition for jobs and increase labour supply, which ultimately reduces wages.

More women in the labour market could also lead to reduced demand-supply gap. As the labour force increases, organizations have more chances to recruit the talents they are looking for.

Furthermore, a more diverse workforce portrays the cultural, social and ethnic composition of society. It has access to more information and different perspectives, making it more innovative and creative. This helps the organization to differentiate itself from others. It could also help the organization to reach more clients, who appreciate being assisted by women.

In terms of challenges, diverse perspectives and opinions could also hamper efficiency as it might build a hostile environment to work. This is illustrated by Mannix and Neale (2005) in their similarity-attraction theory and social identity theory. The former explains that having similar attitudes, values and beliefs fosters interpersonal attraction and vice versa. Women often tend to have different attributes from men. Not having similar attributes creates an asymmetry as people avoid communicating to those different from them to reduce the tension induced by disagreement. The latter explains that people feel the belonging to social groups, where the group context shapes the self-view of the members. This creates stereotypes towards members of other groups, as people tend to negative views about other groups. For example, women are typically seen as weaker than man, and are expected to take their traditional roles in the household. The challenge for the Human Resource Management department is to turn this diversity into a competitive advantage and find a way to make the employees overcome stereotypes. It has to define specific rule of conduct and find and effective way to communicate.

However, Mannix and Neale (2005) also show that, according to the Information-Solving and Problem-Solving Approaches, the different perspectives and approaches to a problem and the variety of expertise of a diverse workforce could improve the group outcome. Hence a diverse background, including both men and women, could help the organization, offering the opportunity for a deeper analysis of problems. This is case when there is intrapersonal-functional diversity, meaning teams formed of people with broad functional backgrounds. Information sharing is key to this process, and the HR department should ensure that it takes place. Most of all, it should foster intrapersonal-functional diversity in the recruitment and selection process.

# Bibliography

Mannix, E. & Neale, M. A., 2005. What differences make a difference? The promise and reality of diverse teams in organizations. *Psychological science in the public interest,* 6(2), pp. 31-55.

Weinstein, A., 2018. *When More Women Join the Workforce, Wages Rise — Including for Men.* [Online]   
Available at: https://hbr.org/2018/01/when-more-women-join-the-workforce-wages-rise-including-for-men  
[Accessed 6 November 2020].