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.”

Take at home exam questions can be addressed from multiple perspectives. You will be assessed on your ability to utilize and relate concepts and theories and not on your ability to reproduce information.

Below you will find key ideas and streams of literature that could contribute to a high-quality answer. Note that this is not a fully developed answer but rather a set of potential ideas/topics that could form part of a possible answer.

The topics below draw mostly on information and related literature covered in lectures 2 and 3 and tutorial 2.

We will suggest a range of key ideas for your introduction, the development of your argument and the conclusion.

**1. Key ideas for your introductory paragraphs.**

In these introductory paragraphs you are expected to highlight the relevance of the topic and set the tone of your answer. Please note that there are potentially other ways of setting up your answer.

* You could start by acknowledging how important changes in the competitive landscape and in the composition of the workforce stemming, among others, from globalization, migration and technological change impact/challenge organizations and people management;
* One of the key changes in the composition of the workforce is the increasing participation of women in the labour market. Evidence suggests that over the last decades the majority of new jobs have been taken by women (note, for instance, evidence from the OECD). Women have also significantly increased their participation in further and higher education. In a context of shortage of talent, attracting, engaging and retaining women (as well as workers from diverse backgrounds) is a particularly important source of competitive advantage.

**2. Key ideas for the development of your argument.**

In this part of your answer you should present, develop and support your key arguments. You are expected to highlight why it is so important for organizations to attract women but also some of the challenges it presents. We will offer some key arguments as a suggestion for a possible answer but please note that this is not intended as an exhaustive list of arguments.

As you present each argument do it in a clear way and consider the evidence to support it. Evidence can stem from empirical studies (e.g. a study conducted by X and Y showed that…) or official statistics (e.g. Data from the UNCTAD 2014 World Investment Report shows that…) and/or key arguments found in adequate sources of information such as academic journal articles or books (e.g. X and Y argued that…). Do not use arguments found on websites (there are some exceptions such as websites from reputable national and international institutions like the UN, OECD or the ILO), Wikipedia, blogs, etc. as the quality of the information has not been reviewed. You may also want to avoid referencing lecture slides.

* One of the challenges for contemporary organizations is attracting, engaging and retaining women. An optimistic perspective on diversity is offered by information processing theories. These suggest that diverse groups of workers have access to a broader range of information and perspectives and, as a result, achieve more creative and innovative solutions for problems when compared with less diverse groups of workers. Organizations who are able to have women represented at all levels of management can have an advantage against competitors with a less diverse workforce;
* However, there is also counter-evidence from the diversity literature showing that attracting, engaging and retaining women is not without challenges. Women face more significant barriers around access to higher level positions and career progression despite oftentimes being more qualified than men. This more pessimistic perspective on diversity can be explained, for example, by similarity attraction theory.
* The challenges women face at work also stem from their non-work commitments. Evidence from the work-family interface literature, for example, indicates that while women have increased their participation in the labour market they have not abandoned their traditional roles in the household, including taking the main responsibilities for childrearing. This creates important additional career barriers for women.
* To attract and engage women organizations need to manage diversity adequately. HR practices can be a useful tool to promote diversity and inclusion in organizations. Examples are the utilization of a broad range of recruitment sources, diversity training, mentoring and the implementation of flexible work arrangements.

**3 Conclusion.**

In one or two paragraphs summarize your main argument and draw a conclusion. You should not be presenting any new arguments here.

* In conclusion, evidence suggests that while organizations stand to gain from gender diversity there are still important barriers preventing women from achieving higher level positions. The HR function has an important role in promoting gender equality and fostering the careers of women by embedding principles of equality and inclusion in HR policies and practices.