

Introduction

Organizations work hard to develop a diverse workforce in today's fast-paced business environment in order to foster innovation and competitiveness. The importance of treating employees fairly and equitably has been highlighted by the increased emphasis on morality and responsible behavior. However, managing a diverse workforce with a range of work schedules, including part-time, full-time, freelance, and remote workers, can be extremely difficult.

HRM

Human Resource Management is a collective term for all the formal systems created to help in managing employees and other stakeholders within a company. The purpose of HRM is to ensure that an organization has the right number of employees with the right skills in the right jobs at the right time. HRM is tasked with three main functions, namely, the recruitment and compensation of employees, and designating work.

Ideally, the role of HRM is to find the best fit between employees and jobs while maximizing employee productivity and organizational effectiveness. The goals of HRM are to attract, retain, and motivate employees while ensuring that they are productive and satisfied with their work (*Lepak, D. P., & Gowan, M. A. (2010)*).

IHRM

International Human Resource Management (IHRM) is an extension of HRM that deals with managing employees in different locations. IHRM refers to the management of human resources within multinational corporations.

Its purpose is to effectively manage human capital across different countries, ensuring the alignment of HR policies and practices with global business strategies. The main objectives of IHRM include global workforce planning, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, and employee relations (*Dowling, P., Festing, M., & Engle, A. D. (2017)*).

Objectives

The objective of this essay is to identify and analyze the key issues that organizations could face with a diverse workforce engaged in the work patterns suggested by Fieldglass, as well as to evaluate the possible implications of IHRM practitioners achieving their goals and objectives on behalf of the employer, particularly when taking into consideration cultural diversity.

Findings

The essay will discuss the different forms of diversity, including full-time employees, freelance employees/contractors/interns, and remote/part-time employees, and how these work patterns impact the HRM department. By the end of this essay, readers will gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities that come with managing a diverse workforce and the strategies that organizations can adopt to ensure that they are able to effectively manage and leverage their diversity.

What Is Diversity?

Diversity refers to the differences among people in a given population. In the context of the workplace, diversity can refer to differences in race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, and more (*Harrison, D. A., Price, K. H., Gavin, J. H., & Florey, A. T. (2019)*).

Examples of the different types of workers that may be found in a typical company's workforce includes, Full-time employees, Freelance employees/contractors/interns, Remote/part-time employees, etc (*Brown, M. (2017)*).

Introduction to Cultural Diversity as proposed by Hofstede

Cultural diversity, as proposed by Geert Hofstede, refers to the presence of multiple cultures and their unique values, beliefs, behaviors, and norms within a given society or organization. Hofstede's renowned cultural dimensions theory explores how various cultural factors, such as power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term vs. short-term orientation, shape and influence the behaviors and attitudes of individuals within different cultural contexts (*Hofstede, G. (1980)*).

The survey of UK companies and the average workforce provides insight into the proportion of employees belonging to different diversity categories. However, relying solely on averages can mask disparities and inequalities, so it's important to examine diversity data beyond the average to gain a more comprehensive understanding.

Full-time Worker

A full-time worker typically refers to an individual who works a predetermined number of hours per week, which is considered to be the standard or expected workload for a particular industry or occupation. In different countries, the definition of full-time work may vary. For example, in some countries, full-time work may be defined as 40 hours per week, while in others, it could be 35 or 37.5 hours per week.

The nature of full-time work can differ across industries. For instance, while banking may follow a typical 9-to-5 schedule, industries like medicine, retail, or agriculture may involve irregular or shift-based hours due to the nature of their operations (*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*).

A full-time work pattern refers to an employment arrangement where an individual works a predetermined number of hours per week, typically 35 to 40 hours, for an extended period. For employers, the advantages of a full-time work pattern include increased productivity, continuity, and better integration within the organization.

Employees benefit from stable income, benefits, career development opportunities, and security, but HRM may face challenges in managing workload distribution, burnout, and work-life balance. To ensure employees align their behavior with operational goals, organizations must establish clear expectations, policies, and guidelines.

Part Time

People who work part-time jobs typically put in fewer than 35 hours per week, which is less than what full-timers do. The effects of this pattern on workers' identities and cultures are significant. As they may be viewed as less dedicated or skilled than their full-time counterparts, part-time employees may feel marginalized or have a lower status within the company. HR professionals are essential in ensuring that part-time workers receive fair treatment and are

integrated into teams as valuable contributors. Depending on organizational culture and personal perceptions, full-time employees may see their part-time coworkers as essential team members or as less skilled workers.

Although full-time employees may believe they have more power and authority within the company, actual power can vary depending on job roles and responsibilities. To foster a positive organizational culture, HR professionals must establish an inclusive workplace that values the contributions of all workers, regardless of their employment status.

Freelancers

Freelancers offer services to businesses without being directly employed, but the organization has the right to establish rules for their conduct. They are not eligible for the same benefits and pensions as regular employees, but the organization is responsible for providing them with necessary training. HRM must manage their engagement, policy adherence, and communication channels.

Remote Workers

Remote workers are individuals who perform their job tasks and responsibilities from a different location than the traditional office environment. HRM must foster collaboration, engagement, and maintain a sense of belonging. Performance measurement can be based on deliverables, targets, and regular communication. Ensuring safety requires establishing guidelines, policies, and resources. Cultural dimensions can influence remote working.

Cultural Dimensions

Cultural dimensions are aspects that shape the behavior and values of a particular culture. In the context of multicultural working, dimensions like individualism-collectivism, power distance, and communication styles can have significant impact. In the United Kingdom, cultural dimensions such as individualism, low power distance, and a preference for indirect communication influence the employment and employability landscape by emphasizing autonomy, equality, and the need for effective interpersonal skills in diverse workplace settings (*Hofstede Insights. (n.d.). Country comparison*).

Global companies and International Human Resource Management (IHRM) practitioners adapt to U.K. cultural dimensions by implementing cross-cultural training, fostering diversity and inclusion, and ensuring alignment of company values with local cultural norms.

For employees, advantages of a particular dimension may include opportunities for growth, skill development, and job satisfaction, while disadvantages could involve increased workload or limited advancement. For employers, advantages may include productivity gains, diverse perspectives, and employee retention, while disadvantages may involve higher costs or organizational complexity.

The dimensions can impact the structure of the typical workforce in various ways compared to the Fieldglass data. They may lead to a more diverse and flexible workforce, with a mix of permanent employees, contractors, and freelancers. This can result in a more agile and adaptable workforce composition

Conclusion

Fieldglass's 2015/16 research study on major UK companies revealed that the average workforce composition consisted of 54% full-time employees, 20% freelance employees/contractors/interns, and 26% remote/part-time employees. This suggests a growing trend of utilizing non-permanent workers and embracing flexible work arrangements. The findings highlight the need for companies to adapt to changing workforce dynamics and consider the benefits of a diverse workforce.

Yes, diversity is beneficial for both organizations and individuals. It fosters innovation, improves decision-making, and enhances employee satisfaction. Embracing diversity sends a positive message about fairness and equality, contributing to social progress. Overall, diversity is a positive and valuable concept that leads to better business outcomes and a more inclusive society.

All forms of diversity are important and can contribute to a more inclusive and successful organization. Embracing and valuing diversity can lead to a more inclusive and successful organization, resulting in increased creativity, innovation, and organizational performance.

Strengths of Work Patterns Diversity

Work pattern diversity, including part-time workers and temporary agency workers, brings strengths such as flexibility, knowledge and familiarity, scalability, cost-effectiveness, and specialized skills to organizations during high-volume work periods. This enables efficient resource allocation and effective management of workload surges.

Weaknesses

Diversity in work patterns and temporary workers can present weaknesses such as limited availability due to personal obligations and potential demotivation. Organizations must address these challenges through strategies like flexible work arrangements and supportive policies to ensure the engagement and productivity of all employees.

Strengths of Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity within organizations offers strengths such as increased creativity and innovation, a better understanding of diverse markets, improved decision-making, enhanced problem-solving abilities, and valuable learning opportunities. Leveraging these strengths leads to a more inclusive and successful organization.

Weaknesses

Cultural diversity within organizations may present challenges such as communication barriers, potential conflicts, integration difficulties, resistance to change, and the need for time and resources. Overcoming these weaknesses requires efforts in fostering effective communication, addressing conflicts, promoting integration, managing resistance, and allocating resources to support diversity initiatives.

Recommendations

In summary, here are recommendations to improve and manage diversity for HR practitioners in HRM and IHRM:

1. Develop inclusive policies and practices.
2. Foster cultural awareness and sensitivity.
3. Implement diverse recruitment and retention strategies.
4. Establish effective communication channels.
5. Provide training and development opportunities.
6. Support employee resource groups.
7. Monitor and evaluate diversity initiatives.
8. Foster inclusive leadership.

These recommendations aim to create an inclusive work environment that values and embraces diversity. For more information and specific guidance, HR practitioners can refer to scholarly articles, books, and resources on diversity management in organizations (Cox, T. H., & Blake, S. (1991)).

To maintain the strengths of diversity, HRM can foster inclusion and equity, encourage collaboration and cross-cultural learning, support employee engagement and well-being, promote diversity in leadership, address biases, establish diversity and inclusion metrics, and provide ongoing education and training for HR professionals. These measures will help organizations maintain the positive impacts of diversity (Mor Barak, M. E., & Duan, N. (2016)).

To eliminate the weaknesses associated with diversity, HRM should focus on improving communication, fostering inclusion and integration, addressing bias and stereotypes, providing support and flexibility, enhancing engagement and motivation, and promoting inclusive leadership. These actions will help organizations overcome the challenges and maximize the benefits of diversity (Cox, T. H., & Blake, S. (1991), Ely, R. J., & Thomas, D. A. (2001)).

It is difficult to predict the exact figures for the composition of the workforce after COVID-19. The pandemic has had a significant impact on work dynamics, with remote work becoming more common. The future composition will depend on various factors, including industry trends, technological advancements, and organizational strategies. To understand the post-pandemic workforce composition, updated research studies and industry reports should be consulted (*World Economic Forum. (2020)*).

The pandemic has undoubtedly presented numerous challenges for HRM, such as managing remote work, ensuring employee well-being, and addressing organizational changes.

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