

HR Challenges and Coping up with the New Normal

*This report is submitted as partial fulfillment of the degree of Master in
International Human Resource Management*

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3rd March 2021

Letter of Transmittal

Mr. Md. Musharrof Hossain
Adjunct Faculty
School of Business and Economics
United International University.

Date: 3rd March 2021

Subject: HR Challenges and Coping up with the new Normal

Honorable Sir,

It is a great pleasure for me to submit the report on “**HR Challenges and Coping up with the new Normal**” as per my requirement for the completion of MIHRM (Masters in International Human Resources Management).

It's a descriptive study. Writing this Report has been a challenging but interesting experience for me. After completing this report, I can say that I have learned a lot about the insights of the challenges faced by business organizations during the recent CoViD 19 Pandemic and the coping means to deal with it as well as with the new normal. It allowed me to grasp a thorough knowledge on the subject matter and I am confident that this knowledge will prove to be of utmost value and importance to me in the future.

I have tried my best for the successful completion of this report and hope that any unintentional error while preparing this report will be considered with sympathy.

Therefore, I hope for your kind consideration in this regard. I will be very grateful if you find my effort satisfactory and oblige thereby.

Sincerely,

Nikita Barai

MIHRM
School of Business and Economics
United International University

Acknowledgment

I would like to convey my sincere appreciation to the Almighty for giving me the strength & the ability to finish the task within the planned time.

I would like to thank my academic supervisor for providing me suggestions and guiding me to prepare this academic report. His valuable input helped me a lot to prepare the report in a well-organized manner.

I am also grateful to my line manager and other employees of Infinity Marketing ltd. for helping me by giving information and suggestions.

I am very thankful to my classmates for helping me understand different concepts related to this report. I tried to design my report according to the format given by my respective supervisor. I am also grateful to all the individuals who contributed indirectly while preparing the study by giving me suggestions, assistance, and supply of information which were valuable to me.

Executive summary

Human Resource Management has a diverse function that plays a very important role in the functioning of an organization. In the present situation, the world is in an uncertain situation, and organizations are also confused about what to do. Many companies face the crisis of loss in this pandemic. The purpose of this report is to show the HR-related problems that organizations facing in the 21st century's challenges and recommendations for different organizations. In this report, I tried to describe the overall HR-related challenges that currently organizations are facing. I also try to focus on how companies can overcome these problems. This report also highlights the challenges that different organizations may face after the pandemic because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also focuses on the importance of HR activities in the overall performance of the organization. Here the theoretical aspects will also be shown in the light of the theoretical framework, this report will relate core practice and problems of the HR department. I also analyze different organization`s circumstances in the pandemic. Here I also described my findings after analyzing the problems of HR. I also include some recommendations for the organization for the future betterment of their HR. And finally, I tried to give a framework on how they can implement my recommendations.

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1. Introduction

This era is the most challenging of the last few decades. The main reason for such circumstance is a **Coronavirus** which is widely known as **COVID`19**. It outbreaked on 31ST December 2019 in the Wuhan province of China. Almost immediately the World Health Organization had declared it a global pandemic. It had impacts on both developed and underdeveloped countries counting to 213 countries. Since its first recognition, at least 98,420,850 people have been infected till now and the number of death is 2,107,655 and the number of recovered patients is 70,706,296. (Worldometer, n.d.)

It not only affected social life but at the same time the global economy has faced tremendous turmoil. Some countries have faced it harder than a few, especially the third world countries are affected worst by this pandemic.

It is after 13 months of trying hard that the vaccine for COVID` 19 has been developed. The best scientists from all over the world had been working day and night to find this cure.

1.1 Background of the study

The only measure against this deadly virus that could have been taken was to stop the spreading of it. Since it is an extremely contagious disease, the most common form of a fightback strategy was to stop socializing. This pandemic was not only an issue of survival but also an issue of global crisis, financial breakdown, poverty, hunger, and economic crisis. As a precaution, governments all over the world had to succumb to the mercy of the Lock-down policy.

Even after 13 months since the declaration of the pandemic, some countries are still having to cope by embracing the Lock-down strategy. In most countries, the lock-downs have been lifted but heavy restrictions are still to be maintained. Taking Bangladesh for example, the lock-down has been lifted since July of 2020, but the education system remains to be a virtual medium. These new drastic measures are forcing us to come up with new ways to deal with the problems and forcing us to think out of our traditional thinking and comfort zone. During this Pandemic, Human Resources as a vital functioning organ of any business had played a major role. HR, in the majority of Offices all over the world including Bangladesh, implemented **work-**

from-home as an option during the lock-down periods. Today, they are continuing to practice it as new office culture, as conscious citizens of the world, even though the lock-down restrictions have been loosened. This has completely changed the traditional concept of Corporate Office Culture and People are trying to adjust to these new norms.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to give a clear idea about the challenges Human Resources is facing because of the CoViD 19' pandemic and how it is coping with the new normal. The objective contains two-parts. One is a broad objective, and another is a specific objective.

1.2.1 Broad objective

- To identify the challenging factors for HR due to covid'19
- To find out way out for HR to solve the challenges regarding HR policies

1.2.2 Specific objective

- Finding challenging factors during a pandemic
- Finding challenging factors of post-pandemic.
- Analyzing ways to overcome this situation.

1.3 Methodology

There are two types of methodologies: Primary methodology and the other is Secondary methodology. The Primary methodology is used when data has been collected directly from a sample of people. It can be collected through surveys, interviews, and market researches. Secondary methodology means when data has been collected from other sources or documents. For this paper, I used both types of methods for data collection.

In the case of the Primary methodology, I interviewed the HR staff as well as some other general staff of the company. The purpose of this interview was to better understand the policy and processes that the company was following because of the sudden situation.

The individuals I have interviewed from my organization are:

- i. Mr. Md. Sirajul Amin
C.E.O.
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- ii. Mrs. Sharmin Afrose Shumi
Managing Director
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- iii. Mr. Mohoshin Shikder Pavel
Director Finance
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- iv. Mr. Mohammed Burhan Uddin
Executive Director
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- v. Retd. Major General Refai Hassan
Head of Human Resource and Administration
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- vi. Mr. Maksudur Rahman Lupen
Senior Manager, HR
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- vii. Mrs. Najmun Nahar
Manager, HR
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- viii. Mr. Rezbanul Haque
Assistant Manager, HR
Infinity Marketing Ltd.

- ix. Mr. Md Russel Ahmed
Assistant Manager, HR
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- x. Ms. Jannatul Ferdous
Senior Executive, HR
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- xi. Mr. Al Amin
Senior Executive, HR
Infinity Marketing Ltd.
- xii. Mrs. Farzana Ahmed
Executive, HR
Infinity Marketing Ltd.

I also interviewed a few HR professionals from my previous workplace, a real-estate company named **Dream Way Properties Ltd.**

- i. Md. Abul Kashem Raj
Head of Department, HR
Dream Way Properties Ltd.
- ii. Sabrina Rumpa
Senior Manager, HR
Dream Way Properties Ltd.
- iii. Mr. Md. Masum Billah
Manager, HR
Dream Way Properties Ltd.

- iv. Mr. Jahangir Alam
Deputy Manager, HR
Dream Way Properties Ltd.

For a better result of this research project, I even interviewed a few HR professionals from my internship workplace, a lifestyle, beauty, and health care e-commerce portal, **Shajgoj Limited.**

- i. Mrs. Sinthia Rimi
Director, HR
Shajgoj Ltd.
- ii. Ms. Farzana Preety
Manager. HR
Shajgoj Ltd.
- iii. Ms. Tabassum Binte
Assistant Manager, HR
Shajgoj Ltd.
- iv. Ms. Anika Jahan Mou
Executive, HR

For clarification and a further understanding of the concepts in this research, I had to use a secondary method of data collection. I took the help of different articles, journal papers from the internet as well as took some information from the company websites.

1.4 Scope of the study

The scope of the study limit is to HR-related issues that my selected organizations are currently facing because of this recent uncertain situation. This report only includes the factors that are affecting HR policies in the organization and how they are coping with

this situation. In this report, I talked about only during and post-pandemic situation of the organization.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

- During the interview sessions for collecting information from my current company, the subjects could not answer many matters since it involved the company's confidentiality. This gave rise to a limitation in the data collection process.
- Human Resource is a vast concept, and as I had a limitation of time, I could not explore more.
- Another limitation I faced, because of this pandemic I could not reach out to all the people from whom I could have taken interviews.
- The report could have gone better without the deficiency of my knowledge regarding the topic.

1.5 Significance of the report

This report includes the HR activities of Infinity Marketing Ltd. during the time of the pandemic. The situation of the company was severely difficult when COVID 19 attacked Bangladesh. This report will describe all challenges that the company faced at that time and now as well as the coping mechanism of then and what is the new normal. The report also covers a detailed analysis of factors from different perspectives, solutions, and possible HR strategies to survive in the long run.

2. Literature review

Article 1: Impact of employee's engagement and knowledge sharing on organizational performance: Study of HR challenges in COVID`19 pandemic

Many things have been forced to change because of a sudden pandemic. As a result, organizations have to change their policy. Because of the lockdown, the company has to remain closed for a long time (25th March to 30th May) So HR decided in most of the organizations to start remote working. So here physical workplace turns into a virtual workplace. Although it secures safety but creates some problems for running businesses.

Here employee engagement becomes an obstacle. The author took a survey among employees to understand the impact of employee engagement and knowledge sharing in organizational performance. And from the result author found that there is a positive relationship between employee engagement and organizational performance. And it has an impact on organizational profitability. At the same time, it has been also found that there is a positive relationship between knowledge sharing and organizational performance. And the author describes in this paper that because of covid'19 these two factors are declining. That means knowledge sharing and employee engagement is reduced in virtual communication. (Tanveer Ahmeda, 2020)

Article 2: Effects of covid-19 on human resource management from the perspective of digitalization and work-life-balance

This report is all about the HR challenges that companies are facing because of this covid'19. Many things have been changed because of this sudden change. So the HR function also changed a lot during this pandemic. In this research, the paper author tried to focus on the current HR crisis because of the pandemic. The author identifies some of the struggling areas like managing remote work, maintaining employee engagement, and taking care of employee mental and physical health. These factors are the most challenging part for hr managers during this pandemic. To analyze the impact author uses direct methodology. He took an interview of Georgia to indicate and found that there is a significant impact of COVID`19 on the digitalization of the system and HR policies. (Gigauri, 2020)

Article 3: The Impact of Pandemic COVID -19 in Workplace

Covid'19 becomes a global worry. As for safety measures, the social distance was a must for the people. As a result, the lockdown has been announced. So the company has to remain closed for an unpredictable time.

In this report, the author tried to describe the organization's actions during the time of the pandemic. Most of the organization take work from home as their integral business model. In this report, the author tried to highlight both the positive and negative sides of work from home. Technological uses have been increased a lot because of this new policy. Around 44% of people now accepting work from home as a normal fact. In this

report, the author analyzes the challenging factors of doing remote work. (Kaushik1*, 2020)

3. Company Profile

3.1 Company overview

Infinity Marketing Ltd. falls into the network marketing industry, which is a growing industry with More than 1 lac people involved. The company started its journey about 9 years ago in 2012. It is a Bangladesh-based company selling consumer products such as Infinity Sanitary Napkin, Alkaline Water Jug, etc. The company focuses on being the sole agent for renowned Swiss brands like Sancom which specializes in health products such as Dietary Fiber and Women's inner-wears like body-shapers. It is also the sole agent for another famous Swiss brand called Skin Code, which specializes in skin-care products such as skin serums, body lotions, sunscreen, etc. Considering the full range of products Infinity Marketing Ltd. sells, it involves countries like Malaysia, Switzerland, and China. A training department exists, solely to educate the sales team for developing knowledge and understanding of the exclusive foreign products to improve sales. The business pattern followed here is direct selling and commission-based through networking. These products are only available in Infinity Marketing Ltd., it is not available in the market.

The organization is also involved in the manpower business, sending workers for employment and students for education to the Middle-East and Europe respectively. The concern that handles this sector is called Akhwan HCM (Human Capital Management).

Maslow, Bangladesh Ltd. is another sister concern of Infinity Marketing Ltd. that conducts various kinds of skill developments and certification training programs by contracting with experts of different practical fields.

The company is also heavily involved in the tech industry through a few other sister concerns. Infinity Infotech is a wing that handles the e-commerce side of the business like maintaining the company website and the e-commerce website that sells the company products online. Digi-Desk is another concern that involves itself with the graphics sector of the tech industry.

3.1.1 Vision

To provide people-driven products and services which will not only enrich the wealth of the customer but will also be beneficial for health. Their main focus is the consumer and achieving customer satisfaction is the goal of the company.

3.1.2 Mission

The mission of Infinity Marketing Ltd. is to provide the best network marketing service in the industry. It wants to sustain in the market through their customer-driven service.

3.1.3 Product mix

Product mix refers to all product portfolios of a company. It includes the whole set of products or services that a particular brand or company provides. Infinity Marketing Ltd. has a wide range of products and services. Its product mix includes consumer goods, health products, beauty and skin-care products, baby care products and manpower, services such as education and training of Human Resources and is also quite active in the technology sector like graphics designing and e-commerce.

3.1.4 Customer mix

Since Infinity Marketing Ltd. offers such a wide variety of products, the customer mix of the company is also very diverse. It serves both the Female and Male genders of the society with customers ranging from babies to kids to the young and middle-aged population.

3.2 SWOT Analysis

Strength	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> As they offer products of renowned international brands, gaining customer trust is easy. <input type="checkbox"/> The capability of huge investment capability. <input type="checkbox"/> Unique products. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The company follows a strategy of promoting employees based on years of service to the company rather than actual capabilities. <input type="checkbox"/> Employee satisfaction is very poor due to bad compensation management and unhealthy office culture. <input type="checkbox"/> Unique products.
Opportunity	Treat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The market of this industry is increasing so it will create a greater business opportunity for them, <input type="checkbox"/> As they are an established company so if they bring other segments of product or service people will accept. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> New competitors are entering the market due to low barriers to entry.

3.3 Human Resource Department of the company

Human Resource Development: It is a framework for helping employees to develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and ability. (www.thebalancecareer.com, n.d.).

Infinity Marketing Limited invests in developing its Human Resources by organizing various development and training programs essential for the employees to work in the company as well as in any corporate environment.

Human Resource Planning: Human resource planning is the continuous process of systematically planning for optimal use of manpower. (Investopedia, n.d.)

The only HR Planning of Infinity Marketing Ltd. is the development of its employees and recruiting new ones from time to time.

Human Resource Information System: The Human Resource Information System (HRIS) is a software or online solution for the data entry, data tracking, and data information needs of the Human Resources, payroll, management, and accounting functions within a business. (www.bambooHR.com, n.d.)

The HRIS system used at Infinity Marketing Ltd. is provided by a third-party software firm customized to the specific needs of the organization.

Human Resource Service: HR Service Delivery refers to the function that supports and provides services to employees. The HR Service Delivery solution will span the entire employee lifecycle—from hire to retire, such as onboarding, payroll, and benefits. (Ultimate Software, n.d.)

The HR department of Infinity Marketing Ltd. is not well organized and manned with enough employees to deal with such a large volume of employees. So, not surprisingly, the HR service provided to the employees is not adequate.

Compensation: Compensation is a total monetary and no monetary package that is given to the employee in exchange for their work effort. The compensation management of Infinity Marketing Ltd. is not up to standard. The payment of salaries is usually late, leading to employee dissatisfaction.

Performance Appraisal System: A performance appraisal is a system of review of an employee's job performance and overall contribution to a company. It is also known as an "annual review," "performance review or evaluation," or "employee appraisal". Performance appraisal evaluates an employee's skills, achievements, and growth, or lack thereof. Companies use performance appraisals to give employees big-picture feedback on their work and to justify pay increases and bonuses, as well as promotion decisions. They can be conducted at any given time but tend to be annual, semi-annual, or quarterly. (Investopedia, n.d.).

Infinity Marketing Ltd. does performance appraisals of its employees annually. It helps the employees to stay motivated and the management to keep track of performing employees.

Employee turnover: Employee turnover, or employee turnover rate, is the measurement of the number of employees who leave an organization during a specified period, typically one year. While an organization usually measures the total number of

employees who leave, turnover can also apply to subcategories within an organization like individual departments or demographic groups. (www.bambooHR.com, n.d.)

About 90 employees are working for Infinity Marketing Ltd. The usual turnover rate is about 25 people per year, which is about 27.7%. For a taskforce of less than 100, it is not a very good employee turnover rate.

Employee engagement: Employee engagement is a workplace approach resulting in the right conditions for all members of an organization to give their best each day, committed to their organization's goals and values, motivated to contribute to organizational success, with an enhanced sense of their well-being. (Engage for success, n.d.)

The Corporate Office Culture at Infinity Marketing Ltd. is not a very healthy one. The **Network Marketing** concept is very similar to **Multi-Level-Marketing (MLM)**, which is banned in Bangladesh, and also the reason for law enforcement to often visit the office to observe operations. The behavior of senior management towards the lower-level employees is very **harsh** and **rude**.

Employee Downsizing: Downsizing is the situation when companies terminate multiple employees at the same time, often to save money. Companies generally do this when they fall into a loss or face a critical situation.

During the 3 months of the lock-down period of the pandemic, the company remained out of operations. After the pandemic, Infinity Marketing Ltd. downsized its human resource by about 10% letting 8 people go.

Chapter 4

4.1 Challenges during the pandemic

1. Business contingency plan

COVID-19 is a sudden unexpected incident. Infinity marketing ltd was not prepared for it. So, they fell into sudden uncertainty. Finding the right course of action in this situation is a very vital task.

A contingency plan is a sort of action that will be taken if any uncertainty occurs. It is a kind of alternate plan. (HRD, 2020) Because of the pandemic companies cannot operate as regular or cannot go with the previous plan. So, HR must plan differently on this sudden circumstance. So, this is a challenge of how they will do and what type of plan they will take.

2. Information / communication gap

One of the major problems of remote work is the communication gap. As this concept is new so the chances of a communication gap are high. Communicating everything via phone or text or email cannot clear out many things. Especially HR must face this problem with the employee who is working in the technical teams. Their job is more connected with machinery and less with digital platforms. So, it becomes difficult for the employees to relate to the organization all time.

3. Managing remote work

Remote work is a new concept for us. We are not used to it. So, when HR will come up with this concept many employees will need time to understand the concept of this new policy. In the company, there are different types of employees. All cannot easily understand this concept.

Again, there is a possibility of poor internet connection in many employee's geographical locations and remote work cannot be done without the internet. Employees must relate to the organization virtually so they must have a proper internet connection.

4. Attendance tracking

There is no track of office hours in the remote work policy. So here HR suffered to obtain work hours of the employees. There is a possibility that employees can give wrong updates. So, this will affect the measure of employee performance.

5. Employee engagement

In the period of Lockdown, Company must connect with employees through digital platforms so there is a possibility of having some gap between the instructions and employees understanding them. So, the employee must keep in touch with the company. Therefore, it is very difficult to have engagement with all employees.

6. Providing salary

Providing monthly salaries to employees is another difficult task for HR. In this pandemic company's investment is off. Also, its sister concern's activity is off. So, there is no earning source for the company. But still, the company must give the salary to its employee. So, HR must face problems regarding how they will provide the salary. They must decide if they will give full salary or will cut down some. HR must take the decision which will be beneficial for both organization and the employee.

7. Leaking of information

The company must operate operations remotely because of the pandemic during the lockdown. In this situation, they must provide confidential information or files for running the operation. There is no way to look after whether employees are using this information anywhere else or not. So here is a chance of information leaked by employees. This a challenging task for HR to ensure the information will not be leaked from any employee.

4.2. Challenges after the pandemic

In the 21st century, many things are changing very rapidly. Organizational culture, policy, the technique is also changing. Especially many things become critical because of the pandemic. COVID-19 is the most vulnerable concern of this century.

So, in this critical situation organizations are also going through very tough conditions. Many organizations are shutting down their business because of lockdown. Many organizations that are dependent on other countries especially in China are facing a lack of raw materials. Because of this pandemic without an emergency flight, all flights are canceled. So import-export businesses are shut down.

RMG sector is badly affected because of this pandemic. Many orders have been canceled because of the pandemic. There is a study where employee reaction about COVID-19 was shown-

1. Managing employee work schedule

COVID-19 becomes a global crisis so in this situation, the company must be concerned about their employee in the first place. When the government imposes lockdown, offices must remain close. So many companies must run their business from home. So, keeping employee attendance on track and making sure of presence is the most difficult task for HR. When the office remains open it is easy to oversee employee attendance and timing of starting office but in the case of remote work, it is not possible to make sure employees are starting their work on time or not. So, this a challenging task for the 21st century for HR.

2. Evaluating employee performance

In the upcoming two/three years probably, we must face the consequences of this pandemic. We do not even know when we will be fully risk-free. So, companies that do not operate their organizations like infinity marketing ltd cannot start their businesses regularly. Evaluating employee performance will be a difficult task in this situation. Many companies must run an office from home as well they may have to hire an employee virtual. So, in this case, the company also cannot evaluate employees properly. So, this will be a huge challenge ahead that they must face. If employees do not get a proper evaluation, they may get demotivated. It will affect his/her work.

3. Ensuring the safety of the employees

In a few years, the most important concern will be safety. In COVID-19 being safe and clean is very important to get rid of it. After the pandemic when offices will be opened ensuring safety will be the most challenging part for HR. Most organizations especially local and SMEs do not have that much capability to ensure the safety of all employees. Some multinational companies can only provide PPE or other safety instruments. But others do not have the capability. So, for those companies, this will be a challenge to ensure the safety of employees properly.

4. Managing employee turnover

Companies must remain closed because of the pandemic. That is why many companies' especially small companies cannot earn revenue. So, most of the companies could not provide employees' salaries on time. For that reason, employee turnover may increase. This is a very challenging task for HR to keep those employees and manage the situation in this critical time.

5. Managing employee compensation

Another critical task of HR is salary and compensation. Companies face loss during the pandemic. So, it becomes tough for companies to pay regular payments and give regular benefits to their employees. This also happens for network marketing companies. Infinity marketing ltd also faces this problem. So, HR may have to cut pay or give fewer benefits. Employees may get demotivated by this happening, so HR must handle this situation strategically.

6. Downsizing policy

Downsizing means reducing the number of employees. Companies adopt this policy when an employee performs poorly or goes through loss.

Because of COVID-19 currently, my organization, including Infinity Marketing Ltd. may want to adopt a downsizing policy. HR must do so in this critical time. There is a possibility of getting employees outraged because of such a sudden job loss. HR must face this condition strategically. They have to create a balance between the organization and the employees.

7. Hiring new employee

Organizations will fall into a financial crisis after the pandemic. So, after or during the pandemic, if they need an employee for any vacant position, it will be tough for HR to hire a new employee. The Company cannot bear new expenses right now. So, it will hamper the productivity of the organization.

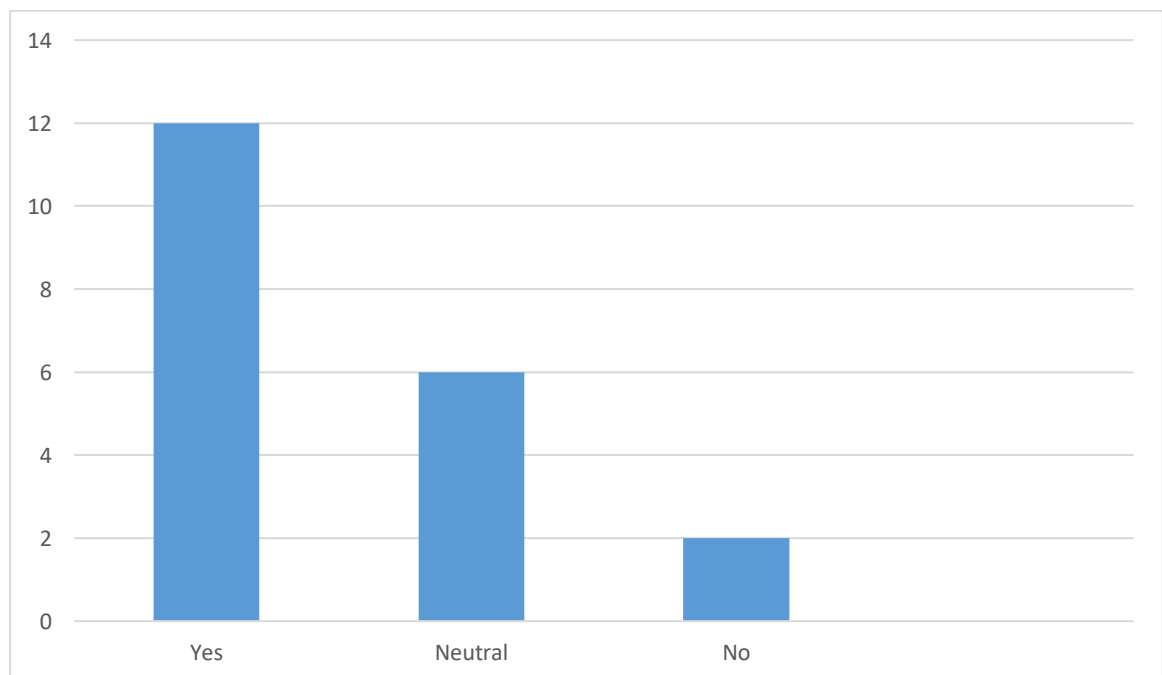
Chapter 5

5.1 Analysis

To know and analyze HR challenges during and post-pandemic I interviewed 20 HR professionals from different organizations, and I tried to analyze the result from my findings.

1. Did HR have to take a contingency plan because of the pandemic?

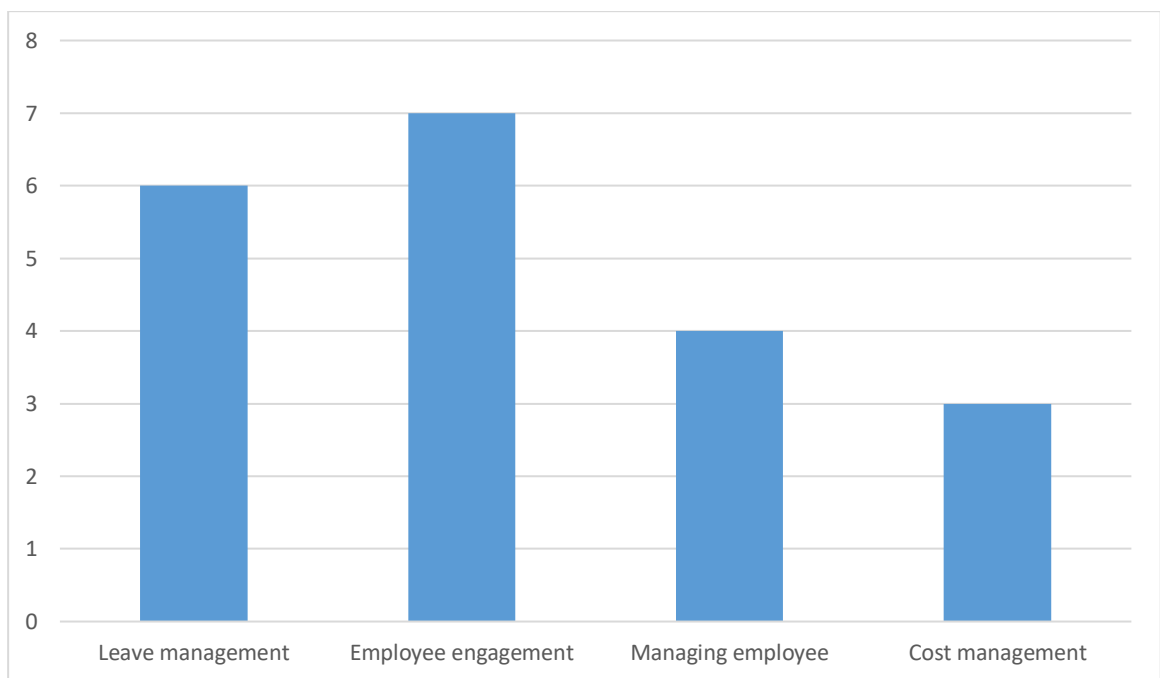
Answers	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	60
No	2	10
Neutral	6	30
Total	20	100



60% of the professionals think that a contingency plan should be kept for any uncertainty like this pandemic.

2. What was the most challenging factor for HR?

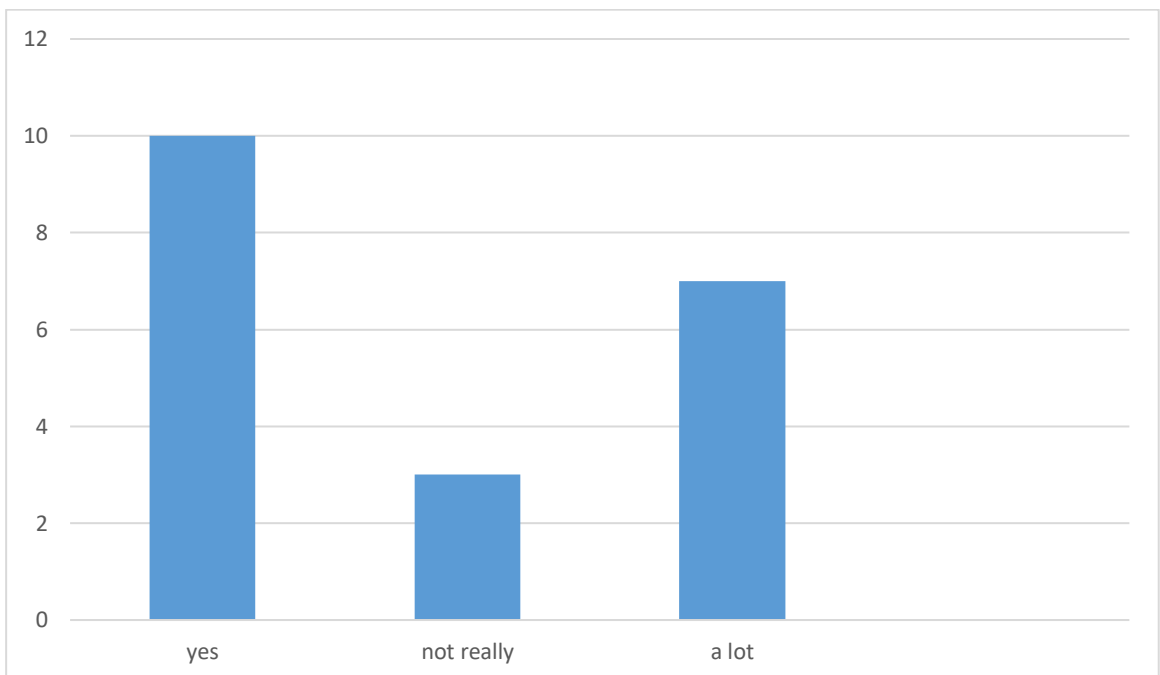
Answers	Frequency	Percent
Leave management	6	30
Employee engagement	7	35
Managing employee	4	20
Cost management	3	15
Total	20	100



35% of people think that maintaining employee engagement is a tough task for HR in the time of remote work. Almost 30% of people think that managing the leave schedule for an employee is the next difficult task for HR.

3. Did HR have to go through termination because of this Pandemic?

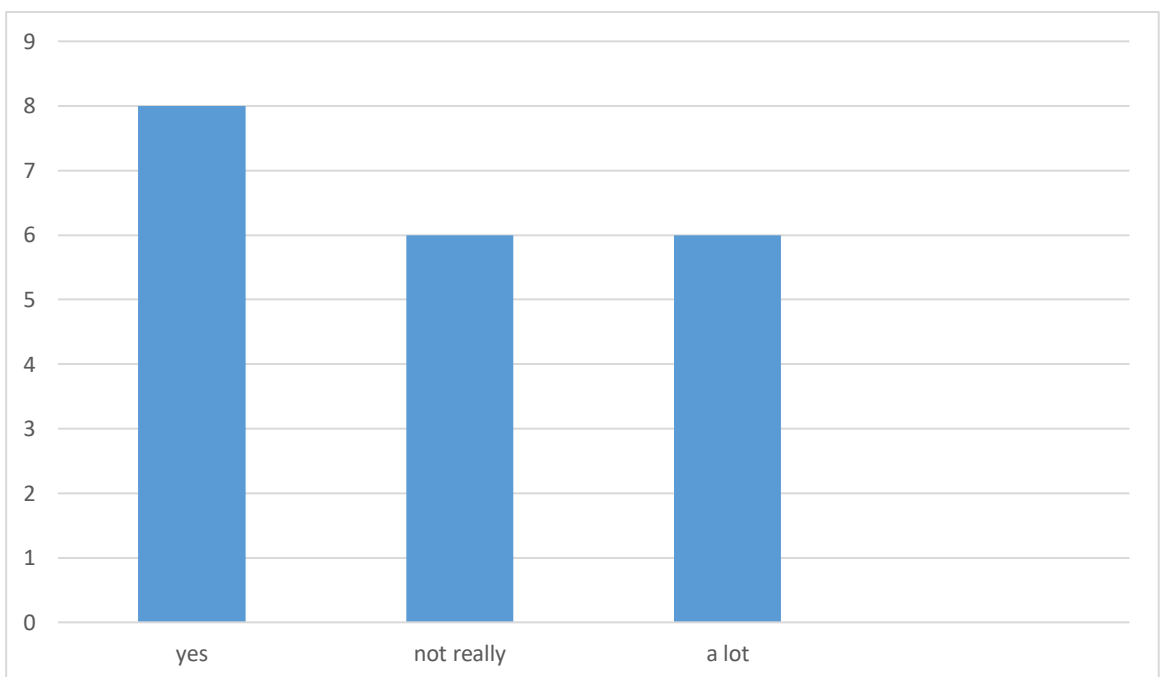
Answers	Frequency	Percent
Yes	10	50
Not really	3	15
A lot	7	35
Total	20	100



50% agree about facing the risk of termination because of the sudden uncertainty and shut down of the organizations. 35% of professionals think companies had to go through the termination a lot in this pandemic.

4. Did HR have to deduct the salary to reduce the cost?

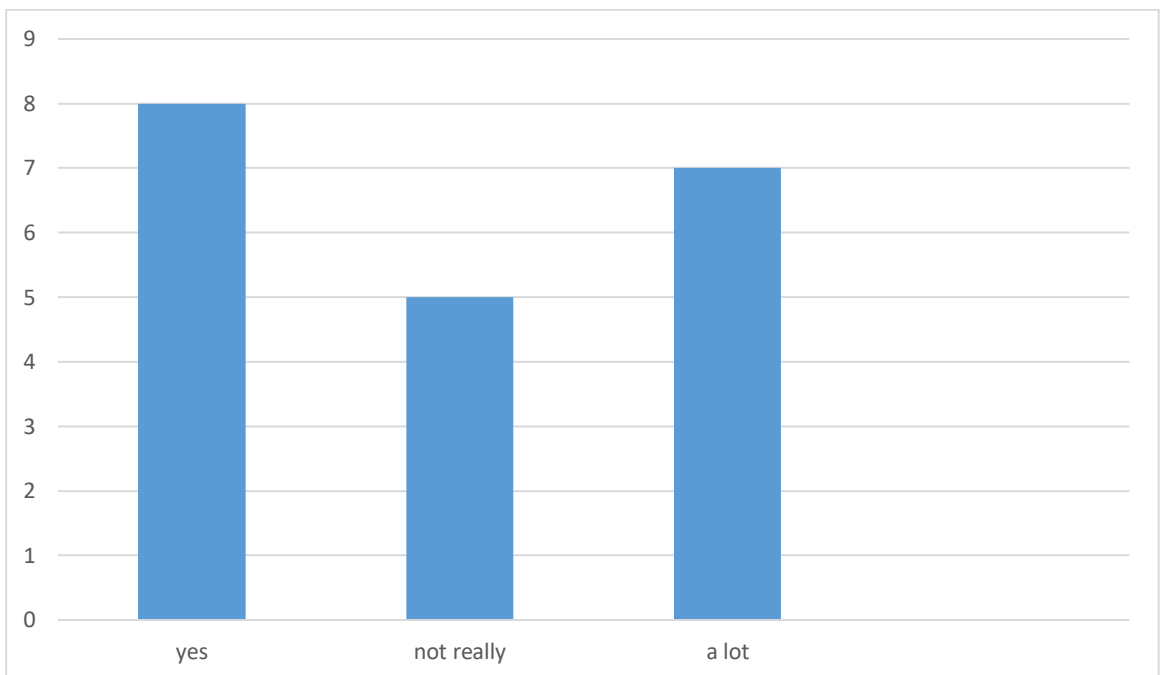
Answers	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	40
Not really	6	30
A lot	6	30
Total	20	100



40% of the people said that salary has been deducted from employees because of the lockdown. 30% of people mentioned that employee salary has been deducted a lot in this pandemic.

5. Did the employees get demotivated during a lockdown?

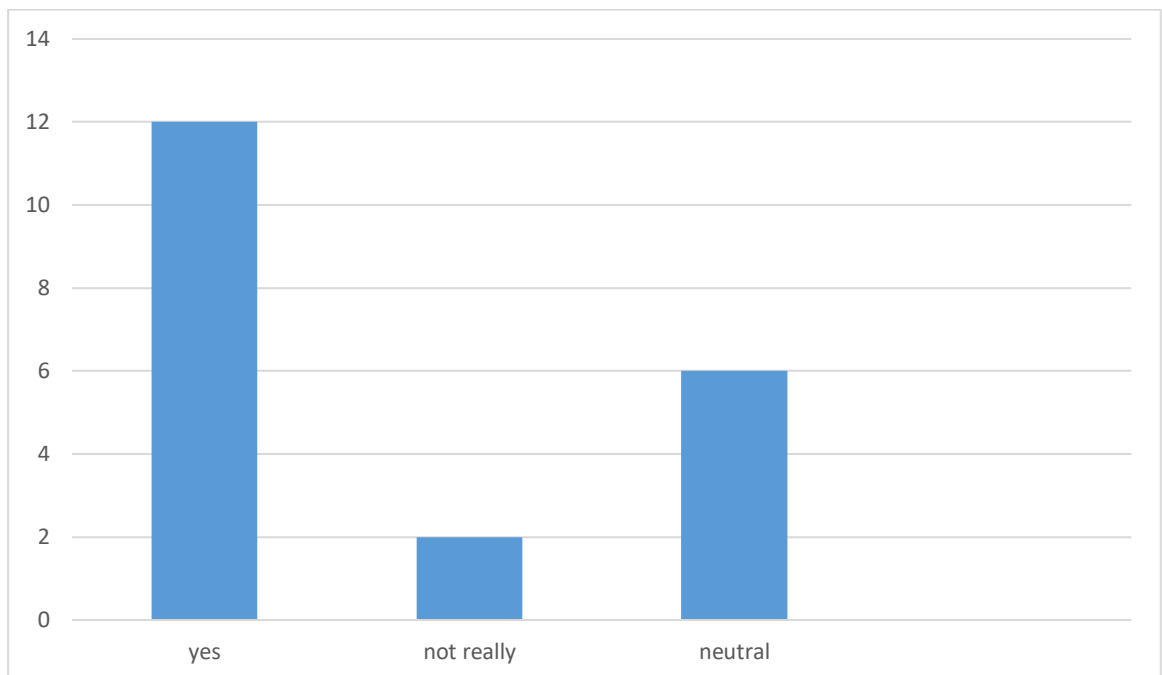
Answers	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	40
Not really	5	25
A lot	7	35
Total	20	100



40% of people agree that they got demotivated to work from home. Again 35% of people said that this pandemic demotivated employees a lot.

6. Did HR suffer to manage work from home during the lockdown?

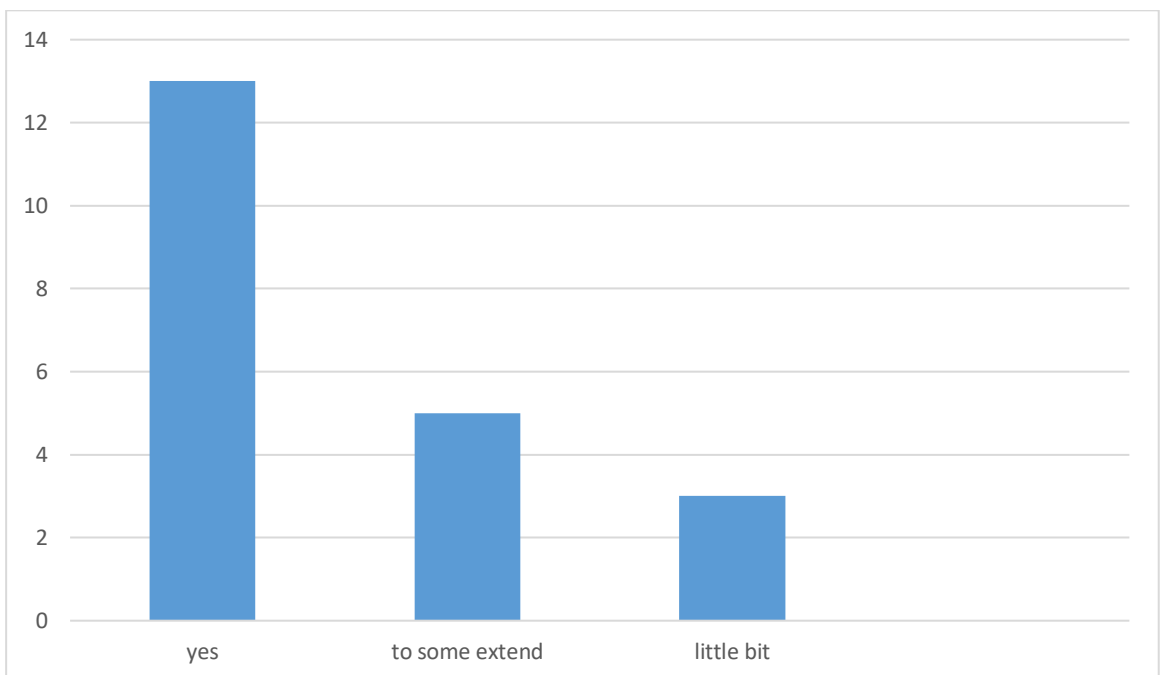
Answers	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	60
Not really	2	10
neutral	6	30
Total	20	100



60% of people think that managing work from home was a difficult task from HR.

7. Is maintaining safety a challenging part for HR?

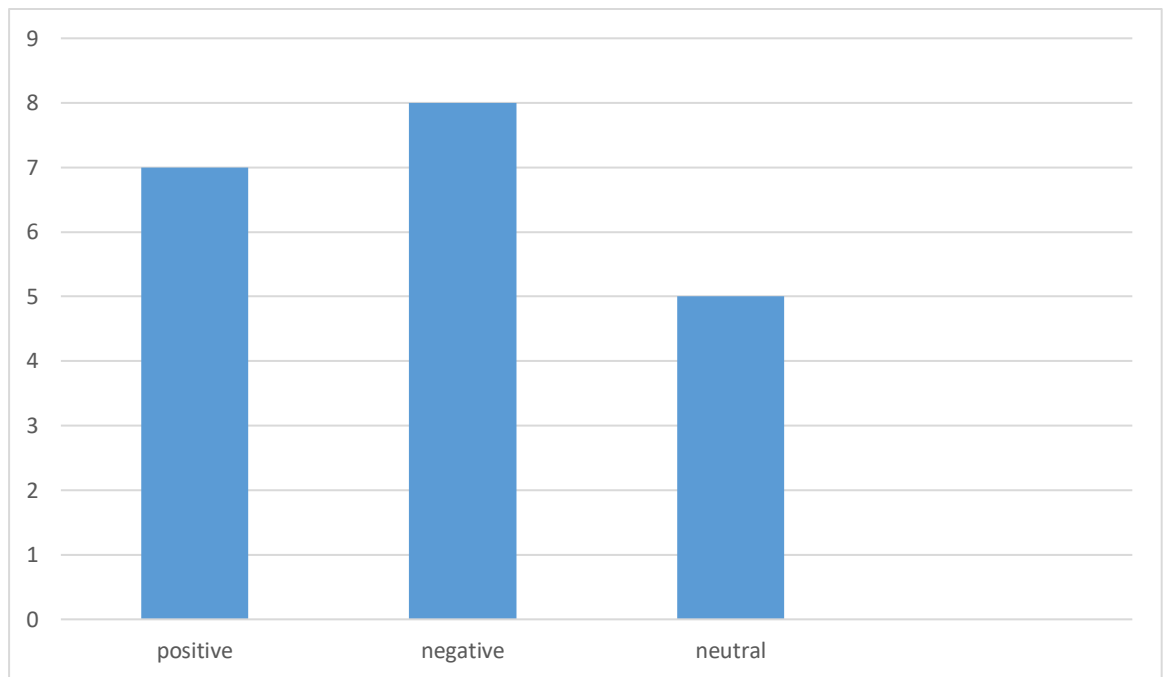
Answers	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	65
To some extend	5	25
Little bit	3	15
Total	20	100



65% of people think that maintaining safety is a difficult task for HR because of the pandemic.

8. What was the impact of work from home on employees?

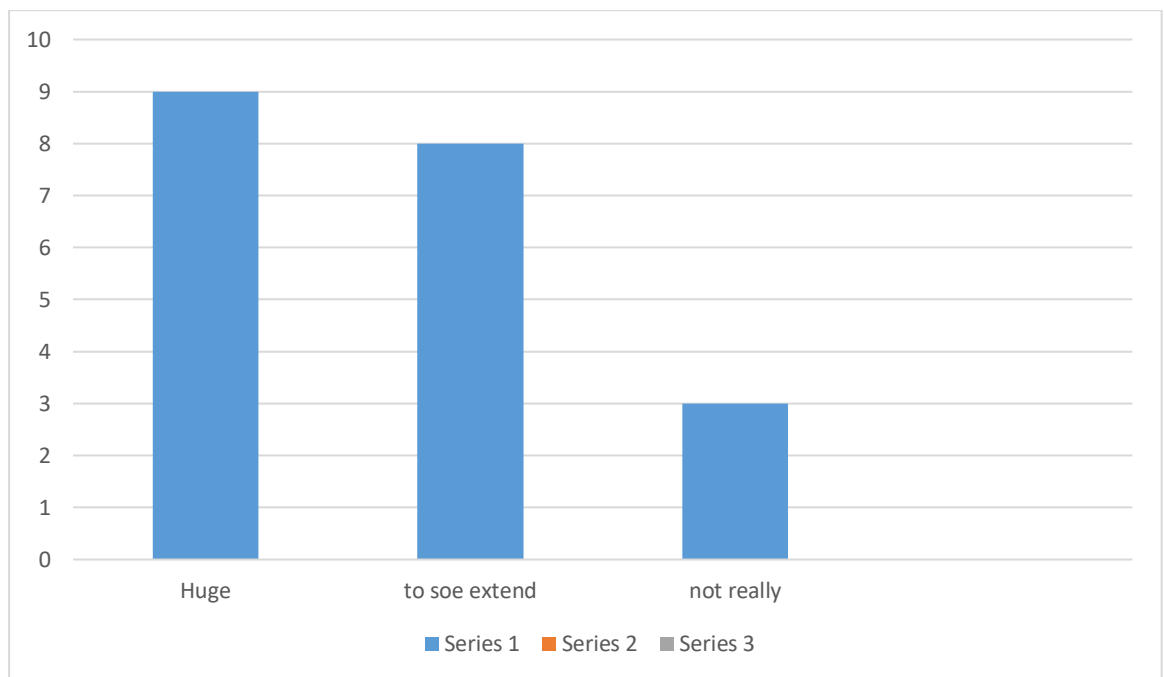
Answers	Frequency	Percent
Positive	7	35
Negative	8	40
neutral	5	25
Total	20	100



40% of professionals said that there was a negative impact of work from home on employees and 35% said it had a positive impact.

9. What was the impact of technology during work from home?

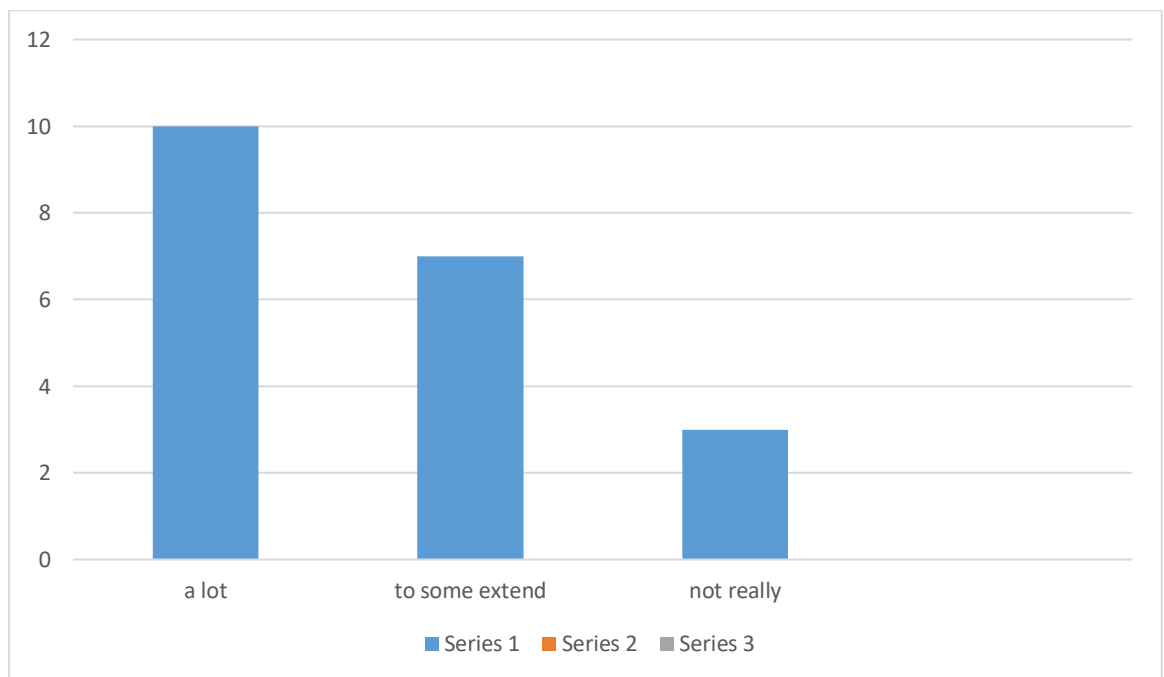
Answers	Frequency	Percent
Huge	9	45
To some extend	8	40
Not really	3	25
Total	20	100



45% of people mentioned that they were dependent on technology a lot during the time of work from home and 40% agreed to be dependent on technology to some extent.

10. Did any change in training programs occur because of the pandemic?

Answers	Frequency	Percent
A lot	10	50
Not really	3	15
To some extend	7	35
Total	20	100



Here I surveyed over 20 people of the organization about the changes that occurred in training programs during the pandemic. And I found that almost 50% of people think that a lot of changes took place in training programs during the pandemic.

5.2 Findings

1. HR should have a contingency plan for any uncertain situation.
2. Managing employee-related activity gets tough to control remotely.
3. A lot of companies go through termination of the employees in this pandemic because of the shutdown of businesses.
4. Companies must deduct salary because of the loss that the companies took during the pandemic.
5. Work from home is the most difficult part for the employee in this lockdown as communication was not smooth.
6. Technological dependency was huge during the time of work from home. People use to work with different software.
7. Training programs changed a lot. Now training is conducted online. As a result, the method and procedure have been changed.
8. As work from home is remote work and there is a communication gap and employees cannot meet each other so they are getting demotivated.
9. As this is an alarming situation and ensuring employee safety is important. So, it is getting difficult for HR to maintain safety for all employees.
10. Employee engagement should be focused on getting a better result in organizational development.
11. Employee motivational programs should be conducted to make them engaged with the organization.
12. Technology should be updated to run the functions of the organization.

Chapter 6

6.1 Recommendation

When any pandemic occurred a lot of changes take place. Especially different organizations face critical problems. Because of COVID19 a lot of change will take place. The organization must take strategic decisions on those. One of the key factors for any organization is its employee. So here HR plays a great role.

Organizations like Infinity Marketing Ltd have a good image in society, as well as they deal with many employees. So, HR must be very conscious during the time of policymaking. They must formulate policies that help the organization, as well as the employees, and will uphold the reputation. HR policies that should be taken as means to coping with the new normal after the pandemic are listed below.

1. Preparing a safe workplace

After the pandemic, the main concern should be providing a safe working environment to the employee. For this pandemic, employee and their family are afraid now. As the employee is the key component to the company so to ensure their safety is the priority. In this case, HR must take the necessary measures. They must ensure a safe environment, sanitizer, maintain social distance from employee to employee, must take extra precautions for cleanliness and hygiene factors. They also must keep personnel for checking the temperature of the body and if anyone's temperature is found high; he will not get permission for entering the premises.

Many organizations are providing safety equipment. So, HR should give special concern on it. They can provide PPE, mask, sanitizer for all time use, tissue. Especially the services which are related to public communication must take extra precaution. For example, client service executives, sales executives must be more concerned.

HR may have to change the alignment of the company. As maintaining social distance is essential in this crisis, so to ensure the distance the office desk

arrangements may have to change. If there is an opportunity to do so, then HR must take immediate action on it.

2. Reviewing major HR policies

A lot of changes will take place because of this pandemic. And obviously, employee safety is the company's responsibility. So, HR must rethink and overview the major HR policies of the company.

- **Leave policy.**

For the sake of employee safety, HR must change the leave policy. It has to more flexible after the pandemic. The paid leave must be increased. If an employee has a fever, cough or any other sickness HR must give him paid leave immediately.

- **Increment and compensation policy.**

Because of pandemic people go through a huge financial crisis, so the organization must give support to its employee here. Infinity marketing ltd can give medical fringe benefits to their employee.

Organizations can also have a medical team or at least a consultant for an emergency in the organization. At least they should arrange a virtual medical consultant for the medical emergency of the employee.

- **Transportation facility**

After the pandemic, we must be careful about the social distance. But on public transport, it is not possible. So those who are using public transport have a huge chance to get affected. And those who use public transport when they will come to the office, they can affect other employees. So, for the overall safety of the organization, the company must give support on transportation for the safe of the overall safety of the employee.

3. Alignment of office

Social distance is essential for a safe working environment. And the company must have that working environment for the employee. So, HR may have to change the arrangement of the company. There should have 3 feet gap between every desk. Also has an extra place for employee walking and relaxing. HR must be strict to ensure employees are maintaining distance while working, walking, in meetings, and during lunchtime. So, to ensure the distance the office alignment may have to change. If there is an opportunity to do so, then HR must take immediate action on it. If there is no opportunity, then HR must think about different policies.

4. Work from home

Because of covid-19, we must think differently. Employee safety should be the first concern. In many organizations, there is no opportunity to maintain social distance. So, they must think about different policies. So in this situation work from home can be a new and effective concept. To ensure safety we can have a policy of doing office from home. It can be productive as well as help to provide security for employees. Work from home can be productive if we maintain rules and regulations. Benefits of remote work/ work from home-

- Work from home is less costly. The employee does not have to travel to attend the office so it will be cheaper.
- There are no issues of safety as they do not have to go out or do not have to work with a lot of people. As well as who is working in an office, they will be safe also.
- It is more flexible. Home is the most comfortable place for anyone. So, the employee can join the office in a flexible work environment and can be more comfortable.

5. Digitalization

After the pandemic, many things will be changed. So, for the future, we must take a big step. As during the pandemic, we are already using technology to maintain our regular work, after the pandemic, we should try to make digitalized working an option as well to be prepared for any such uncertainty in the future. We should have a digital footprint on processes, communication, and operations.

- It will make our life more comfortable, flexible, and employee-friendly.
- It will help to be more tech-friendly. Nowadays everything is getting easy on technology. For helping work from home successful, companies have different software. It will help one to be tech-friendly.
- It will make the employee get better in communication. Employees must communicate through email, zoom, or other such technologies so it will help one to be better in communication.

6. Virtual recruitment

After CoVid-19 there will still be the risk for life through contamination. So, we must be prepared for this type of consequence. If we cannot overcome that situation, we cannot survive in the long run. Here HR must play a very technical role. We cannot pause hiring. So, rather than calling all at the office, we can arrange interviews virtually. It not only increases safety but also, is less time-consuming, less expensive, and more flexible. We are running deeper and deeper towards the digital revolution and thus this step helps us move a step further.

7. Hiring Contractual / Part-time employees

The practice of hiring a contractual employee or part-time employee is not a new concept. Although it is not widely practiced, because of the pandemic, many companies are experiencing loss. So, maintaining employees has become tough for the company. In this case, the company can hire part-time or contract-based employees. It will be helpful for both companies and employees as well.

- Since cost-cutting is one of the very urgent issues, hiring part-time employees will be more cost-effective than hiring a full-time employee.
- It will be helpful for the employee or job seeker as they will at least have an earning source in this dire situation.

8. Virtual / E-training

As mass gatherings are risky and also restricted because of the pandemic, physical training should not be the choice of training anymore. It is also tough, time-consuming, and expensive to arrange training, especially if it is small in number. So online or virtual training can be very useful in this situation. It is also sometimes called e-training and has many benefits

- It is Flexible. Employees can join from any place. Those who are geographically immobile can also join in the training.
- Virtual training is more cost-effective. As there is no need to arrange venue, equipment or refreshment for trainee and trainer so the cost is less. Again, trainers do not need to be present physically so the cost of hiring the trainers will also be less.
- It can be more productive. In the case of virtual training trainers or trainees can join from any place so special trainers from a foreign country can also be hired to train. So, it may be more effective.
- No interruption. In the office, there can be interruptions during the training but in virtual training, the possibility is less.
- Virtual training can be arranged at any time. In the case of physical training, it must be arranged within office hours most of the time. So, office-work may be disrupted. But virtual training can be arranged even after office hours.
- Virtual training is more interactive. In virtual training, the trainer can look after an employee`s actions frequently. Also, it is less costly so with fewer amount of people it can be arranged.

9. Engagement team

It is very important to maintain the employees carefully after the pandemic. It is natural for the employees to panic after the pandemic. They will be concerned about their job, and they might even try to switch jobs. So, to keep the productive employees onboard, HR must take the necessary steps. In this situation, a team is necessary to create engagement with the needed employees. The job of this team will be creating connections, giving assurance of job security, and building faith and trust over the company.

10. Strategically Manage Downsizing

After the pandemic, HR must make difficult decisions since the company went through loss during the pandemic. The most difficult decision can be employee downsizing. So, here HR must make decisions very strategically. HR must choose employees for layoff critically. Unfortunately, employees with the least effect of performance toward the company have to be selected carefully for the terminations. At the same time, HR must ensure that after downsizing, there will be no conflict or dissatisfaction in the remaining employees. If such happens, then it will affect the company's overall productivity and performance.

6.2 Implementation

In this pandemic, HR should take various steps for the organization, employees, and society. But implementation is made tough in this pandemic. Managing employees and engaging with them considering organizational tasks and balancing work and professional life is extremely challenging. Some effective steps HR can implement are recommended below.

6.2.1 HR Practices during Pandemic

1. Managing remote work

Remote work or work from home is a common concept in this pandemic as employees cannot come to the office.

- ✓ HR must give targets to a different department.

- ✓ Department heads must give projects or tasks to employees and must give a deadline.
- ✓ After the completion, tasks have to be reviewed and employees will get feedback from the supervisor.
- ✓ HR must set proper rules and regulations during the time of work from home.
- ✓ All department heads must also give updates on their projects.
- ✓ HR can use technology to count attendance on time. There will be a specific office hour. The employee must sign into any tabulation sheet or through apps. In doing so, office-timetable can be maintained.

2. Meeting management

For the engagement of the employees, meetings can be arranged virtually where employees will share their experiences on working remotely, how they are dealing with virtual work, and suggest ideas on how to improve the policies. For arranging these meetings HR can use “Zoom Ultra” or “Google Meet” or other useful apps. Implementing such policies will make employees feel they are in office routine.

3. Arrangement of virtual training

Training is essential for the continuous development of employees. Especially during this critical situation, training is very important to make the employee more productive on virtual work, technological improvement, and so on.

In a virtual platform, the trainer and trainee will interact with each other through a virtual medium; video conferencing. It is much more convenient with the help of technology. So, keeping the development program off is not the solution. HR has to always come up with alternate solutions.

4. Virtual recruitment

In this critical situation operating physical recruitment is difficult and risky. So virtually arranged recruitments will be suitable in this situation. HR will give advertisements in electronic media and collect CVs from them.

- ✓ They can interview via video conferencing or other software.
- ✓ Even a written test can be arranged using an online platform.
- ✓ Even effective software like Sonra, where video interviews can be taken with a setup time and question can be utilized to hire new employees.

5. Restricting traveling

Most of the organization has employees all over the country. So, during the time of COVID-19 employees may want to move from one place to another. HR must be strict on this issue. They must give limitations or fully restrict traveling from one place to another.

6. Taking continuous feedback

Coping with the new normal will take some time to get used to. It is to be expected that complications will arise with the new culture and practices. Some mismanagements are bound to happen or face technological difficulties or have communication gaps or even have a conflict with another coworker or supervisor. So, HR must monitor all of these by taking feedback from the employees.

7. Evaluation of employee performance

After this pandemic, the criteria of evaluation of employees should not be the same. HR must change the factor of consideration.

- ✓ They must check how actively the employee performed during this pandemic.
- ✓ HR also must consider the situation of the employee during the pandemic. He or she may have gotten sick or may stay in an area where the internet connection is poor.
- ✓ HR also must consider employee motivation towards work and efficiency.
- ✓ The evaluation must be clear and transparent.

6.2.2. HR actions after the covid-19

1. Security measures

In the perspective of Bangladesh, implementing safety for all employees is very difficult. There are different types of employees. Many of them are uneducated. They are not conscious of their health. Still, companies must ensure the safety of the employees. They can keep a medical consultant for this pandemic who can give support any time to the employee. Whenever employees will feel sick, they will consult with the doctor. The Company must keep sanitizers and temperature checking machines at the entrance. So that if anyone is found affected then they will not get permission for entry.

2. Technologically improvement

In this period of the pandemic, to run operations, the company must have to use technology. But many employees have no idea/ very little idea about different technology. So, the company must arrange training on the uses of technology. As mentioned earlier they can arrange virtual training for employees on new software uses or management.

3. Recognition of employee

This is like an engagement program. During the COVID-19 organization may go through a salary cutting policy. So, employees are bound to get demotivated. HR must technically manage this situation. They can give recognition such as employee of the month or best team of the month rewards to keep them motivated.

4. Limit traveling outdoor or abroad

Many companys' employees must travel around the country. It can be risky even after the pandemic. So, when the regular office will be continued the organization should restrict employees from traveling.

5. Workplace flexibility

During the COVID-19 pandemic, employees got a flexible working schedule but after the pandemic when they are to be back to regular life, they may get frustrated and de-motivated or find it difficult to cope with the new norms. HR can pause

the regular working hour of 9-5 for some months. They can go for flexible working hours. It means the employees will get the flexibility of coming and leaving office but must fill the working hours.

6. Redesigning leave policy

After the pandemic, organizations cannot go back to their original policies. They must bring significant change in many things. The leave policy is very important and must be customized accordingly. Employees' sick leave should also be redesigned. After the pandemic, it is still possible for employees to get sick. So, having a flexible leave policy is essential.

7. Medical Insurance

In this pandemic, we faced a huge crisis. Employees and organizations both went through financial turmoil. Many people have suffered from treatment. So, in the future, organizations can have medical insurance policies for the employees to show care for them and increase their loyalty towards the company.

8. Changing sitting alignment

The social distancing rule during the pandemic is to maintain a distance of at least 3 feet within each individual to avoid contamination and the spreading of the virus. It is only natural that it is expected that the companies are to maintain this practice within the office culture to avoid any such incident in the future. So, it will not be surprising to see that the new sitting arrangement in the offices is at least 3 feet apart.

9. Project-based job opportunity

After experiencing financial difficulties during the pandemic, and as a result, having to layoff employees, organizations might find themselves in the need of new employees. In such a situation, it would be advisable for the companies to hire on a project basis.

10. Promotion or increment

At this stage, it is to be expected that the employees are to be confused and fearful of losing their jobs. So, they may look to switch their workplace, but the organization needs loyal and proactive workers in this critical situation. In such a situation, organizations must take a step to keep these employees in the organization. They can give promotions or increments to proactive and loyal employees.

Conclusion

The whole world is in crisis and struggling to survive. Everyday uncountable people are dying. People cannot have a normal life because of this pandemic. Moreover, after the pandemic, the world will not be the same as before. Many different types of crises will arise after the pandemic. Among them poverty, Famine, unemployment will be a huge problem. To overcome this pandemic, we all must fight together. So different social organizations, institutions, voluntary organizations, business organizations must come forward to overcome this crisis.

It will be most challenging for the HR of the organizations as they are the policymakers relating to the Humans. They must make decisions strategically. They must balance the profit-loss, overcome the losses, taking care of employee welfare, responsibility toward graduates and society. So, their every step can create a better world or destroy the hopes.

The world is in a critical situation so all of us must be concerned. If we all can be conscious, maintain health rules, can help each other in need, take decisions strategically then obviously we can fight against the pandemic and overcome the critical situation.

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Appendix

1. Did HR have to take a contingency plan because of the pandemic?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) Neutral.

2. What was the most challenging factor for HR?
 - a) Leave management
 - b) employee engagement
 - c) managing employee
 - d) Cost management.

3. Does HR have to go through termination because of the Pandemic?
 - a) Yes
 - b) Not really
 - c) A lot.

4. Did HR have to deduct the salary to reduce the cost?
 - a) Yes
 - b) Not really
 - c) Neutral.

5. Did the employee get demotivated during a lockdown?
 - a) Yes
 - b) Not really
 - c) A lot.

6. Did HR suffer to manage work from home during lockdown?
 - a) Yes
 - b) Neutral
 - c) Not really.

7. Is maintaining safety a challenging part for HR?
 - a) Yes
 - b) To some extend
 - c) a little bit.

8. What was the impact of work from home on an employee?

- a) Positive b) negative c) Neutral

9. What was the impact of technology during work from home?

- a) Huge b) to some extent c) not really.

10. Is there any change occur in training programs because of the pandemic?

- a) A lot of b) to some extent c) not really.