

Evolving employment relationship assignment

[Sociology](#)



Evolving Workplace Relations Introduction There has been a great challenge faced by business organization today: a shift in employment relationship.

Today employees are savvy, confident, upbeat, open minded, creative and independent and therefore tend to be more challenging to manage. There is a demand for greater work/life balance, workforce flexibility and good management of workforce diversity. Definition Globalisation and the changing workforce have produced two contrasting changes in relationships between employers and employees: Aligning the workplace with emerging workforce expectations, and increasing workforce flexibility to increase organisational competitiveness' (Mcshane & Travaglione, 2007, pg 10).

Mullins (2005) also agrees that there is a need for greater flexibility in the structure of work organisation and pattern of management; and the changing nature and composition of the work force. Literature Research Work/Life Balance

Achieving a good balance between work and family commitments is a growing concern for contemporary employees and organizations which results in them looking for workplaces that provide for time exchange that make maximum use of their work-life hours (Anilkumar & Sandeep, 2005). Robbins (2003) states that employees are increasingly complaining that the line between work and non work time has become blurred, creating personal conflict and stress. There are few major factors that are contributing to this blurring of line, firstly are with the creation of global organizations, which means the world never sleeps.

Secondly is communication technology that allows employees to work literally anywhere they are. This lets many people in technical and

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professional job do their work any time and from any place, in other words employees are putting in more hours despite not being physically in the office (Robbins, 2003). Gen-X/Gen-Y expectation has made work-life balance a ' must-have' condition in today's employment relationship and in order for companies not to risk losing the war for talent; they will have to pay close attention to it (Robbins, 2003). Workforce Flexibility

Over the past decade, increased attention has been focused on workplace flexibility, in part because employers are beginning to frame workplace flexibility as a potential benefit for the organization and employees, rather than an accommodation to employees (Mercie & Christina, 2008). Today, organizations, managers and employees must continually adapt to rapid change to survive and prosper (Stone, 2005, pg58). Organizations are now flatter, less hierarchical. There is great emphasis on individual skills, which leads to the concept of life time employability rather than lifetime employment.

Employees are expected to take personal responsibility in their own employability. There are also new job descriptions, job classifications, pay rates and reporting relationships (Stone, 2005). Companies seeking a high level of commitment from their workforce are able to do so only when they genuinely value their contribution, eliminate barriers of hierarchy and rank, develop an atmosphere of trust, invest heavily in training and empower their employees to improve and control their own work.

Workforce Diversity One of the most important and broad-based challenges currently faced by organizations is adapting to people who are different

(Robbins, YR, pg 17). The term used to describe this is ' Workforce Diversity'. In short, workforce diversity means that organizations are becoming a more heterogeneous mix of people in terms of gender, age, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (Robbins, YR). The two major challenges are namely cultural differences and gender. Cultural Difference

Cultural differences are attributable to the fact that others have tendency to act or behave differently towards people with cultural origin that is different from their own. This behavior stems from various factors, such as communication barriers that lead to misunderstandings and arguments. The first step should be a deep exploration and understanding of one's own culture and how that worldview is shaped (Robert 2009). By acquiring a broad knowledge of values and beliefs of other cultures, rather than looking at them through the prism of cultural stereotypes.

Secondly people should also learn about cultures that they come in contact with. This knowledge can be obtained through training programs, general reading, talking to people from different cultures, and learning from past experiences. Managers would also have to shift their philosophy from treating everyone alike to recognizing differences and responding to those differences in ways that ensure employee retention and greater productivity while, at the same time, not discriminating (Robbins, 2003, pg 15). Women in workforce

Women and men continue to be concentrated in different occupational categories and women as compared to men tend to be in lower status, lower-paid job categories within occupations. This is another major form of

diversity, the increasing representation of women in the workforce (Mcshane & Travaglione, 2007). Society's concern with equality of opportunity has led to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action legislation in many countries. Equal employment opportunity and affirmative action programmes are designed to redress differential treatment of targeted groups in the selection, hiring, recruitment and promotion process.

These policies will increase the representation of females in male dominated areas and increase the representation of males in female dominated areas. In the case of female/male differences, this ultimately leads to a change in the gender ratio of individual job categories, particularly an increase in female representation at the higher levels of the organisation (Riach & Rich, 2001, pg 216). Interview Employment relationship has been changing rapidly in recent years. My interviewee feels employees now are demanding for more learning opportunities and responsibility, looking for stronger workplace relations and greater work/life balance.

She feels that the new generations like to choose when and where they work and want to escape traditional workspaces and hours. Great importance is being made in making their family life work. Being in a globally operated company will mean having to work almost all day and with such advance technology there is no escape. Mullins (2008) agrees that employees are increasingly complaining that the line between work and non work time has been blurred. Employees have no qualms about leaving the job if they feel that the job is creating personal conflict and stress as it is taking up into their personal time.

They are also very interested in amenities available at work. Workplace flexibility is also one of the evolving trends as mentioned. She thinks that employers used to be more rigid and not much decision making opportunities were given to employees. However, managers are now empowering employees (Robbins, Millett, Cacioppe and Waters-Marsh, 1998). Employees are given more freedom and responsibility to make choices to solve work-related problems. Employers do not look at providing lifetime employment but now look at an employee's lifetime employability. Employees have to be very independent.

And employers will also have to assist in providing the right tools and training. The two main challenges in workforce diversity are cultural differences and the increasing number of women in the workforce. In her opinion, cultural differences are attributable to the fact that we have the tendency to behave differently to people who come from a different cultural background. And this will lead to problems like miscommunication and misunderstanding. In order to overcome this, we will have to learn about our own culture and be very open about learning cultural diversity.

We should also be able to recognise and respond differently to different cultures so as to ensure that they know they are respected and not discriminated. Wood, Wallace, Zeffane, Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (1998) also states that to be effective we must overcome the limits of parochialism and ethnocentrism and develop cultural empathy. My interviewee feels that for many years before women were never given equal opportunity at employment. However as the society changes, there is an increasing concern with equality of opportunities.

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She feels that there are no differences between a man and a woman which will directly affect job performance. And this is agreed by Wood, Wallace, Zeffane, Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn (1998). She feels that as the workforce is rapidly and constantly changing, we will need to have new approaches and be very flexible whether it is the working hours, job duties, controls, technology, employee empowerment, and involvement in decision making, non-hierarchical forms of work or diversity of workforce in order to overcome the challenges. Reflection

Singapore is a unique country which embraces changes very well. We understand that flexibility of a workforce, understanding the needs of employees and workforce diversity plays an important role in the development of business. Singaporeans are now looking for workplaces that provide them with a great balance between work and personal life. They prefer working for employers which gives them the freedom to almost choose when and where they work which results in an increasing number of job options such as permanent part time work, job sharing, flexi year or annual hours and flexi week.

Employers are less rigid now and there is an increased in job flexibility. We are now given the freedom to not only participate in the decision making we are also able to make the decision ourselves. There are more self managed teams as employees are given more opportunities to take charge of what they do and to take control and responsibilities for their choices. In sum, employers are now empowering employee. Organizations in Singapore are no longer constrained by national borders, there is a great increased in foreign assignments and foreign talents.

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We have to be understand that only through better interaction and knowledge between local and foreign talents will it enable us to reduce stereotyping against foreign talents of usurpers of local job opportunities and with this communications channels are better established and thus benefiting the organization with an open culture of sharing and cooperation. Next the increasing awareness that women are no longer considered inferior to men in the workforce is very important and relevant in Singapore. There has been increasing number of women entering the workforce.

The strong employment performance of women partly reflects the improvement in their educational profile as higher educated women are more likely to participate in the labour market. In sum, I will be joining a workforce which has a diverse environment and at the same time is very flexible and understands the needs of an employee. In order to be to be an efficient team player, effective and an individual at the same time, I will have to have strong interpersonal and relationship-building skills, which will enable me to relate to people of all levels, gender and cultures. Conclusion

In conclusion, we must be able to recognize and accept that the workforce has changed. Creating constant awareness on such issue can help us minimize and reduce stereotyping that causes problems to our working relationship and environment. We also note that organizations today aim to modify and further improve their work trends and employment relations, such that everyone would have equal opportunity to grow and develop in their careers. 1718 words Reference List Anilkumar, CS & Sandeep, KK 2005, 'Balancing Work and Life - The New Age Dilemma', Human Capital, August, India, pp. 9-53 Green, FB & Hratch, E 2001, 'Involvement and Commitment <https://assignbuster.com/evolving-employment-relationship-assignment/>

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Appendix A How do you think the employment relations in Singapore have evolved in recent years? Is work/life balance one of the evolving trends how has it affect you and your employer? Is workforce flexibility one of the evolving trends and how has it affect you and your employer? What are the two main challenges in workforce diversity? How do you manage the two main challenges? What can we do to counter these challenges? Summary Employees now are demanding for more learning opportunities and responsibility, looking for stronger workplace relations and greater work/life balance.

There is a growing concern that work life does not create personal conflict and stress. And that employee has no qualms about leaving the job if the line is blurred. There has been a shift in workplace flexibility, employers are more flexible and employees are expected to follow suit. They are expected to be more self sufficient as more authority and responsibilities to make decisions are given to them. There are two main challenges in workforce diversity, cultural differences and gender.

To work efficiently with people from different cultures, we will have to understand how their culture has shaped them and be flexible on adapting our management accordingly. As the society change, women are given equal opportunities for jobs that used to be male dominated, as no research have shown that there is difference in productivity in men and women. We must be able to accept the workforce is always changing and in order to establish an effective, efficient and pleasant working environment we have to understand diversities.

We are also looking at fair and merit-based employment practices so that employees can realise their full potential and help employers achieve organisational excellence. Appendix B (i) There has been a great challenge faced by business organization today: a shift in employment relationship. Today employees are savvy, confident, upbeat, open minded, creative and independent and therefore tend to be more challenging to manage. There is a demand for greater work/life balance, workforce flexibility and good management of workforce diversity.

Employees are looking for organizations which can provide them the need for freedom which will enable them to have greater work/life balance. They want to be able to choose when, where and how they work. Non standard employment relationship such as part-time work, temporary work, job sharing, non traditional shift and endless internships will be integrated with full time work to accommodate their personal needs. There are also new job descriptions, job classifications, pay rates and reporting relationships as job flexibility increases.

Employees have to be able to cross boundaries, seek out resources needed to overcome obstacles and get their things accomplished independently. They are also given the opportunity and rights not to only participate in the decision making for work related problems but also able to make decisions on their own. This shows that there has been a shift of responsibilities given. It is important that we learn how to over cultural differences to achieve a harmonious working relationship and to accept that there are an increasing number of women in our workforce.

The recruitment of a highly diverse in terms of cultural and gender, is useful as it provides the organization a larger pool of skills and talents from a very wide and diverse area. This broadens the organization's perspectives and increases its options for developing decisions. From all these findings it can be seen and understood that the organizations today aim to modify and further improve their work trends and employment relations, such that the citizens would have equal opportunity to grow and develop in their careers

Appendix B (ii)