

**An Evaluation of HRM Practices in Indian Organization: A Study with  
Reference to Covid-19 Era**

**Sweta Saurabh<sup>1</sup>, (Research Scholar)**

**Dr. Vipul Jain<sup>2</sup>, (Research Supervisor)**

**Department of Management**

**<sup>1,2</sup>Vinayaka Missions Sikkim University, Gangtok, (Sikkim)**

**Abstract:**

Because to COVID-19, many firms have discovered that they must make adjustments to their HR practices. Because of the nature of the current global crisis, these procedures are still not well-systematized. Human resource management practices and procedures have changed as a result of the pandemic, and this study will help describe these changes and offer the view of human resource managers for the future. The responses of human resource managers from 126 Indian organizations were solicited for the study Workplace safety, training, organisational structure, hiring and selection, onboarding, and communication have all undergone substantial transformations. There was a correlation between the size of an organization and the amount of change that occurred. This crisis has led to an increase in the usage of telework, layoffs, and an overall favorable appraisal from the organizations. Technology, telework, and work structure are expected to play a major role in the future, according to HR managers. As a result of these results, human resource managers are critical to the organization's ability to adapt to this pandemic condition.

**Keywords:** Human Resource Management, COVID-19; preparation and challenges.

## **Introduction**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has released its first report on the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) based on information received from the WHO office in China reporting atypical pneumonia cases of unknown origin that were discovered in Wuhan in China. On March 2, 2020, the Directorate-General of Health in India officially declared the first cases of SARS-CoV-2. Since no vaccine or cure for COVID-19 was known at the time, tight containment measures were required, which varied from country to country due to the widespread lack of understanding about the virus. India had to take extraordinary steps such as declaring a state of emergency that would last from March 18 to May 2, 2020, which included individuals isolating themselves from others, practicing social isolation, cleanliness, and respiratory etiquette. This resulted in the closure of public and private sector institutions such as schools, companies, and other non-essential establishments. Because this was and still is a new illness, even though it is linked to viruses that are already in the human environment, the virus's reach and rapid spread have made it an unusual phenomenon that is shrouded in mystery. Social groups have had to come up with global strategies for dealing with the virus's spread. The Indian population's economic, social, and family circumstances have seen a dramatic shift since the country's independence in 1974.

COVID-19 has offered an unprecedented challenge to the global workforce, affecting a critical component of human existence: the survival of individuals and organizations. According to Koirala and Acharya 2020, human resource management (HRM) has been entrusted with the task of implementing the political powers' plans to preserve social separation, therefore helping to minimize transmission of the virus. There has been a lot of talk about how important these experts are in coming up with solutions that let people work from home ( Acharya 2020 and Koirala ; Elsafty and Ragheb 2020). Especially when it comes to using information technology and managing employees' emotions about how the crisis could or might not affect their work and home lives, this is especially true. As a result of a wide range of problems that have happened in the past, HR managers have built up a library of useful information (Bailey and Breslin 2020 Psychogios et al. 2016). There were many different solutions across Europe during the financial crisis of 2008. These included more employment flexibility, new job structures, and the possibility of downsizing. Employers can use a variety of HR practises to help them weather economic downturns, such as severance packages, early retirement, and the use of part-time or

temporary workers. They can also reorganize their work schedules, such as by reducing overtime or allowing for more flexible hours. They can also work to stabilize their workforce, such as by allowing for more sabbatical leave or resorting to layoffs (Roche et al. 2011). It's not just leaders who play a role in crisis management. Human resource managers, whose power has grown because of the recent epidemic, also play a big role (Caligiuri et al. 2020). If you'd like to learn more about how HRM can help manage the current pandemic crisis, you can check out Zhong et al systematics' literature review (2021) or Butterick and Charlwood's (2021)reflection on how human resource management can help solve problems for different groups of workers in this kind of setting..

Management of human resources in crisis situations plays an important role in addressing the health and safety needs of workers and addressing the anxieties and stressors that can be exacerbated by the demands of virtual working environments that are neverright(Roche et al. 2011Caligiuri et al. 2020). "Managing staff morale, motivation, and engagement," "ensuring employee mental health and well-being," and "creating transparent communication" were all identified by Nutsubidze and Schmidt (2021) in their assessment of the pandemic's primary problems from the perspective of HRM experts. There is also a lot of work that isn't paid .As a result, the COVID-19 dilemma is a new problem for the world's workers. In order to give better advice to employees in this ever-changing situation, you need to know how the pandemic affects businesses and how it affects people at work.

The goal of this study, which is exploratory in nature and use mixed-methods analysis, is to examine

(1) how human resource management practises in Indian organisations have evolved in response to the pandemic scenario, as well as organisational processes and the extent to which firms have prepared for and adapted, and (2) the future aspirations of human resource professionals.

## **Methodology of the Study**

### **Sample and Procedure**

A total of 126 organizations took part in this research, and the results were submitted by the HR directors in those firms. The majority of the organizations were located in the tertiary sector and

were either medium or big in size. Nearly half were privately owned Indian organizations with offices in various parts of India. Human resource management was handled by an area in most businesses and in nearly 70% of the cases of these firms, the leadership and leaders were accountable for this part of the HRM. The groups were spread across the country, from the north to the south and in the middle.

People at the University of Porto's Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences approved the ethics committee for this study because they thought it was a good idea. To get to more Indian businesses quickly, we used the Indian Association of People Management's contacts to get in touch with more people there. This was important because India was beginning to break out of its confines. Additionally, we decided to include groups of all sizes in order to facilitate comparisons across organizations with varying levels of resources. As a result, non-probabilistic sampling strategies including convenience sampling and snowballing sampling were used to get our sample. Digital Survey was used to gather data online between May and June 2020. Participation in our study was predicted to increase as a result of our survey being made available online. The approach used was also in keeping with the time's efforts to isolate people from one another. Responses to the survey were made clear to participants that they were free to participate or not, with no financial or other incentives for doing so. An average of 15 minutes was needed to complete the questionnaire. All questionnaires that were either incomplete or wrongly filled out were thrown out.

### **Research Tools**

Three parts were included in the questionnaire for data collection. In Section 1, data was gathered about the organization's profile, including questions on the industry in which it operates, the number of employees, and the location of those employees. It was the goal of Section 2 to offer a socio-demographic profile of the HR manager, including things like age and gender, as well as a socio-professional profile of the manager. COVID-19's human resources procedures were discussed in the study. Open and closed-ended questions were utilized for this aim.

HRM processes were profiled using a measure consisting of 21 elements assessed on a scale from 1 (no changes) to 3. Respondents were asked to provide an open answer detailing the modifications introduced into each procedure. In addition to the Indian Labour Code, a measure

was also used to look at work conditions, such as work of weekend, rotating shifts and working overtime, yearly hours in the contract, part-time work and flexible hours. It also looked at working from home, teleworking, and multiple hours (or working remotely). In this question, people were asked to think about how many people worked for the company under these conditions on January 31, 2020. They were asked to use the percentage scale below to figure that out. and during the first state of emergency 1 means not utilized, 2 means 0 to 5 percent, 3 means 6 to 10 percent, 4 means 11 to 20 percent, 5 means 21 to 50 percent, and 6 means more than 50 percent of the population is using it. After assessing the organization's ability to adapt to COVID-19, a dichotomous answer item (i.e., yes/no) was asked about the need to cut employees. An additional measure of the organization's readiness and adaptability for the pandemic were two items that ranged from 1 (not at all prepared/adapted) to 7 (completely prepared/totally adapted). Finally, in response to an open-ended question, participants were invited to express their thoughts on how the pandemic would affect human resources management in the future.

### **Data Analysis**

SPSS was used to analyze the data acquired from closed questions, and descriptive statistics and multiple correspondence analysis were used in the analytic process. Open-ended question "What do you think will happen to HRM as a result of the pandemic?" was used to collect data, which was then analyzed using template analysis (King 1998). When the researchers started this study, they looked for the most important themes, which then became more specific as the analysis went on and more information was found. A hierarchical coding system is used in this method based on these themes. These themes led to the first template, which was used to organise the data in a way that was clear and useful. Before agreeing on a template and a set of themes, two members of the research team coded the data on their own. This way, they could make sure that the data analysis was correct.. Human resource management (HRM) methods, telework and (re)organization of work were some of the key elements of the original design. A final template was created at the end of the analysis, which included some additional topics that had emerged during the investigation. Although certain data were not coded, such as "no remarks or "paradigms all respondents answered the open question. These changes and procedures and their composition are based on how big a company is, what has changed at work, and HR managers' future plans.

### Deviations in Practices of Human Management

For the most part, it appears that HRM procedures haven't altered much throughout the years. Here, it is possible to focus on out-placement (88% of respondents), expatriation (85.7%), and career management (87.2%). Internal communication procedures (n = 75; 56.4%) are among the important processes that have experienced minimal modifications. The process of work and safety has undergone the most substantial transformations (n = 57; 42.9%).

Respondents were also tasked with providing an open-ended answer detailing the specific improvements made to each step. The most common responses were: (1) it was suspended; (2) it went online; and (3) it remains face-to-face but with safety safeguards. It's also worth noting that the number of procedures for controlling departures has risen. Internal communications have also become more intense, according to respondents. Other suggestions for improving workplace health and safety included putting in place emergency plans and measures to protect employees' physical safety, increasing the amount of specialized training provided for workplace health and safety, as well as other methods for improving the well-being of employees.

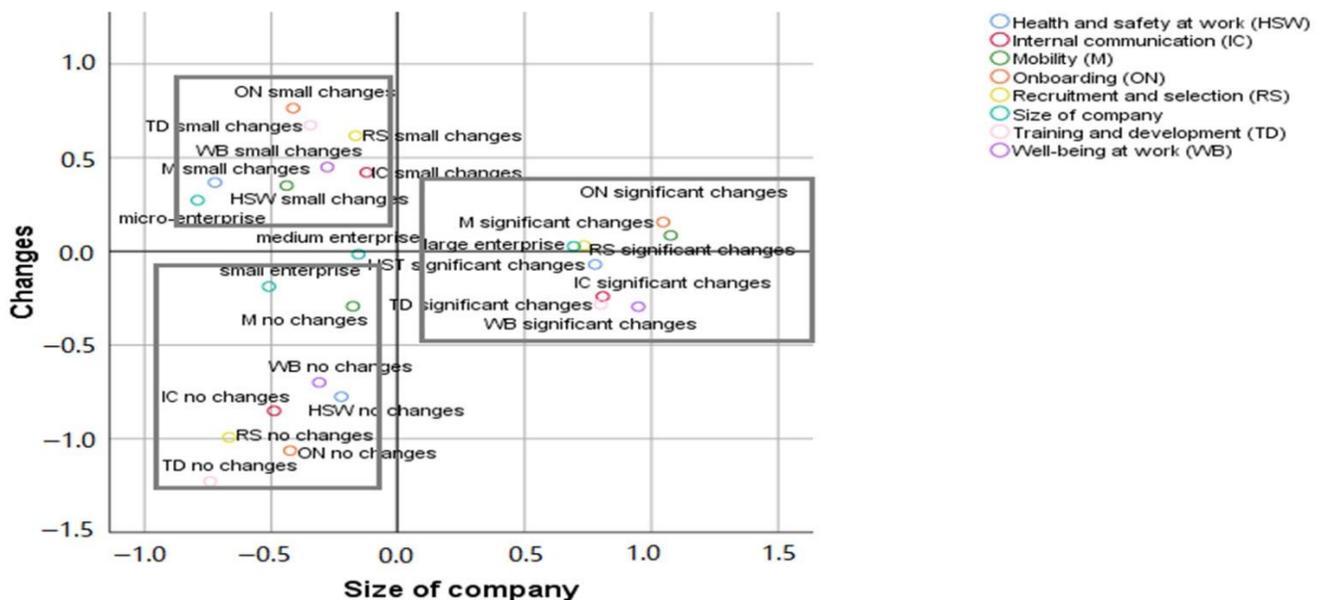


Figure 1. Changes in HRM practices and processes

### Structure of Deviations in Human Management Practices

Accordingly, A multiple correspondence analysis was used to map the changes in large firms' human resource management systems that were caused by the epidemic. It's called multiple

correspondence analysis (MCA). It's a type of data analysis that looks for correlations between the values of two variables by using a lot of categorical variables to look for them. When this method is used, the data is represented in either a two- or three-dimensional space. In this study, data is presented in a two-dimensional style based on the level of change experienced and the size of the organisation. The outcomes are important. A multiple correspondence analysis was utilised to include the process indicators that showed the greatest variety in terms of change, as a result. Recruitment and selection, job security, employee well-being and health at work were all included in this report. Induction and onboarding were also covered, as well as internal communications.. The number of employees was taken into account while assessing the company's size. There are two axes that organism the variables, one connected to changes in the management of people and the other to organization size of the results. Compositions in the two-dimensional space illustrate the existence of three categories of dependency between the levels of variables. Small firms that have not modified their HRM procedures; micro enterprises that have made slight improvements; and large organizations that have made major changes. The lack of homogeneity in the emerging groupings of medium-sized enterprises may reflect a wider range of transformation levels.

### **Deviations in Work Surroundings**

Estimate how many employees in your company would be working weekends, rotating shifts, overtime or any combination of these during the first declared state of emergency that will last from March to May 2020. Over half of the workforce was affected by telework and the advent of layoffs during this time period. During the state of emergency, more than half of the workers in the organizations studied were teleworkers, telework was not commonly employed. Due to the fact that all other scenarios are either not utilized or are minor, they have not been included here. 69.9% of respondents said there was no need to reduce employees in light of the epidemic, according to data collected on this topic (n = 93). No-renewal contracts (n = 34; 25.6%) and severance payments (n = 1; 0.8%) were cited in response to a question concerning the actions implemented during the restructuring.

## **Research and Adaptation to COVID-19**

Organizations' readiness for a situation like the COVID-19 pandemic was most commonly rated as 4 on a scale of 1 (completely unprepared) to 7 (very well-prepared) (fully prepared). For the question concerning the organization's level of adaptability to the current circumstances, the most common answer was shows that human resource managers believed their firms were well-prepared for the epidemic and were able to change quickly as a consequence, as suggested by the results..

## **Future of the Study**

Analysis of data using a template with the open question "In your perspective, what changes will occur due to the pandemic in HR management?" provided insight into HR managers' anticipations of the most significant changes to HR in the years following the epidemic. Finally, the template illustrates the nine primary themes and subthemes identified during the analysis:HRM role and practises; organisational practises; teleworking; technology. Work organisation, working-life balance, and workplace restructuring are also shown.This is an example of how the analysis was organized. There will be less travel, new systems for checking and more work as well as a need for a more adaptable and multi-skilled workforce, all of which were predicted by the respondents. Management in human resources believes that technology-related innovations, such as teleworking and homework, will have the greatest impact on the future of work. This includes everything from work structure to remote worker communication and leadership. The majority of respondents (n = 7; 5%) predicted that HRM will gain more authority in the future. However, a small minority (n = 7; 5%) predicted that nothing would change. In the following parts, the findings will be presented and discussed in further detail, using examples drawn from the data. A respondent's location in the database is denoted by a number (for example, p. 1). Organizations are transforming into "... peopleless organisations where they are abandoning their setting or are on a hybrid regime," which, according to respondents (n = 18; 13 percent), alters the function of HMR (p. 9). According to p. 38, HR will become "more dependent on the Board" and "more crucial in the business" as new trends such as "digital or remote work are no longer the future but to be transversal reality" emerge (p. 28).Adapting to this new circumstance will necessitate a stronger attention on planning, "Improvement in administrative procedures," and "Contractual flexibility" (p. 86). As a result, it

will necessitate "better control of operations" (p. 78) as well as "increased performance and productivity of HRM" (p. 37).

### **Best Practices in Human Resources Management**

Changes are anticipated in several HRM practices (n = 52; 38%), primarily due to the extensive use of technology. Among the most notable of these are the methods used to carry out inductions (n = 2; 1.5 percent); recruitment and selection (n = 10; 7.35 percent); and training that will become "100 percent" ("Rethinking [...] current methods"; p. 12); and "online recruitment" (p. 108); (p. 39). HRM participants (n=15; 11 percent) most frequently identify "guarantee that workers gain new skills for this new environment" as one of the goals of training as an HR practice (p. 86). The emphasis will shift from time to performance ("... performance having greater importance than working time," page 81) in performance management and assessment. Those who participated in the survey were split on the topic of compensation (n = 2; 1.5%). A small percentage of workers (n = 1; 0.74 percent) are also facing "freezing [of] awards," while others predict "growing" benefits for workers. Emergency and safety plans" and "additional safety and hygiene measures" (n = 11; 8 percent) are receiving more attention, though (p. 39). HR managers (n = 5; 3.7 percent) pay attention to the work team by making them There's a greater sense of cohesion, as "each individual feels that they are a part of the success," and they worry about how to maintain "a connection of trust in the work team" as technology and remote working become more commonplace (p. 27). It is expected that "new team monitoring approaches" would be required to deal with this issue. (p. 56).

### **Practices in Administrations**

Twenty-eight people (n = 28; 21%) said that they expect leaders and managers to make changes to certain organisational processes, such as work engagement. These changes need to be made to increase organisational commitment and engagement."Reinforced internal communications and "new forms of leadership were given special consideration, as were communication methods that needed to be updated to reflect the current times, with an emphasis on psychological, sociological, and hygienic-sanitary concerns.Technological and teleworking as well as organizational developments will have the greatest impact on the future of work. "Greater use and adoption of new information and communications technologies, particularly tools for

collaboration and teleworking [...]"and "doing business online or through internal and external meetings [...] on platforms that facilitate information sharing and make teamwork and the business as a whole more nimble.". Redefining work techniques, such as video conferencing instead of face-to-face meetings, was one of the ideas from respondents. "We also talked about "Flexible ways of working provision," which included things like setting up work schedules and establishing goals. Both in the private and public sectors, there will be "More openness to enabling teleworking for some personnel.", which will lead to "Implementing flexible schedules and temporary teleworking regimes to enable this to be accommodated," according to survey respondents. According to one respondent, workplaces will be redesigned in the future, including "planning the size of offices." Reuniting the family was also highlighted in relation to the work-life balance. "A clear focus in both personal and professional life" as well as a "emotional foundation for knowing how to split work and home when they occur in the same place.

### **The Influence of Workplace Reforms**

Employees will be fired or hired less, there will be less turnover, and there will be less mobility and travel, all of which will cut down on the number of employees. according to participants as well as "employees being more absent," according to participants. In light of the anticipated changes in the workplace, respondents predicted that: In addition, new mechanisms for checking would need to be developed, such as "a different view of the ways in which to manage and check the mechanisms associated with each employee." As a final point, employees will feel more apprehensive about their jobs because they will feel more insecure. Some participants, however, saw an extremely favorable influence on production connected with a reduction in the number of employees in a firm.

### **Results and Discussion**

According to this study's first goal, the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on human resources (HR) in Indian enterprises was analyzed in terms of the perspective of human resource managers. There are a number of HRM procedures that have experienced significant alterations, including internal communications and work and safety policies. In view of the pandemic's direct impact on people's health and safety, it was to be expected that companies would have to make the most significant changes to their work and safety policies. On the other side, it takes a lot of work to explain and communicate changes in safety practices to employees when they reflect

organizational life changes. In reality, the internal process of communication and dissemination is one of the characteristics of organizational transformation processes that is regarded to as crucial. Several other answers, such as the creation of contingency plans, back up this interpretation in the case of health and safety at work. Communication is also talked about in other answers, like when work is reorganised and when telework is used.. Asynchronous communication, for example, is reinforced or new tools are used. Recruitment and selection, as well as training and development, are becoming increasingly dependent on technology. Some of the other HR challenges that Zhong et al. (2021) found to be influenced by the current pandemic include employee wellness, remote communication, and employee well-being.

There are clear distinctions between large and small organizations in terms of the amount of HR practices and procedures that have changed through time, as evidenced by a more in-depth examination of this relationship. Deshpande and Golhar 2020 found that large corporations tend to have more organised and coordinated HR strategies because they have more resources, such as knowledge of the functions they are in charge of, to help them do so. (Keating et al. 1999). According to our research, most HR managers in our study had advanced degrees in related fields, making them more prepared for crises, such as the current epidemic. This makes them more capable of adapting to crises, such as the current pandemic. Factors such as readiness, industry, resources, and the involvement of human resources experts were all highlighted as crucial in Adikaram et al(2021) .'s research in the process of preparing businesses for a pandemic.

Furthermore, Waldkirch's (2021) There is a lot of evidence that the pandemic had a bigger impact on big businesses, manufacturing companies, and those that rely more on imported goods. This is what people say: These human resource managers think that their companies were at least partly ready for the epidemic and that they had been able to adapt well to these changes because of the severe economic crisis that India had been through about a decade earlier. It's possible that the financial crisis may have served as a sort of "natural selection" process, allowing better-equipped firms to emerge. As a result of the epidemic, several enterprises in India took unusual and temporary measures, such as teleworking and layoffs, which may be attributed to the government's assistance. HR experts see a wide range of roles, procedures, and processes affected by COVID-19, which is reflected in their view on impending changes. Human resource

professionals were particularly concerned about the possibility of employees working from home. Two important aspects of future HRM interventions appear to be linked to this finding: (1) In this section, we'll talk about two things that will help workers stay together and keep their relationships strong: (1) a change in how work is done, as well as mixed solutions like more flexibility in how and where people work.). Technology has emerged as an enabler for (1) communication; and (2) collaboration. In order to reduce the burden of travel, digitalize, improve administrative procedures, and enhance HRM practises, we need to focus on these four areas: As a result, people's increased reliance on technology as a result of the epidemic is a good development with promising outcomes.

The function of human resources management (HRM) in preserving organizational coherence is a major concern for the future. Because of this epidemic, their job is to care for people and their relationships with organizations, so that individuals may work together in teams and communicate effectively. This is their primary responsibility. According to respondents, HRM practices will see the least change. It's easy to see where this will go: online. A few examples include: (1) the types of profiles needed for recruitment and selection because employees will be working remotely; (2) performance management and assessment that emphasizes objectives rather than time; and (3) training that emphasizes digital skills for workers. Due to this, a number of difficulties are expected. It is possible to see this study as offering input to management of the anticipated crises because HRM is expected to provide solutions for dealing with them (Koirala and Acharya 2020). The pandemic's effects on the workforce, family life, and workplace management are all mentioned by respondents as potential future impacts. Specifically, they mention: (1) severances, less hiring, and less turnover; (2) balancing work and family life; (3) a concern over managing spaces; and (4) workers' feelings of insecurity. Employees' views of insecurity will demand preventative action by Human Resources Management (HRM). In addition, workers will be less exhausted and more productive because they won't have to travel as much. In order to manage teams that don't meet in person, leaders will have to adopt new leadership styles, such as e-leadership, and the implications that this has for these new work formats (Machado and Brando, 2019).

## Conclusions

Retrospective and monitoring of results are required in addition to layoffs and the continuance of face-to-face activities with alterations in safety precautions or by moving online. Workers need time to adjust to new roles and responsibilities, which is why processes like induction and onboarding are so important (Bauer et al. 2007). As a result, it's important to consider how new policies and procedures will affect the lives of employees already working at the company. Another example is the apparent evolution of internal communication, which has become more intense and innovative. What may be expected in the long run, given that the literature shows beneficial correlations between internal communication and professional behaviour and attitudes (Men and Yue 2020; Neill et al. 2020)? Will the pandemic put the world's leaders in all areas to the test because of the improved ability to communicate? Human resource managers must answer these issues quickly if their organizations are to remain functional throughout and after the epidemic. Despite the findings, the study discovered significant shortcomings that need to be addressed in future research. First and foremost, this study analyzed the perspectives of human resource managers. It's also crucial to get workers' thoughts on these issues in order to have a clearer picture of the present state of affairs in the workplace. To ensure a complete picture, this study might be used in conjunction with other data sources, such as analysing documents and conducting interviews with key players in the company. Another way to better understand how managers' opinions change when the current epidemiological scenario changes is to do a longitudinal research to supplement the current cross-sectional study. For example, an attempt may be made to determine whether or not the forecasts presented here will come to fruition. Another factor to consider is the quality of the sample. Because the data was gathered through an online survey, it was mostly comprised of responses from professionals working for big or medium-sized businesses. The experiences and perspectives of small and medium-sized (SMEs) and micro-companies, which are common in India, should also be taken into account in the study because they should be taken into account. In any case, these findings are an important step in describing how HRM has changed during this crisis. This epidemic started quickly and is expected to last for a long time, so it is important to keep an eye on how it affects businesses and learn from them. Because of the COVID-19 virus's impact on HRM, Zhong et al. (2021) say that the scientific community needs to pay attention both conceptually and empirically to the

problem. According to Butterick and Charlwood (2021), people who study HRM should be concerned about how this pandemic is affecting people's work experiences. People who teach and practise HRM should also be concerned about how this pandemic is affecting them.

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