



INSTITUTIONAL LOYALTY PROGRAM AS A TOOL FOR RESILIENCY AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND BEYOND: IMPLICATIONS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND FUTURE ORGANIZATIONAL DIRECTIONS

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Abstract:

The Perpetual Group of Companies, primarily a health and academic community, had been challenged by the drastic effects of COVID-19 resulting in the deaths of some frontliners and creating fear among its managers, faculty, doctors, and allied medical personnel. Some students who presumably have higher immunity compared with their mentors have been reported to be sick, thus missing some synchronous class meetings. Given this scenario, it is imperative for top management to solicit members of the organization to find innovative solutions to ensure the continuity of the business units in helping their employees to cope with the unprecedented crisis. While the business managers had explored scientific strategies, COVID-19's impact on its personnel continues to require innovations to help each other in surmounting their problems in life and at work. This paper discusses a general impression of perpetualite's attempt to broaden the scope of an organizational intervention by exploring the impact of COVID-19 on its organization, more specifically, its human capital. It will attempt to revive the Institutional Loyalty Program as a way of identifying the main challenges and opportunities as a logical antidote to the pandemic towards using it as an organization development (OD) tool.

Keywords: institutional loyalty program, managing planned change, institutional networking

1. Introduction

The Perpetual Group of Companies despite its being primarily a health and academic community, was no exception to the unprecedented pandemic that shook the world creating fear and anxiety over several uncertainties. The school system for its part, had experienced cuts on work reporting and a reduction in employee monthly take-home

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pay. On the other hand, the medical group of the hospital had suffered from overwork and in fact, lost some of its front liners to the deadly virus. The fear and anxiety had spread as fast as the virus had contaminated doctors, nurses, faculty and students presumably arising from patients who come and go to the hospital facility. The writer is no exception. He contracted COVID-19 at his workplace. The fear and anxiety were aggravated when he was refused admission by the University Hospital because rooms were available for COVID-19 patients only after a reservation was made 10 days before the intended hospitalization. The triage or emergency room was full of patients undergoing first-aid treatment, blood transfusion, intravenous administration and sounds of oxygen tanks for patients seemingly losing their breath. After a positive SWAB test, he was forced to undergo home quarantine for 14 days plus 7 days of the recovery period (Boscolo-Rizzo, et al., 2022, pp. 889-891).

Social distancing was a must; lockdown measures have been imposed intermittently; people were quarantined; schools, universities, nonessential businesses, and non-governmental organizations have been temporarily closed; travels were restricted, flights were canceled and mass public gatherings, as well as social events, have been prohibited. Small-scale industries that had low-income start up, were wiped out and their owners, and employees were rendered helpless.

In the university and hospital setting, employees witnessed a forced reduction in compensation. Employees experienced working two days a week and were compelled to avail of their earned leaves which, after having consumed, will be rendered “without pay” (Kim, & Liu, 2022).

Indeed, these attempts to recover from the economic shock by allowing employees to report on an off-and-on basis had obviously led to the emergence of a very complex and challenging environment for the Perpetuality Managers. It looks as though there is no end to the uncertainties. For instance, the government announces different levels of lockdowns and consequently reopening of face-to-face classes, only to be withdrawn with confusing rules of the game (Alekseev, et al., 2023, pp. 7-24). There is, therefore, the need to localize the impact of COVID-19 in the Perpetualite environment.

1.1 The Institutional Loyalty Program (ILP)

The principal goal of the ILP semi-action research is to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on the business units, to identify the main challenges and opportunities, and to provide insights into future directions using the Weisbord Model (Pretzels) OD tools. It shall broaden the scope of data gathering from psycho-social interventions to structural reforms.

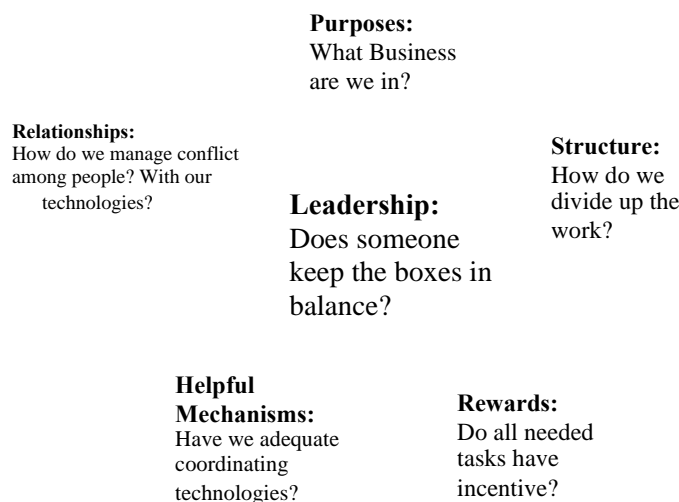
1.2 COVID-19 and a strategic ILP

Strategic ILP refers to the vertical connection between OD functions and the organizational strategy for transformation. For purposes of continuity and consistency, the Weisbord Model which has been used since 1995 when the author was employed on

an off and on basis by the Perpetualite System, shall be applied as a guiding framework in reviewing transitions (Van den Broeck, 2013, pp. 43-47).

Environment

Environment



Environment

Environment

ENVIRONMENT
Is the organization ready for change?

Figure 1. **The Six-box Organizational Model**

In order to ensure the achievement of the organizational goals at a time of crisis, strategic agility is required. Organizations need to be able to prepare and allocate their resources; to coordinate the needed mechanism; and to properly use the organizational resources and knowledge. In this context, the novelty and the complexity of COVID-19 represent a significant challenge that might compromise the achievement of organizational goals. Standard transformation models in organizations are mainly trained to use data from 'normal times' perspective. Thus, it is challenging to make predictions related to 'abnormal times.' This might suggest that making predictions

related to the Perpetualite's business, e.g., the preparation and the utilization of resources might be a complex exercise. In fact, COVID-19 has generated uncertainty. Currently, with Omicron or Deltacron or other variants on our doorsteps, no one knows when this virus will end and if its consequences on the work patterns in the Perpetual Group of Companies will be temporary or permanent even after the recent development of different types of vaccines. Thus, performing strategic planning or implementing the initial one can be challenging for managers and OD practitioners. In this case, most school and hospital corporate organizations were not able to provide their employees enough information about their management plan or their intended reactions toward the pandemic whereas having clear workplace guidelines during hard times helps to reduce employees' stress and to increase their motivation and confidence. This kind of concern for its employees, was shown by the corporate owners in the past when B/Gen. Antonio L. Tamayo prepared the Timbao farm as a retreat place for in case a world disorder erupts. In fact, despite the uncertainty generated by this pandemic, corporations need to develop ingenious practices that can help absorb and face disturbance that threatens their survival. A well-managed planned change, or organization development, therefore, is in order (Mallillin, 2021).

2. Revisiting and Sharing the Perpetualite Vision and Mission

2.1 What business are we in?

With the high turnover of employees, it is not surprising that many employees are not aware of the Perpetualite's vision, mission and values. In the past years, this amnesia for the VISION is not surprising as it had happened so many times. A continuing effort to communicate the core tenets of the Perpetualite to employees can then stay more active, aware and motivated, every time there is an opportunity to communicate with a larger group of people like during the pandemic. The authors had been part of this process of cascading the VMG to its employees. Needless to say, there is nothing wrong with a repeated process of reminding employees about the Perpetualite philosophy.

3. Structural interventions

3.1 How do we divide up the work?

Staffing refers to the process of attracting, selecting, and retaining competent individuals to achieve organizational goals' which has reshaped its dynamism. COVID-19 had influenced almost all industries. On one hand, some industries experienced a sharp decline in their income leading some of them to temporarily close their shops; whereas other industries like the telecommunication business have seen their business flourishing during this pandemic. For instance, while the University Hospital made sizable profits, the school experienced a downtrend in enrolment as students were not allowed to enter the campus for fear of COVID virus transmission. Therefore, the repercussions of

COVID-19 on staffing differ from one business unit to another (Cruz Cortés, et al., 2022, June, pp. 2327-2341).

In this context, the UPHSD system which faced financial difficulties due to this pandemic has adopted downsizing by cutting back on recruitment of faculty and staff, or reducing and cutting down on work hours to reduce costs and try to sustain the business; it had frozen or cut back all its plantilia positions or it has laid off some employees. Indeed, millions of people in the country found themselves unemployed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Laying off employees is not an easy decision for any organization, but it might be inevitable in times of crisis such as COVID-19. The main challenge of corporate owners, in this case, is to support managers and employees during this process and to offer proper information. However, it might not be easy in the context of uncertainty. Actually, all over the world, no one knows when this pandemic will end and if its consequences on organizations will be temporary or permanent. The National Economic Development Authority had uncertain predictions; other economists project a recovery period of five years (Khan, 2022).

On the contrary, organizations that have expanded their business during the pandemic have faced other types of staffing challenges. Many of them have opted out of more flexible employment relationships and subcontracted work, such as temporary agency work, and freelancers due to uncertainty generated by COVID-19. Some organizations found the COVID-19 as a logical excuse for not regularizing casual or temporary employees (Das, et al., 2022, pp. 153-190).

Some organizations that have increased their recruitment found themselves facing the pressure of workforce shortage. But just the same, COVID-19 had presented certain concerns such as how to recruit employees when people are afraid of infection. How to select employees when it is not allowed to meet them face to face, due to the physical distancing measures? In these circumstances, these organizations had no other choice but to reorient their practices toward virtual recruitment and selection methods, another significant challenge for recruiters in corporations as well as job applicants (Vosko, et al., 2022).

Not all individuals are comfortable using internet tools. Also, organizations were not prepared for this type of unexpected change. Moreover, virtual selection methods might affect the ability of potential employees and employers to assess person–environment fit, which can have a negative impact on employees' productivity and retention. Employee retention might represent another major challenge for organizations in the current context of this pandemic. During these hard times characterized by drastic and sudden changes, employment relationships might be damaged, leading to a possible dramatic decrease in employees' morale and an increase in turnover. Some employees are looking for job opportunities in sectors that were not negatively affected by the pandemic, thus increasing the competition in sourcing human capital (Erlyn, et al., 2022, pp. 135-146).

4. Testing the relationships

4.1 How do we manage conflicts among our employees?

The fears brought about by the pandemic have shattered relationships as employees tend to be individualistic—survival of the fittest and elimination of the unfit. It is during a crisis that the organization could test the existence of collaboration as the key to building high-performing teams. Most importantly, the working teams need to keep their ear out for cues and get to the crux of any negative sentiment that might be cropping up (Ercantan, & Eyupoglu, 2022).

Employment relationship refers to ‘the connection between employees and employers through which individuals sell their labor’ Due to the lockdown and mandatory closure of business both were not able to accomplish their contractual obligations. In fact, the challenges resulting from COVID-19 have transformed the traditional relationship between the employee and his employer Work from home has been implemented in different companies Hence, the traditional boundaries defined by job descriptions and key results areas in the workplace and in other parts of the world of work have disappeared. In this context, COVID-19 has positioned the government as a planner more than a regulator, which is challenging for organizations that need to adapt government plans and regulations to their organizational context, while taking into consideration the needs of their employees (Onkila, & Sarna, 2022, pp. 435-447).

Considering the novelty of this pandemic, most countries do not only rely on existing regulations. They have amended, over a short and a prompt period, several labor laws The main challenge was how to protect employees while ensuring the continuity of the economy. For instance, PACUCOA had to lobby the Congress of the Philippines and the Senate to reconsider tax impositions to allow the private schools to survive (Karmaker, et al., 2023).

In a wider scope, some countries have adopted laws to structure and temporarily prohibit collective layoff in organizations Furthermore, various legal measures and laws have been adopted to support employees during the lockdown and closure of schools, e.g., employees were given paid leave to take care of their children. The main challenge is the fact that it is still unclear when countries can declare the ‘end’ of this pandemic Bayanihan 1, 2 and 3 manifested proofs of a critical challenge for determining the proper period of protection needed by employees, which might undermine the relationship between organizations, employees, and their representatives. COVID-19 is an exceptional crisis that has generated extraordinary measures. As issues pile up, the main challenge, in this case, is the fact that labor disputes might arise between employers and employees who had not been offered the possibility to work from home or have contracted COVID-19 at the workplace in case of a lack of contractual agreement, it is possible, to question the consistency of the employers with the labor laws, thus creating further tension in managing the business (Carroll, & Brown, 2022).

Currently, with the recent development of COVID-19 vaccines, the main challenge for organizations from an employment relationship perspective is the management of the vaccination campaign in terms of costs and application, while ensuring compliance with pronouncements issued by government agencies (IATF) that are often conflicting and misleading. This development also raises the question about the ability of the employer to impose it on their employees. the adoption of a rigid, coercive approach could intensify the reluctance of individuals who are not sure yet about the vaccine. The author himself had been dragged into postponing the taking of the vaccine due to age and high allergic reactions to drugs. Intensive education drives to their employees about the benefits of vaccination, and for other organizations, by offering time off for employees for vaccination purposes, rather than imposing it (Madhav, & Tyagi, 2022, pp. 411-452).

5. Helping mechanisms

5.1 Have we adequate working technologies?

Working conditions represent 'the core of paid work and employment relationships. They cover a broad range of topics and issues, from working time (hours of work, rest periods, and work schedules) to remuneration, as well as the physical conditions and mental demands that exist in the workplace'. The COVID-19 crisis has drastically altered working conditions in organizations. Indeed, to ensure their business continuity, most organizations have moved to remote working, requiring their employees to work from home. For example, Google announced that its employees will continue working remotely until at least Notwithstanding, the category of employees working from home represents a small fraction of the overall workforce. In this context, there were two possible scenarios for companies whose nature of their business does not allow them to adhere to these types of working conditions. Either to require their employees to be physically present while respecting the measures of physical distancing (i.e., allow an interval of 2 min between individuals) and wearing personal protective equipment or to lay them off ...showed that employees whose job tasks cannot be performed from home are more likely to lose their jobs. In these circumstances, HRM practitioners are urged to identify the job positions that can be performed remotely, those which can be performed in the physical workplace, and those positions that need layoff due to the situation provoked by the pandemic. Therefore, these unexpected and drastic organizational changes represent significant challenges for managers and HRM practitioners. In addition, they might have significant implications on employees' mental health and person-environment fit perceived by employees as well as the employee experience related to the job design, the workspace and interactions with their peers and managers. Physical presence in workplaces has been maintained with rigorous protection measures the principal challenge, in this case, is to ensure the respect of these protection measures and to plan work schedules that consider employees' context (Yang, et al., 2022, pp. 24-48).

As for remote working, it seems that managers and HRM practitioners have faced major challenges. First, to ensure that employees working from home have the necessary tools to perform their job. Actually, remote working requires the availability of technological tools which will facilitate communication between employees and managers, such as Zoom, Microsoft Remote Desktop, Team Viewer, and Microsoft Teams that cannot be afforded by all organizations, considering that the financial capacity varies from one organization to another. Second, to ensure the employees working from home effective communication, supervision, support, performance management, and a realignment of their compensation. Moreover, HRM practitioners need to support managers who are leading remote teams for the first time. Finally, HRM practitioners need to take into consideration the fact that remote working might lead to employees' isolation due to the absence of interaction between employees, lack of peer advice, and lack of one-to-one communication which can be sources of stress that might undermine employees' mental health. It can also be psychologically demanding for these employees considering the possibilities of family distractions and the multiple roles that they have to assume while working from home. In addition, the increased use of information and communication technology (ICT) can lead to the perception of an everlasting urgency, generating possible expectations about the constant availability of employees. Working from home can lead, as well, to an increase in the volume of information treated by employees, considering that they regularly use their emails. Some authors refer to a technostress related to the use of ICT, which has increased among employees working remotely. This can undermine the psychological health of employees, especially those who isolate themselves by choosing only emails as a means of communication (Mallillin, 2017, pp. 58-74).

Many HRM practitioners have implemented some activities to support their employees, such as creating virtual socialization activities, e.g., virtual lunch or coffee breaks). Undoubtedly, these practices help to support employees in this tough crisis while they are far from each other, and from their workplace). However, they also represent a great challenge for organizations, considering that besides being applied in a context of unexpected changes, these practices are new for employees and managers, who have not been previously trained or psychologically prepared for such changes, which may lead to an increase in their perceptions of person–environment misfit and dissatisfaction if they prefer the face-to-face interactions that they used to have prior to this pandemic outbreak. Moreover, virtual interactions might affect the socialization process recognized for its importance to help employees acquire the tacit knowledge related to the organizational culture, and contribute to its development (Nankervis, 2022).

6. Safety and health management

6.1 What made our present employees stay on despite all the odds?

Employers are responsible for the protection of their employees while they are working. They must ensure that the workplace is free from any hazard that may psychologically or physically harm them or cause their death. COVID-19 has generated a new workplace hazard and a significant challenge for managers and the impact on employees' health varies based on the working environment and the employee's occupational role. Two main challenges can be identified in this context: how to control the spread of the virus and to protect employees from contagion and how to develop the employees' awareness about the importance to respect the prevention measures implemented in the workplace. The WHO has provided guidelines for organizations to ensure the protection of their nonetheless, controlling employees' behavior might be challenging, considering that some people may ignore self-isolation instructions. The recent development of vaccines against COVID-19 has brought the light of hope all over the world, but it has also generated two additional new challenges for organizations, specifically the management of the vaccination campaign in the workplace as well as their capacity to sponsor it and cover its costs considering the financial difficulties that they have witnessed due to this pandemic (Capasso, et al., 2022).

COVID-19 is not only a physical health risk, but it also represents a significant risk for individuals' mental health. It might be psychologically demanding for employees who work from home, who can feel isolated and torn between their work and their private life. Moreover, employees who are required to be physically present in the workplace might return to work with the fear of contracting the virus or transmitting it to their family which might increase their level of stress as well as the risk of mental health issues especially for employees who were facing high psychological demands at work, prior to the pandemic or those who have a high-risk job position, e.g., healthcare workers. The main challenge for managers and HRM practitioners, in this context, is to identify the risk factors and to implement the proper prevention measures in the workplace, including for employees working from home.

Sense of Ownership—many employees can often feel disincentivized due to a lack of transparency and process opacity. It is very important to let employees know about the things they are (or could be) a part of. Give them a sense of ownership and communicate why they are important (Barford, et al., 2021, pp. 162-172).

7. Rewards and punishment

7.1 Do all needed tasks have incentives?

Performance management is 'a continuous process of identifying, measuring, and developing the performance of individuals and workgroups and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization'. It is crucial to ensure that employees'

performance is aligned with the company's strategic goals (Yildiz, & Ahi, 2022, pp. 894-906).

To sustain the company amid a crisis like COVID-19, employees are still required to maintain their good performance. However, it seems that the COVID-19 outbreak has also altered performance management in organizations. According to some authors, most organizations were overwhelmed by the challenges resulting from COVID-19, such as measuring employees' performance and the disruption in performance-based pay, that they have reduced or even abandoned performance management, due to the complexity and the novelty of this. In fact, measuring employees' performance during this crisis can be challenging, considering the modification of the working conditions. Furthermore, there are many factors related to the COVID-19 outbreak that may influence employees' performance. In this context, the study by Prasad and Vaidya reported that workplace isolation, lack of communication, family distractions, role overload, and occupational stress factors (role ambiguity, role conflict, career, and job-control), which have emerged due to COVID-19, mainly among employees working from home are significant predictors of employees' performance. Furthermore, employees' performance during remote working is also dependent on managers' understanding of how and what is required to manage a remote team). Some authors argued that managers might not accept remote working because they might consider that it affects employees' performance negatively, which can lead to the adoption of micromanagement that can be perceived by employees as a lack of trust toward them which can create tension between them and their supervisor (Rahman, et al., 2022, pp. 1990-2009).

It is crucial for organizations during this health crisis to maintain and strengthen their performance management process. They should communicate relevant information related to the company's strategic direction to their employees, to collect useful business data, and to provide feedback to them, which will help these organizations to retain their talents and to avoid legal suits. (added that the frequent appraising of employees' performance fosters their learning and sharing that can help organizations to win back their business) showed that compensation might have a significant impact on employees' performance in the COVID-19 era. Hence, the authors suggested that organizations should be more concerned about employees' total compensation. The main challenge, in this context, might be related to the financial capacity of the organization during this ongoing pandemic (Nasar, et al., 2022, pp. 182-189).

A reward system can be a tricky one, and it doesn't always involve a monetary aspect but can also include things like experiential rewards. It is imperative to design a rewards system with various choices so there is almost something for everyone. That is certainly not an easy task and might require:

- Frequent in-house quizzes about management and work culture
- Revisiting the rewards system regularly
- Engaging with an external partner
- Compensation management

- Compensation management refers to the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards that employees receive for performing their job. It encompasses monetary Compensation can influence employees' motivation, and performance the study showed that financial benefits such as bonuses during COVID-19 are associated significantly with employees' retention.
- As a reaction to the COVID-19 outbreak, some countries have implemented governmental policies to provide financial support for employees and organizations during this health crisis and to encourage them to comply with the stay-at-home orders. For instance, in the USA, the federal government has enacted temporary paid sick leave, allowing private and public sectors employees 2 weeks of paid sick leave for isolation, treatment related to COVID-19, taking care of a member of their family infected by COVID-19, and childcare caused by the school or daycare closure Short-time compensation, also known as part-time jobs, has also been adopted to sustain the economy while protecting business and employees' jobs. It consists of offering employees a temporary reduction in the number of their working hours which will help organizations that are experiencing a decrease in the level of demand, to retain their employees and to avoid layoffs These measures alter compensation strategies and policies within organizations. Furthermore, they might create a complex and challenging environment for managers and HRM practitioners. According to some authors, paid sick leave might lead to an increase in employees' absence in the workplace but at the same time, it helps to prevent employees' presenteeism when they are sick). Additionally, this type of government's policies, such as paid sick leave, help to increase their implementation in industries where employees have never got such benefits which suggests that managers and HRM practitioners need to think about ways to sustain them to avoid losing employees' motivation after the pandemic. In this context, referred to the importance of intrinsic motivation to retain employees, e.g., increasing employee autonomy.
- Furthermore, compensation management can be particularly challenging in workplaces where the risk of contamination is very high, for example in hospitals. In this context, the level of compensation offered to employees may be questioned, to know if it is high enough considering the level of risk that these employees encounter daily individuals use to select jobs based on their risk tolerance in return for more compensation for higher risks. Generally, the employer's intervention is oriented toward the necessary control of hazards to be able to recruit individuals for job positions with higher risks. Hence, in case of a high level of risk associated with the job position without sufficient compensation, many employees might decide to leave the organization (Dennerlein, & Kirkman, 2022).

8. Leadership and management's role

8.1 Does someone keep the boxes in balance?

Just like any other organization-wide initiative, any OD direction should start at the top in order to ensure the spirit of change all throughout. Every management member and senior executive must take responsibility and remain active throughout the process of transition. Here are some ways to build a strong pillar for managing change towards resiliency in the Perpetual Group of Companies.

Leadership plays a bigger role in empowering teams. In the language of the Weisbord model for organizational change (Pretzol) it is at the center of the pendulum to keep the balance of all the forces of change. The top leaders should be approachable to the team members, and this could be done by keeping an “open-door policy” where everyone can walk into any of the leaders’ offices and have a chat. Eventually, work toward dismantling the culture of offices and enable a “dinner seating” type of arrangement where every employee, including the leadership, sits and works in the open while implementing social distancing or the use of face masks and face shields (Shahbal, et al., 2022, pp. 1452-1460).

9. Readiness for change

9.1 Have we prepared our employees for a planned change?

Training plays an important role in a period of crisis, such as pandemics. It helps to develop the needed skills for employees to increase the COVID-19 awareness, to reduce the risk of the virus spread, and to prevent mental health issues. It also helps to support employees in the process of transition toward remote working. In fact, not all employees have the proper digital skills to cope with these changes generated by the use of ICT, whence the necessity to train them on the utilization of ICT, which will help to facilitate their work and communication with their manager and peers while they are away from their workplace organizations face the challenge of reskilling and upskilling their workforce to be able to deal with the requirement of the new context of ‘distance economy.’ In this case, the main challenge for HRM practitioners might be related to the development of a training program adapted to the new reality of the organization and the employees and choosing the proper training methods, considering physical distancing measures coupled with the necessity to have employees quickly operational to sustain the company business. This suggests that managers and HRM practitioners need to go beyond the traditional training methods. to change employees' training programs in a way that ensures a long-term transition toward the new working practices (Mallillin, et al., 2020).

The success of remote working is also dependent on managers' understanding of the virtual supervision of employees in this context, the HRM practitioners should play a strategic role by supporting and training these managers on how to manage a virtual

team, to help them to overcome these difficulties and to cope with remote working challenges in order to be able to support their team members

Besides training, COVID-19 has posed significant challenges related to career development in organizations. Employees showed that due to the COVID-19 crisis, employees were afraid of losing their job in the near future. In addition, some of them expected to miss out on a promotion that they should have received if this crisis has not happened.

10. I am a Star---

Opportunities, future organizational directions, and insights into OD interventions COVID-19 has posed grand challenges for managers and OD practitioners, but it has also opened the door to opportunities worth knowing and understanding, that can help organizations to direct their future actions. Indeed, the Chinese character for crisis is double-bladed: on one hand, it might create unexpected opportunities for organizations; on the other hand, it could usher further struggle if not handled correctly (Zargham, et al., 2022, April, pp. 1-13).

COVID-19 has challenged UPHSD's creativity and innovation and has urged discussions about the future of work. It has accelerated the disruption of day-to-day operations as well as the implementation of scenarios expected for the future. Moreover, it has pushed its top people to rethink their management strategies and to go beyond the traditional models of managing human capital and non-human resources, by positioning new information technology as an essential partner to survive and to ensure the sustainability of their business. As stated earlier, the Congress, Senate and the Executive Department have adopted new legislations like Bayanihan 1, 2 and 3 to support organizations in this sudden and unexpected transformation. For the Commission on Higher Education and the Department of Education and Culture, innovations have been adopted like the use of video conferencing and modular delivery of the curriculum to support learning and working from home (Ahmed, & Opoku, 2022, pp. 365-405).

Therefore, the normality that seems to be emerging for the moment in workplaces is the implementation of remote working. However, it is still pre-mature to confirm that all organizations which have adopted remote working will continue to adopt it in the future, beyond COVID-19. They are probably reviewing the effectiveness of this work organization before taking their decision, considering that they have implemented it for the first time. Therefore, the challenge of analysing the effect on employee productivity and student performance lies ahead. With the upsurge of Omicron and its variants, schools and corporate organizations are compelled to review the impact of remote work, as well as virtual meetings as COVID-19 variants continue to attack campuses and corporate premises (Akter, et al., 2022, pp. 592-598).

Despite its challenges, remote working offers teachers and employees the opportunity to have flexible working hours, save commuting time, foster job control, and

experience the use of new internet system. In addition, it offers companies the opportunity to optimize the use and save the costs of their resources, e.g., office space. For one, the writer for example sees continuing academic growth opportunities and lifelong learning in telecommunication, remote support solutions, and online education. Observations on the campuses tell us that COVID-19 offers opportunities for organizations to develop the autonomy of their employees, upgrade their digital competencies, and broaden the perspective of their competencies' development. Besides, this pandemic has positioned new technology as a strategic partner for organizations. It has helped to sustain businesses and to shorten the distance between and among faculty members, employees, students and the Perpetual Group of companies while ensuring their safety. It has fostered the creativity of managers, Deans and hospital administrators and it has facilitated the transition from traditional face-to-face socialization methods to virtual ones, e.g., virtual meetings, Christmas Parties, lunches, and even coffee breaks (Mallillin, et al., 2020).

The new technology has also supported the management of safety and health in workplaces. It has helped to implement the decision to keep the employees at home and to protect them from the risk of infection, while they keep on working for the organization. It has also supported healthcare professionals, e.g., psychologists who have continued to help the population through telehealth systems while respecting physical distancing measures. Students from China who are enrolled in the English Online at the UPHSD Molino, for instance, have tried various models and channels such as hotlines, online consultations, and online courses that accelerated the adoption of automation and artificial intelligence (AI) in sectors. This ICT exercise with high levels of human interaction can be used in other disciplines such as medical care and personal care (e.g., gyms and hair salons). Hence, it is crucial for organizations to get to grips with ICT and to make it accessible to all its members, in order to be able to sustain their business during extraordinary crises. The use of new technology also supports data analytics that can help corporations to optimize and improve functions and practices, such as workforce planning, talent management, budget processes, operations and even marketing during this pandemic and beyond (Axson, 2010).

Identifying the opportunities generated by COVID-19 can help managers to develop the proper behavioral and structural interventions and future actions. Nevertheless, it is important to take into account the fact that organizations all over the world are still witnessing the pervasive effect of this pandemic that does not seem to end soon. Undoubtedly, the enhancement of organizational transformation towards resilience is required. In this context, UPHSD needs to be able to develop innovative responses to effectively absorb and face disturbance that threatens the group's survival. Line and staff should work in collaboration with each other to transform the challenges brought on by COVID-19 into opportunities, to rethink their mandate such as to make profit and to serve the contiguous communities. In fact, as in the past, strategic planning exercises need to be conducted to re-evaluate the context, compare the new trends

generated by this unexpected crisis, and assess their applicability (Hamouche, 2021, pp. 1-16).

Considering the unpredictability of the current situation and the high level of doubt surrounding its end, UPHSD should opt-out to move toward a hybrid workplace model flexible enough to allow a quick and efficient adaptation of the organization to the requirements of this new situation and beyond. Managers need to adapt job positions and focus on redesigning of key result areas of the various business units. Employees should receive the necessary organizational support to acquire the skills needed during this pandemic and beyond, coupled with the development of career pathways offering possibilities of upward mobility and enhancing their employability. Such interventions should have a positive impact on employees' motivation and retention as well as the reduction of the costs related to organization development. Some authors go so far as to suggest that organizations should reinvent themselves by integration of entrepreneurship competencies among their employees, to help them to learn how to adjust themselves to the uncertainty that can be generated by an unexpected crisis and to thrive in a dynamic environment. The field of entrepreneurship might help employees to explore, to evaluate, and to exploit opportunities that occur in a dynamic and unstable environment, considering that this field is based on exploration, evaluation, discovery, and the capacity to transform challenges brought on by an ambiguous context into opportunities (Wójcik, et al., 2022, pp. 119-139).

Besides, the pivotal role of the new information technology during the pandemic should urge managers to explore effective ways to the context of their organization. Moreover, they need to identify the specific interventions. The involvement of employees is required to ensure the success of this organizational change. Additionally, sustaining communication with them should help to reduce their stress and increase their trust in the organization. Furthermore, employees should be given the possibility to work remotely with the flexibility to choose when and where to work without limiting the workspace to their home. However, organizations should provide the possibility to schedule a flexible presence in the office to keep the employees connected to their workplace, by ensuring the presence of efficient health and safety measures and facilitating access to vaccination. Considering the blur surrounding private and professional life boundaries, managers should communicate and discuss with their employees the expectations of the organizations in terms of performance. In this regard, managers should review and realign the performance management system in order to adapt the performance objectives to the new reality of organizations and employees. They should provide continuous feedback that will enhance learning and sharing among employees and foster organizational flexibility, agility as well as employees' motivation and retention. They should also develop well-being programs that aim at protecting employees' mental health and providing solutions adapted to the needs of every employee, in terms of resources and social support. Managers should discuss with their employees the different scenarios of work schedules adapted to the requirements of the

current situation. Also, with the support of HRM practitioners, managers should increase employees' awareness about the necessity to disconnect from work when it is required to prevent mental health issues (Mallillin, et al., 2022, pp. 189-198).

In this context, rebuilding the organizational culture is needed to facilitate the adoption of flexible work arrangements and the transition toward a hybrid working model. Moreover, developing and maintaining a cohesive culture that supports employees' connections and interactions is required, to encourage social support and collaboration among employees, particularly those working remotely. In fact, virtual interactions might affect the socialization process, and the acquisition of tacit knowledge related to the organizational culture. This led some authors to recommend the development and implementation of a digital organizational culture handbook, which should be made available to employees working remotely through the organization's intranet, to provide toolkits that support and vehicles symbolic aspects of the organizational culture, such as values (Arghode, et al., 2022, pp. 239-256).

11. Contribution and practical implications for organizations

In the OD world, crises are inevitable. However, no one can predict a crisis with the magnitude of COVID-19, which has accelerated the disruption of traditional methods of Organizational Change and has created significant challenges for managers and OD practitioners, who were not fully equipped in terms of leadership, competencies to cope with the complexity and the novelty of the pandemic that require structural and behavioral interventions. Besides these challenges, COVID-19 has opened the door to opportunities that organizations should know to be able to properly direct their future actions in organizational transformation. This paper is a general literature review that provides relevant and useful information which can help managers to understand the main challenges and opportunities related to COVID-19. The insights provided in this paper into the future directions in OD should help them to develop an intervention plan adapted to the needs of their organizations and employees (Sanchez-Planelles, et al., 2022, pp. 904-917).

11.1 Short-term and long-term challenges

The pandemic has posed a challenging role of management from the loss of talents. Challenging objectives, if employed the right way, can unlock the potential of the Perpetualite talent and help with employee retention and engagement.

11.2 Limitations and need for future action research

The contribution of this paper should, however, be considered in light of some limitations. First, this article is based on primary data, observations as a faculty and an OD practitioner might suggest that there is a possibility of a subjective selection of literature. Besides, the purpose and the informative character of this paper do not require

a systematic review of the literature. Second, during writing this paper, COVID-19 is still present. Therefore, it is not possible to identify accurately the long-term challenges and opportunities. Future research should be directed toward longitudinal analysis to identify these challenges and opportunities. The revival of the Institutional Loyalty Program may motivate further (Thomas, & Gupta, 2022, pp. 116-140).

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

About the Author

Atty. Ireneo Martinez Jr. has 48 years of teaching in the Higher Education and Human Resource Development practice specializing in Organization Development (OD) for community-based people's organizations with a special focus on political education and transformational leadership. Presently, he is employed at the Senate Blue Ribbon Oversight Office Management (BROOM). Prior to this post, he held various government positions, one of which was reporting directly to His Excellency, Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., President of the Republic of the Philippines. With a special permit to exercise his legal profession, he teaches at the Graduate School of the University of Perpetual Help System Dalta, Las Piñas City, Philippines.

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