SWOT analysis of challenges and opportunities for the company's human resources in COVID-19

Wansha Qin*
Department of Jinjiang, Sichuan University, Chengdu, China
*Corresponding author: cd_hky@cuit.edu.cn

Abstract. The COVID-19 epidemic reveals the important meanings of the HRM "Human Resources Management" in organizations. Thus, The response and countermeasures of companies to the epidemic is one of the key topics in current research. Currently, some companies only catch the sight of harm from COVID-19. Thus, employers are more concerned about human resources, which have adverse aspects with the online working pattern. However, it's very one-sided to see the shortcomings of the pandemic. Furthermore, the research topic of this paper is the more realistic opportunities and challenges faced by the company's human resources during the epidemic. The objective of this study is to know different relevant factors and the living environment of companies by SWOT analysis. Using the four indicators of the SWOT method to analyze the concrete situation of the company in this paper, and combine the different indicators to provide worthy suggestions for the company, which could reference and make better decisions for company development. The results of the analysis are relevant to real life. Specifically, COVID-19 creates challenges and opportunities at the same time and it not only influences the structure of management in a company but also increases the cost of employees in the future. Besides, the factors mentioned in the paper are closely related to the development of the company and they are not necessarily comprehensive, but salient under COVID-19. Finally, advising the company based on the research, they take action through analysis of internal factors and external factors, and four aspects of SWOT.

Keywords: SWOT; challenges and opportunities; human resource; COVID-19.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has an impact on whole societies, companies have the same natures while they have different reactions to the same problem. How to distribute the limited resources in a company is still an intractable problem. Company managers always hope that they use the smallest spending on human resources and this change could create the maximum profit for the company. Traditionally, companies advocate better ways to solve problems of human resources through adjusting the spending on human resources or limiting the number of staff. If they are situated in a serious context, they may carry out other methods to deal with some real problems when the COVID-19 pandemic comes. What realistic problems will they face? What challenges and opportunities will they face? Is there a better way to manage human resources for companies when COVID-19 comes?

When COVID-19 comes, the companies take the online office, which is a way of doing work far away from the public workplace. Because COVID-19 has a strong ability of infection. Hence, people need to stay at home on time to work through some online applications instead of sitting in a public office. In reality, managers choose online meetings to make decisions and announce regulations. The reaction influences the efficiency of workers and the development direction of the company. Workers are the first productive forces in the company. If a company could be run in normalization during the period of COVID-19, the company is required to take some measurements about human resources and consider more realistic situations. Therefore, this paper will analyze the influences of COVID-19 through SWOT to realize the challenges and opportunities, and real conditions for companies. Besides, experiencing the different analyses, and giving more realistic suggestions for internet-based companies to manage human resources, a company could have a successful transition to fit in the COVID-19 context, and then readers learn more about companies and the management measures of human resources.
2. Method

2.1 SWOT

2.1.1 Analysis of SWOT

SWOT analysis, a commonly used tool for strategic planning, is traditionally a form of brainstorming [1]. This method uses four indexes, which have a strong connection with the object of study. This analysis resulted in a situational matrix with data organized in four quadrants that considered strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats [2]. Firms optimize their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats with the help of SWOT analysis [3]. It helps organizations gain a better insight into their internal and external business environment when making strategic plans and decisions [4]. The internal situation of the company is reflected in S and W, and the external environment is reflected in O and T [5]. The method of SWOT assesses the objective environment of companies, distinguishing potential risks and it is often used for strategic decisions.

In the paper, the method of SWOT analysis not only analyzes related factors within the company but also some factors of the epidemic, and based on the company's condition. Using the method of SWOT, this study for the company was divided into 4 small steps to analyze respectively when COVID-19 came. Managers needed to consider different situations as far as possible and do some analysis of factors by using a SWOT table and then list some specific and clear suggestions for the company. Therefore, referring to human resources, giving realistic suggestions, and helping the company fit the Covid-19 context are both important. Thus, the detailed elements are shown directly in Figure 1.

Figure 1 The factors of Strength; Weakness; Opportunity; Threat

3. Analysis of strengths

3.1 Strength

Strength is an internal factor in SWOT analysis. Understanding the strengths of the company have a big influence on the development process. Because the obvious strengths in companies represent strong power they easy to solve some aspects of severe issues and have abilities to control issues leisurely. While different companies have different natures and different reactions to one problem. Therefore, the biggest strength is the company's nature, which manager could dig the advantages for developing the company.
3.1.1 The property of the company makes the management structure as simple as an introduction

Some companies benefit from their special property. They easily control their production process and business process. For example, middle-scale companies and small-scale companies have flexible business patterns that control marketing and human resource directly without too much government interference. They could formulate the employment principle according to their circumstance. It is also a way that learns how to plan, manage and control resources in a big company and leads to economic growth. Thus, as an introduction to big business, the smaller-scale companies play a role in the development of the country’s finance.

3.1.2 Motivating potency of company’s workers

Countries compel people to work at home not in public. Contrary to HR expectations, however, this is boosting their productivity [6]. When Covid-19 invades countries, workers are required to stay at home to cooperate with the government to guarantee the safety of residents. Compared with a strict work system, residents' home supply freedom of work circumstances and flexible work time now. It means employees could distribute their limited time by themselves. They don't have to go out and just take a few minutes to turn on the computer. Employees are likely to be productive by not wasting too much time going out. Sitting at home, employees have space to exhibit their online talents by using working applications and individual values, which are easily recognized by the company. They found that utilizing employee recognition, especially the non-financial, can increase employee motivation, and then contribute to high-duty attendance, high-task accomplishment, and high willingness to work overtime [7].

3.1.3 Promoting the unity of the company

Fitting the online pattern for work, employees have to learn a new method to deal with their work problems. It is also a new strength for the whole group to communicate with each other and coordinate with other departments. This behavior aims to improve work efficiency and boost the culture of the company. The culture of the company represents diversity in culture management and the value of the company, which could Let unfamiliar people directly understand the company activities and the status of the staff. Thus, it makes supervisors and employees more aware of company strategies and policies.

3.1.4 Accelerating company transformation

Fortunately, the company could change its form in the special period. If a company has different forms to serve different groups, the company has a better future. Some offline companies explore new forms and they hope to have a successful transformation to become online companies. It means offline companies want to become digital and scientific companies in the future. Digitization brings convenience to human resource services. Experiencing Covid-19, the human resource department in the company takes online recruitment and online training expertly. This current situation testifies to the increasing number of using online work patterns.COVID has led to both more and different forms of computing usage[8].

4. Analysis of weaknesses

4.1 Weakness

Weakness in the company is directed at insufficient human management and structure of the company. Human resources in certain companies embody the structure of human management and the manager's synthetic abilities. Among many abilities, the leadership of a leader plays an important role in a company. Leadership is one of the most basic and at the same time the most important functions of the company management, which besides planning, organizing, and controlling helps to achieve the goals[9]. Thus, a leader's decisions impact the company's performance in the future. Additionally, simple and direct human management could make the company run better.
4.1.1 Management limited

The dominant power in the company is from leaders, managers, and other senior executives. Meanwhile, the senior leaders are the core of the company. They decide a part of the future path of the company. However, the senior leaders do not matter much during the period of Covid-19. Taking the online working pattern, senior leaders just manage employees through online applications. For instance, they check the punching card record via the application's database recording. The defect is that leaders can't watch the direct employee's performance and give an exact opinion accurately.

4.1.2 Chaotic hierarchy management and employee's belief

Most companies show a clear hierarchy system. The senior leaders make decisions and decide important events and they deliver their minds to the subordinates. For online work, the company establishes a chat group and welcomes different departments to join in. Other department workers just click the button easily to bother the strange leader. And now most companies complete work online, which leads to employees ignoring the manners of the company and ignoring the status of leaders gradually. It damages the culture of a company and loss of respect for the important decision maker. When it comes to adopting work from home, the company's primary emphasis is on increasing employee productivity while also improving their mental wellness[10]. When a company is responsible for its employees, it will improve their sense of belonging to the company and enhance employees' belief in working for the company.

4.1.3 Chaotic division of labor

Employees have different talents and they endlessly improve their specialty literacy when they enter the company. Before Covid-19, employees complete their unique work and use a professional tool to play a fixed role in the company. However, everyone plays an equal role online without tools for actual operation. They execute excel form, word PowerPoint as same, which make particularity of employees less.

5. Analysis of opportunity

5.1 Opportunity under COVID-19

Covid-19 not only brings trouble for the company, but it takes the opportunity. The background with Covid-19 leads the company to consider more realistic issues, which relate to the property of the company and the future path of the company.

5.1.1 Increased labor demand for some companies

With the Covid-19 background, some companies emerged different trends, and they seem like not influenced by the pandemic. The elementary work pattern for an Internet-based company is online work when the company is established. Thus, the internet-based company has a platform to exhibit their ability, such as ordering software and the e-commerce industry. Following this trend, the internet-based company situate in the condition of staff shortage, the structure of internet-based company become complex with new members join in. Meanwhile, by providing more employment opportunities for new employees to enter the company, the company starts to concentrate on the training and recruitment process. Thus, the company could receive new members to accelerate the staff turnover for good development.

6. Analysis of threats

6.1 Threats

Threats mean that many factors have the potential capacity to make trouble for the company in the process of development. Some factors from the external world are called external threats, which create trouble in the finances and structures of the company. In this paper, Covid-19 come into the
mainland and become the biggest external threat to the company. Thus, the company is supposed to realize it and take measures positively.

6.1.1 The enforcement of policy
At the beginning of Covid-19, companies take all kinds of measures to deal with problems. Some of them take online communication, online meeting, and online report for the company's daily work. However, Covid-19 will be controlled in the future with vaccines created by a health organization and people will work in public office as same as before. Nowadays, the government is strict with the company about returning to work. On the one hand, the policies good for controlling pandemics, particularly the Closure and public awareness policies, which are key in slowing down the spread of the virus and related deaths [11]. On the other hand, these requirements lead the human resource department stressed sometimes.

6.1.2 Increased the costs of employees
For most companies, Covid-19 leads the human resource supply to a lacking situation, which can't recover in a short time. There is a void in the recruitment process with no one applying and recruiters have nothing to do. To avoid no new vitality to join, some companies increase the salaries for the employees in the company. While this phenomenon takes up much expenditure in the company and increases unnecessary expenditure costs.

Besides, the company has the responsibility to protect employees from the Covid-19 pandemic. In terms of the preparation work for returning, the company has to carry out the Covid-19 pandemic prevention work. Specifically, the company declares clear measures for Covid-19 and provides masks and necessary disinfection goods for employees. Conducting these measures means health management for workers to ensure their body health, in the meantime, workers could bring individual values to the company during the period of Covid-19.

6.1.3 Fierce competition in the industry
The pressure of competition exists in the environment of enterprise development. However, the context of Covid-19 intensifies competition between conservative companies. As for the offline companies, the manufacturing companies are represented. The manual manufacturing process is eliminated and the relevant workers stay at home and can't create value anymore for the company. For the few business opportunities in which they cooperate with other companies, they fight these opportunities. Hence, the conservative competes with peer and maintain life.

7. Results
This paper carries out the method of SWOT to explore some factors, which influence the company during the period of Covid-19. Therefore, this paper gets some results through 4 aspects. For the strengths of the company, firstly, the property of the Company is occupied the dominant status, which could influence the management of the whole company. Companies make decisions about the management of the organization and development direction by considering their property. Secondly, the potency of employees is immeasurable. Its impact on the efficiency of the whole company and become the motivation of the company. In addition, the pandemic is conducive to the transformation of the company and the improvement of corporate cohesion. As for the opportunity, the increased labor demand with Covid-19 shocking is advantageous and it could combine with the strengths of the company. Thus, the company easy to fits the pandemic context even though they get more benefits from the serious circumstance.

Next, the paper analyses WT factors from SWOT to escape unnecessary risks during the period of Covid-19. The weaknesses mainly focus on management methods and employees. Limited management affects the efficiency of communication and leads manager can't assess employees in a fair method. In addition, the faint management also makes the employees blur their duty and further
ignore the culture of the company. Considering the impact of the end of the pandemic, employees returning process is influenced by policies and can't recover in a short time. Additionally, the increased costs of the recruitment process and fierce competition in the industries are troubles. These phenomena have potential damage to developing companies.

8. Measures

The company faces both external and internal opportunities and challenges. The companies ask their employees to stay at home and complete their workload online. Hence, the productive forces of employees and related economic activity are influenced by COVID-19. For employees, to maintain their normal productivity, human resources should be more imaginative to create exact manpower measures. Firstly, confirming the nature of the company is essential. Choosing a suitable path for the company in the future could have good results. Secondly, the company is supposed to have superior consciousness and formulate different measures when an emergency happens. Thirdly, the company should train their employees regularly to cultivate more talented people, for example, taking professional skills training, holding different topic lectures. Next, the company pays more attention to the company's culture and increases the belief of employees, for instance, by adding some extra group activities for employees. That could improve the passion of the company and increase confidence in the company's culture. Then, with the increased labor demand in some companies, companies should give more opportunities for interviewees and design a standard online recruitment process.

Besides, when Covid-19 was controlled, the company take some measures for follow-up work. In the employee's return process, the company prepares enough disinfection products and ensures the safety office circumstances, which attracts employees to come back. Then, considering the limited finance, combing the importance of position determine the expenditure on employees. As for offline companies, the economic benefits are not as high as internet-based companies. Thus, the initial offline companies take some online means in some process, reducing unnecessary waste of human resources. Finally, human resources should move towards big data. HR staff can put more energy into the follow-up work of performance appraisal [12]. The experience of employee evaluation doesn’t important anymore. What’s more, it is even more important to improve evaluation methods and results for human resources through digital modern ways. For example, senior staff set the complete staff incentive mechanism, and the computer programs are established by technical staff by using big data, reducing employee dissatisfaction, improving employees motivation, and reducing the loss of talented people at the same time.

9. Conclusion

Through research, this paper found that there are some more realistic factors affecting the development of the company under epidemic conditions. Thus, Companies know some relevant elements from daily operations through SWOT analysis during the period of COVID-19 and they inevitably have to face the epidemic by applying measures. The analysis of SWOT in this paper has a limitation, which provides a few standpoints of the company. However, it still highlights the two sides of the epidemic. The weakness of this study is lacking individual factors related to human management. Getting a higher salary is the life goal of employees and the biggest work motivation. Therefore, salary may lead the behavior of an employee to change. Thus, a high salary package and perfect salary evaluation structure and welfare could influence the promotion rate in the company. Then it influences the structure of management and impacts the employee management and managers' decision-making. Afterward, the future research method of this paper is quantitative analysis, studying the structure of salaries and observing the trend of promotion, finding the relationship between them, and giving suggestions.
References


