



Changing The Scenario- An Enquiry Into Couples At Work

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Opening Lines

Innovations are truly the backbone of nearly every stream of thought, these days. Human Resources are not an exception to this. Human resource management practices (HRMP) have been gaining an increased attention especially in the fields of economics of the organization, strategic management and human resource management (HRM) (Laursen and Foss, 2003). Moreover, the past two decades were characterized by noticeable progress in researching human resource management systems (HRMS) (Wei and Lau, 2010). HRMS and innovation relationship in firms is growing as many researchers inspected this area (Vogus and Willbourne, 2003; Beugelsdijk, 2008; De Winne and Sels, 2010; Ma Prieto and Pilar Pérez-Santana, 2014; Chen et al., 2018). This growing interest is because of the continuous search for having a competitive advantage in a highly turbulent environment (Jimenez-Jimenez and Sanz-Valle, 2008; Shipton et al., 2005).

Innovation can be promoted through proper management of people (Shipton et al., 2005). Moreover, firms intending to innovate consider HRMP as a precious resource (Beugelsdijk, 2008). Furthermore, human capital when leveraged organizational expertizes are developed, thus innovation would emerge as new products and services (Chen and Huang, 2009). Several ways can be adopted to inspect the HRMP and outcomes linkage. However, the current approach is the following: complementarities or bundle of practices or individual practice in isolation (Wright and Boswell, 2002).

This paper seeks to contribute for the comprehension of the HRM and innovation relationship in the context of better halves at work. It has been identified as a black box by several researchers including (Beugelsdijk, 2008; Laursen and Foss, 2003; Messersmith and Guthrie, 2011). Thus, this study tries to inspect the way by which HRM and innovation are linked. Moreover, if there is a need for a mediating or moderating mechanism in the context of recruiting better halves at work to understand such a relation.

Several studies/ researches, allied analysis have been published from January 2003 to December 2018 in 18 Journals (Table I). The list is mainly based on high ranking journals with a proven history and impact in the HRM

research. The database used includes the following: Academy of Management, Sage Journals, Wiley online library, Taylor and Francis online, science direct, Oxford Academic and Emerald insight.

SR. NO.	Title of the journal	Number of articles	Ranking grade of the journal
1	International journal of manpower	2	Grade 2
2	Human resource management journal	2	Grade 4
3	Personnel review	1	Grade 2
4	Employee relations	1	Grade 2
5	Journal of Human resource management	6	Grade 4

Instances of HR Innovations-

1. Interviewing via video

Cisco has embraced this idea, and others are following. It's more popular than ever for an employee to reside in a different state, or

even country, than the corporate office. Used thoughtfully and correctly, interviewing over video had potential to be a perfect marriage of cost cutting measure and technological sophistication. HR should consider this

option the next time the perfect candidate is hundreds of miles away.

2. Using Gamification

Marriott Hotel employs this strategy to drive potential employees to their website. Whether a virtual tour of the office or playing a video game completing some of the potential job's "tasks," adding such elements into the recruiting toolbox woos younger talent to become more interested in the company, and more likely to apply.

3. Mandated time off

Progressive-thinking companies understand that recharging on vacation is integral to employee focus and productivity. Instead of rewarding workers for being "too committed" to take time off, taking vacation is a required action. New policies that employees are required to take time off for themselves at regular intervals result in a refreshed, re-engaged employee.

4. "Owning" unused vacation

Vacation days are technically an employee's to use as he or she sees fit. If they don't use them, for whatever reason, a fresh idea is to let them donate them to another employee. Perhaps the beneficiary is taking a trip around the world, or preparing for a life-changing event. The point is that HR acknowledges the employee earned these days, and can dole them out without company involvement. Google practices this policy, with great success.

5. Investing in employee health

Gym memberships, paid in-office medical screening, in-office ping-pong, and "activity game rooms" are becoming more prevalent in companies large and small. HR managers are learning quickly that investing in their workers' mental and physical health holds great benefit to company productivity.

6. Giving time off for volunteering

Businesses are stepping up and becoming good corporate citizens, and some are encouraging their staff to do the same. CRM Salesforce, for example, covers up to seven days for employees to volunteer. Days off to work in a soup kitchen, build a playground, or volunteer at a hospital are worth their weight in gold at building a well-rounded, happy employee who works hard for the privilege of being part of the greater good – and those benefits can multiply when employees work on a project as a group.

7. Customizing the position for the talent

Progressive HR managers are ditching job descriptions, opting for building the position

based on an employee's strengths and interests. While challenging, this new practice is highly success if moulded correctly. It takes a mix of knowing the employees, and accurately measuring their skill sets.

8. Getting rid of job titles

A few years ago, Zappos eliminated job titles to lessen the "hierarchy" feel of traditional businesses. Looked upon as old and stodgy, renegade companies refuse to pigeonhole employees with one title. The opinion here is that titles stifle the creativity and produces an unproductive hierarchy. Removing them fosters a more united, cohesive team of employees.

9. Two-way mentoring

You CAN teach old dog new tricks. While newer employees learn invaluable product knowledge and process requirements from company veterans, seasoned employees can get their imaginations sparked, absorb new technology, and discover new "hacks" from the newbies. Smart companies tap into the mentoring relationship as a back-and-forth, not up-to-down.

10. Setting up workplace flexibility as the new normal

Focusing less on work/life balance, and more on the integration of life and work, is a paradigm that is emerging in the workplace. It's all about how a company values the contribution of an employee, not just the physical hours worked. Time off for appointments and leaving early for school plays brings about loyalty and satisfaction in employees. Edward Jones is an example of a company who successfully offers a variety of flexible components for their employees.

The background

They say, "Men are from Mars and Women from Venus." The clearer truth is they are here on this planet, together. The bond of love between the two can tend to be an inventive, experimental, constructive and productive catalyst at work as love is sufficient unto love and it has no other desire but to fulfill itself. A recent beautiful Airtel 3G advertisement displays a picturesque scene of a couple working in the same office and further conveys love between the two and respect towards work as well. One of the pre requisites of an organization with a rhythm is blossomed relationships. There have been HR initiatives in this direction but were with unnecessary consumption of time, rupee and effort. Should a couple with

eligibilities and competences be recruited in the same organization, in order to be cost effective and reap the advantages which are aftermaths of one of the best informal relationships is truly an uncommon question to be answered. Despite the inadequacies like occasional probable disturbances in the relation, a varying chance of the forthcoming professional behavior, possibilities of romance, influence of home life of the spouses at work, the creative potential in the concept of marriage has to be rethought. Their faith and trust towards the same organization, assistance with each other, ability to devote more time when needed, may far prove the pillars for the work places.

This paper attempts to travel from the doubts and criticism regarding the recruitment of the couples at same workplace to their unexplored capabilities and proactiveness. The paper further enquires the possibility of selecting the spouses in the current era of fierce competition and allied job rotation, group cohesiveness, complimentary training.

Scanning the matter

The reel life and real life are mirror images of each other. There's a recognizable impact of one over the other. "Abhimaan", a 1973 Hrshikesh Mukherjee Bollywood old classic starring Amitabh (Subir) and Jaya bhaduri-Bachchan (Uma) weaves an elegant masterpiece. The actor's singing career is at its zenith. He falls in love with a village girl, gets married and cultivates her into a singer. Fortunately, (or unfortunately) wife's singing career blossoms far better and that's where the husband's male ego is hurtled, giving birth to jealousy leading to separation. Coincidentally, the couple reunites. But some questions remain unanswered even today. Can a male be egoless in relation with his spouse? Will there be always jealousy if wife achieves more? Can better halves work together more constructively? Should organizations intentionally recruit better halves?

The phenomenon

The current discussion is an outcome of unstructured interviews with 10 couples (Husbands and wives/ 20 spouses) working in the same organization. Most of the questions asked were open-ended questions in order to facilitate the random thinking of the respondents. Open ended questions also act as a catalyst for bringing into picture

attitudes, sentiments, opinions and experience of the respondents.

The formal aspects in an organization run primly on the basis of rationality/ reasoning whereas the informal relationship of a married couple will display belief, faith, values and culture. Therefore the unnecessary time, money, manpower and energy spent in laying down rules, procedures will reduce resulting into faster communication and realization of code of conduct and day to day functioning. The couple will be comparatively more easily accessible especially some tasks to be accomplished at the eleventh hour, thus enhancing psychological satisfaction. The same married couple will be with a faster feedback mechanism providing fine relief to top management. Hence relieved top management can come up with healthier policies and decisions. The probability of a married couple to be accountable to each other is higher than any formal relation tending the couple (both the employees) more accountable to organization. It has been revealed from today's workplaces that lack of accountability damages work environment and working in teams. In such a scene, working husband and wife may save the ruin of team spirit.

Comfort- It's indeed more comfortable to be together at work because of several reasons. Departing from home and reaching office in the same vehicle results into convenient, punctual and economic attempt. Some of the tasks / projects/ assignments given at work can be interchanged depending upon expertise of a spouse. His/ her services can be freely, without hesitation requested rather demanded with right. This comfort will not shatter like any other formal relation because of differences in opinion, conflict at work or a quarrel, fight at home. Still if it happens, the relation will recover with pace which is an added advantage.

Unfairness and Gossips- If there exists an unfairness because of a bias, discrimination, wrong use of power, or any other unethical reason with either a husband or wife, the disappointment, dissatisfaction, frustration can quickly be overcome as the consideration, support and guidance in informal relationship is substantial. If the unfairness is serious enough and urges for whistle blowing, the couple, may constructively initiate to disclose the matter to higher authorities, top management or media and

assist to create a difference by saving organization's image and goodwill, thereby contribute to organization's culture.

The possibility of gossips, rumors, misunderstanding about couples working in the same organization cannot be denied. It's up to conscience, patience and socialization of a couple to tackle such issues. The individual personality traits matter the most here. Yet, emergence of such negative environmental forces can be sorted out by a wise couple. This will still be simpler than handling same kinds of gossips between a male and female who are not husband and wife.

Travel and Transfer- Every organization does not include the aspects of travel and transfer. But if the job demands frequent traveling, one spouse will manage in today's context, as traveling is a common thing for a couple working in different organizations. In case, an organizational assignment consists of traveling by two or more employees, the couple can intentionally be sent provided there domestic responsibilities are not obstacle in traveling together. Transfer of one of the spouses will definitely disturb the rhythm of work. The couple can together be transferred with proper previous training to new location where the chances of exceptional contribution are higher as both of them will realize the care taken by organization for their personal growth.

Nature of profession- Recruiting better halves with almost similar educational qualification, experience, expertise, job profiles, roles and responsibilities best matches to workplaces like banks (office assistants, white collar jobs), Colleges (academicians), software industry (Computer Science engineering graduates) as the possibility to be part of the same team for a given project or task is higher in these jobs.

Superior- Sub ordinate Relationship- A plenty of literature is available focusing on this relationship. The essence depends on some parameters like cultural background of the employees, the organizational culture, family environment, personalities, ambitiousness, mutual dependence, maturity, conscientiousness, and retaliation. Informal relationship of a husband and wife includes these features with positivity in the light of superior- subordinate relationship. There are four relationship maintenance strategies towards a superior. A) Use of humor and playfulness enhancing friendliness at work B) Developing a respect

for superior's authority C) Hesitancy in communicating a bad news D) Openly sharing views regarding the expected treatment employees wish to receive from their bosses. All these pre requisites are in built in the husband- wife relation. Therefore, obviously the worries at workplaces would be eliminated.

Life Stage- An appealing facet in the ongoing discussion is enquiry regarding the Life Stage of the couples working at the same workplace. The family life cycle stages are given below

1. The bachelor stage—young and single.
2. The newly married couples—young, no children.
3. Full nest 1—young, married, with child.
4. Full nest 2—older, married, with children.
5. Full nest 3—older, married, with dependent children.
6. Empty nest—older, married, with no children living with them.
7. Solitary survivor—older, single, retired people.

Some of these stages in the life cycle of human beings can be thought of. The stages like newly married couples with no child ranging from age group 18- 21 to 30-35 approximately, full nest one- a couple with a child, full nest two- a couple with two children, full nest three- middle aged couples with dependant adolescents or young children, and empty nest- couples somewhere around retirement (Senior Employees in an organization) with children not living them because of migration with reasons like job, marriage. In the very first stage, at the beginning of the career the husband and wife tend to be very careful, involved and workaholic as they together wish to prosper in the same organization. Slight chances of gossip, rumors about them may exist. In full nest one, the seriousness of earning money because of increased responsibilities of a child (expenditure on healthcare, insurance policies etc.) is more. An extended version occurs in full nest two. In full nest three, the educational requirements of adolescent children and youngster going in college deepen the sensitivity of husband and wife resulting into productivity, achievements more than set targets. Lastly, in empty nest, lonely couple better finds work as a tool to escape from boredom and be busy.

Ego Clashes- Gautam Budhha says, "Ego is just like a dust in the eyes. Without clearing

the dust, we can't see anything clearly. So clear the dust and see the world." Ego-clashes at work are obvious. The remedial ways and persons are rare. The root reasons for ego clashes like difference in religions, bias on basis of caste, creed, race, culture, an unhealthy competition, temptation to dominate and show of the self, jealousy are definitely in informal relations and lesser in husband- wife relationship. The Indian marriage system assumes marriage as a *sanskara (Ritual)* providing a sacred meaning. Rate of divorces are minimal in India in the global context. Recruitment of husband and wife at the same workplace will be more effective in case of arranged marriages and in small towns or mediocre cities.

Epilogue-

Life asks for frequent breaking of stereotypes. It's beyond belief that women were not allowed to cross thresholds a century back. Times have changed. A woman stays in the space and experiences galaxies today. The prejudice towards husband- wife relation at work is like that threshold which will take its time to dive in space. Our task is to erase those pre conceived notions. In a fabulous Airtel Advertisement, a young multi task oriented dynamic woman is shown as a boss of the husband. The love and affection between the two do not hamper work. The advertisement seems not to be a fantasy but a realistic aspiration. The government of Maharashtra has come up with "Pati patni Ekatrikaran" scheme (Reunion of husband and wife) at work wherein a couple working at two different locations may apply for a common location for work. The functioning is based on usage of distinguished software. Need of the hour is welcoming this truth in private sector as change brings an opportunity. Hope for a sequel of the Bollywood classic "Abhimaan" (Ego) movie remolded as "Swabhimaan" (Self Esteem) where personal growth of better halves occurs and the organization blossoms as well. Aameen!!! (So Be It!!!)

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