

Advancing Diversity and Inclusion in the Post Pandemic Workplace

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Abstract

While initially the Coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic was considered an unprecedented global unifier, with countries worldwide all challenged to flatten the infection curve, accumulating studies have addressed the stark inequalities revealed by the pandemic. Considering that human resource management (HRM) has played a significant role during COVID-19, the purpose of this study is to decipher the stance of HRM professionals in regards the inoculation controversy, which has percolated from society to the labour market. In depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 40 Israeli HRM professionals from varied business organizations. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. A grounded theory approach was utilized for the qualitative analysis of the data. The findings suggest that unvaccinated people are highly susceptible to both openly acknowledged and covert discrimination against them by employers as well as co-workers. HRM professionals are particularly concerned about discrimination against unvaccinated jobseekers in recruitment and selection processes, and discrimination against unvaccinated people leading to employee dismissal. These are the implications of this study: HRM should actively advance opportunities for gainful employment of unvaccinated employees who might be discriminated against in the labour market. HRM professionals are thus advised to adopt preventive steps against implicit or explicit discrimination in practices such as employee recruitment and selection, work design, compensation and talent development. In sum, this study, which reflects current societal controversies, makes a contribution to the critical theorizing of the post-COVID-19 workplace as regards non-vaccination as a cause of discrimination.

Keywords: COVID-19, Discrimination, Human resource management, unvaccinated workers