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Course Code and Name	BUSM3310 - Human Resource Management
Location	RMIT Saigon South Campus

I declare that in submitting all work for this assessment I have read, understood, and agree to the content and expectations of the Assessment declaration.

Table of Contents

I. INTRODUCTION:

DKSH, or Diethelm Keller Siber Hegner, is a Swiss holding firm that specializes in providing market expansion services, such as outsourcing. DKSH, despite having its headquarters in Zurich, has strong connections and a significant presence in several communities throughout the Asia Pacific area. With 25,000 partners, 32,600 specialists, 80 offices, 25 showrooms, 48 testing labs (DKSH 2024). The company provides a range of services including sourcing, marketing, sales, distribution, and after-sales services divided into four Business Units: Consumer Goods, Healthcare, Performance Materials, and Technology. The primary focus of the company is to assist other firms in expanding their operations in either new or established markets as a just and accountable manner. It shows that their firm is founded on trust, integrity, and reliability (DKSH 2024).

With greater attention being given to issues of gender equality and equal opportunities across industries, organizations have to stand for gender equality and fair chances in the workplace if they want to foster a diverse and inclusive environment in the long run. After all, the guest lecturer stated that the basic values of HRM are integrity, respect, responsibility, human focus, and non-discrimination. As a leading enterprise in the market expansion sector, DKSH recognizes the value of eradicating the gender gap in engagement rates. However, in recent years, the company has faced a number of difficulties related to gender equality and fair chances in the workplace, as evidenced by a gender-based engagement score discrepancy. As such, there is a need for the company to adopt proven strategies and draw inspiration from thriving organizations in order to create a fairer and more inclusive workplace over the long haul.

Therefore, this article's main objective is to provide an in-depth SWOT analysis into DKSH, so that key insights regarding the company's approach to gender equality and equal opportunities could be extracted. Moreover, DKSH's potential equal opportunity initiatives will also be implied through a detailed review of secondary case studies that show how other companies dealt with gender issues in later sections of the paper. Throughout the analysis, recommendations for DKSH to improve the current gender-based engagement score gap will also be given out.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strength

According to the guest's presentation, DKSH's HR practices have been greatly improved as a result of the company's persistent commitment to diversity and inclusion over the years. DKSH has recognized the importance of gender equality and equitable opportunities for talent attraction and retention while also providing a safe and engaging workplace. To foster a performance culture and align employees' priorities, DKSH's HR department conducted an open feedback poll in the workplace using a unique Total Engagement Assessment Model (TEAM) and 360-degree feedback tool (DKSH 2020). Furthermore, DKSH continually promotes the motto "Enable Our People to Flourish" (DKSH 2023) by establishing the internal learning center and platform, "Fantree Academy". They offer well-integrated courses that address critical concerns such as ethics, compliance, and employee onboarding. At DKSH Vietnam, the average training duration per person per month is 17 hours, with nearly all individuals attending at least one training session.

Secondly, DKSH's global reach and agility also allows it to thrive in several fields. Being in the company of people from different backgrounds opens doors to learning about other cultures and exchanging ideas on how to make the world a more equitable and inclusive place. Because of its international reach, DKSH is able to draw on best practices from all around the globe and adapt them to meet the needs of each office it operates in. A set of all-encompassing policies and initiatives that workers across the globe can rally behind may emerge from this (Gutiérrez and Castaño 2021).
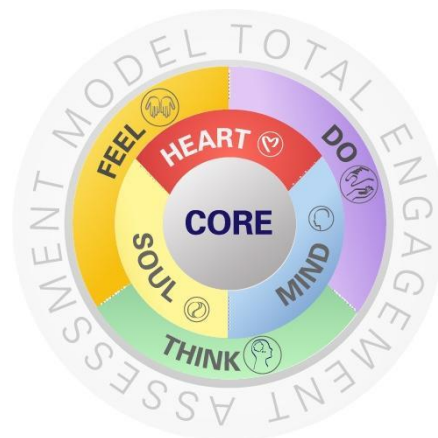
Figure 1: Total Engagement Assessment Model (TEAM n.d.)

Figure 2: 360-Degree Feedback Model (Linkedin 2023)

Weakness

Firstly, considering that DKSH has not been able to extract the source of the issue of gender-based engagement score gap, it can be indicated that a lack of appropriate data and indicators may be one of DKSH's key weaknesses. In particular, it has been pointed out by Cavero-Rubio et al. (2019) that filling up gaps in knowledge and gauging the success of current initiatives are both made more difficult by an absence of adequate data.

Secondly, the organization's unconscious prejudices might be another weak spot that can be difficult to detect, which can be a key contributor to its gender-based engagement score gap. As per Gartzia (2021), even in an organization with a firm resolve to eradicate gender imbalance, unconscious prejudices may impact the recruiting, promotion, and compensation processes.

Opportunities

A key opportunity exists that DKSH may join forces with other groups to further the cause of gender equality and equal rights. In order to have access to a wealth of knowledge and build beneficial collaborations, DKSH should actively participate in social advocacy organizations,

diversity networks, and industry associations. By forming smart partnerships with other companies, firms could improve its HRM processes and stay at the forefront of the fight for gender equality (Ko et al 2021). To achieve this goal, one must gather more sophisticated approaches, do substantial research, and collect exhaustive data for the purpose of comparing performance.

DKSH might also take advantage of the occasion to mobilize its employees behind an inclusive culture drive. Employees at DKSH will have more freedom and responsibility if they get involved with the formulation and implementation of company policies and projects. Establishing diversity councils, employee resource groups, and feedback mechanisms may assist make the workplace more equitable and welcoming to all employees. Thus, employees will have a platform to voice ideas and contribute significantly to corporate discussions when they engage with these types of programs throughout their careers (Badea 2020).

Threats

It's possible that DKSH may face resistance to change while conducting gender equality initiatives inside the organization. As per Wu and Cheng (2016), a systematic approach to changing people's mindsets and behaviors, along with resolute leadership, is necessary to overcome resistance to change. While change management is within DKSH's capabilities because of their training programs, communication initiatives, and unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusion, such a threat might not have been properly accounted for by the company over the past few years, thus leading to poor gender-based outcomes inside DKSH.

Another possible threat can arise from rapid changes to laws and other external factors regarding gender equality. It is critical to follow the ever-evolving rules that encourage fair treatment of all people, regardless of their gender. Therefore, according to the work of Cullen and Murphy (2018), it is essential that modern firms, including DKSH, closely monitor legislative developments and make substantial adjustments to their HRM processes in order to keep up with the ever-changing legal landscape in the future.

## II. THEORY-BASED ANALYSIS:

In the current global business landscape, especially the DKSH company, where the significance of diversity and inclusion in corporate strategy is widely recognised, HR models proposed by

transformational leaders and social theorists provide valuable insights (Cooper et al. 2023). Through an examination of the DEI Philosophy and Gender Similarities Hypothesis, one can gain a thorough understanding of the functioning of these theoretical frameworks.

1.   Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Philosophy

In the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), diversity is not merely a trendy term, but rather a crucial strategic necessity (Kess-Momoh et al. 2024). To encourage diversity, equity is a crucial component which enables HR Managers to develop inclusive policies and practices (Furtado et al. 2021). According to Lu et al. (2015), valuing different viewpoints and perspectives cultivates an atmosphere of dignity and fairness, bolstering an organisation's ability to navigate a constantly changing global environment. The "Diversity Iceberg Model" emphasises the importance of going beyond surface-level attributes to gain a comprehensive understanding of diversity in the workplace (Unah and Dawodu 2018). In addition to the visible apparent traits above the waterline like age, nationality, culture and skin colour, diversity is also reflected in one's family status (Figure 3). A study by Volpone et al. (2022) revealed that up to 66% of working women reported feeling disregarded for promotions after revealing their marital status, which shows the widespread biases that affect their identities as employees and mothers. Adopting a DEI philosophy combination with Diversity Iceberg Model in HRM has the potential to strengthen organisational culture, boost employee engagement and foster sustainable growth (Umeh et al. 2022).
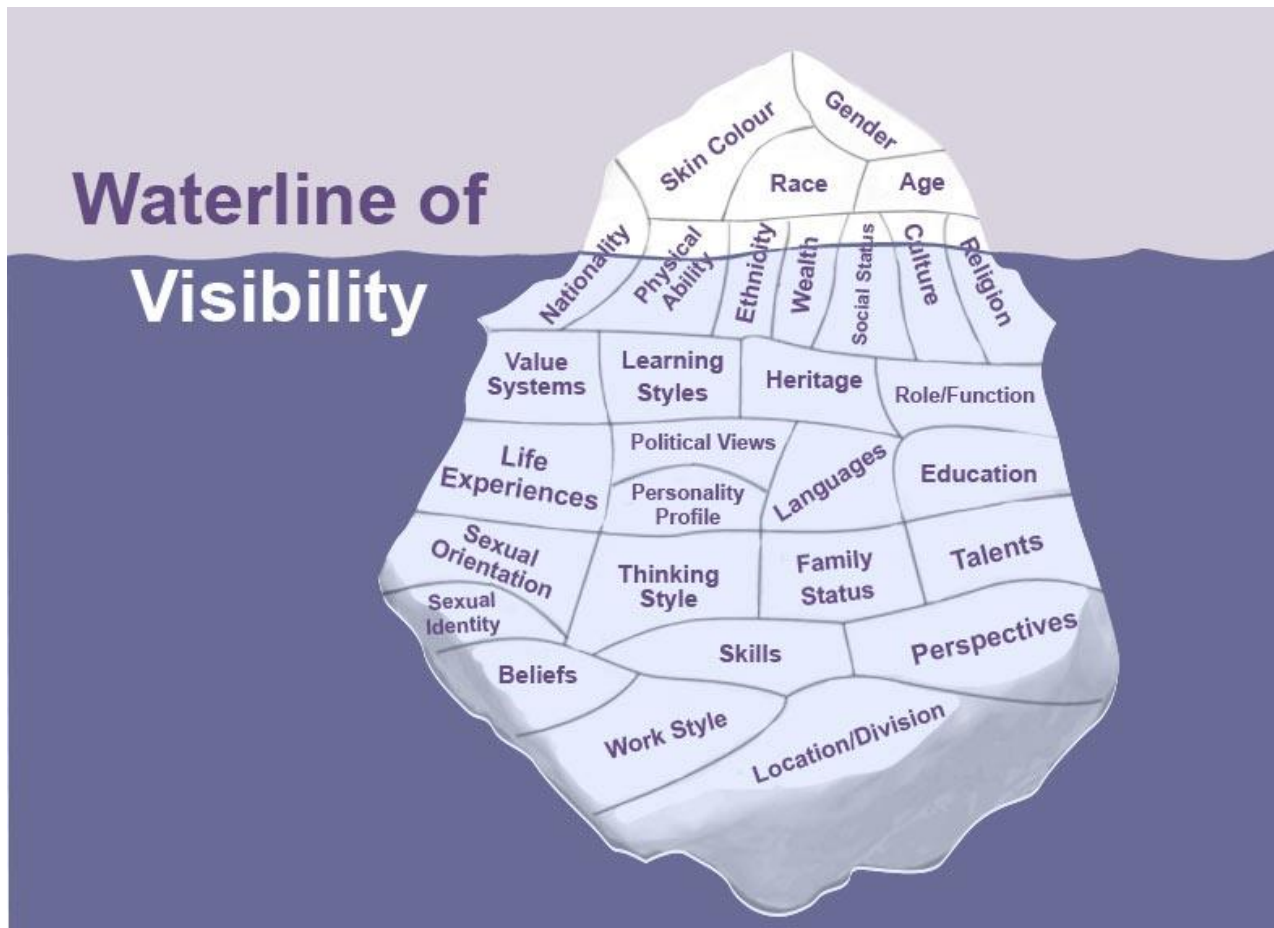
Figure 3: The Diversity Iceberg Model (Unah and Dawodu 2018)

0.   Gender Similarities Hypothesis

The Gender Similarities Hypothesis, a theory in psychology, presents a perspective that questions conventional gender distinctions (Hyde 2016). It proposes that men and women share more similarities than differences in the majority of psychological characteristics (Bosak and Kulich 2023). This hypothesis can serve as a guiding principle for HRM practices, fostering a more equitable workplace. HRM strategies, like competency-based recruitment and selection as well as inclusive training programs, are in line with this theory as they prioritise individual skills over gender stereotypes (Gegenfurtner 2018). Clear and objective performance evaluations provide additional evidence, ensuring that promotions are awarded based on individual merit (Ugarte and Rubery 2020). By implementing these principles, HR Managers can promote awareness of biases, facilitate open dialogue and establish an inclusive culture that ensures equal opportunities for advancement for all employees, irrespective of gender. The Gender Similarities Hypothesis is a

beneficial concept for encouraging diversity and equality in the workplace. It not only benefits individuals but also promotes organizational effectiveness and innovation (Cavero-Rubio et al. 2019).

III. EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS

1. Implementing gender balance training programmes

Deloitte has implemented a commendable and especially suitable strategy for gender balance training in the professional services sector, where effective leadership and sound decision-making are critical factors for achieving success (Christie 1997). Deloitte further enhances the firm's adaptability and problem-solving capabilities while concurrently promoting workplace equality through the provision of essential leadership skills to women and the expansion of their professional networks (Kamau 2018). Such initiatives have the potential to significantly modify the organizational environment by promoting inclusivity. Therefore, they can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction and talent retention, especially among women (Jo et al. 2022).

Google's efforts to address implicit biases and promote inclusivity through inclusive training programs are important in the tech sector, which often lacks diversity (Dhenge et al. 2022). To cultivate a workforce that is both creative and competitive, Google contributes resources to developing technical and managerial knowledge by female workers. Building an atmosphere that sponsors the distribution of different ideas while undermining the obstructions that prevent the exchange of information, can lead over time to the removal of obstacles that inhibit the flow of knowledge and the emergence of breakthrough achievements in technology (Chang et al. 2019).

Through the promotion of an inclusive culture, gender balance training programmes substantially improve the performance of organisations (Dwyer et al. 2003). These initiatives foster greater diversity and innovation in decision-making by reducing unconscious bias and enhancing the leadership abilities of female employees. By implementing such strategic initiatives, organisations not only advocate for gender equality but also enhance their flexibility and competitive advantage in the market (Riepenhoff 2006).

2. Supporting female leadership

IBM pursues this principle in the respect that the leadership development initiatives and mentoring are proactive including the urgency of diverse perspectives in the technology sector (Bompolaki

et al. 2021; Cretekos et al. 2012). Innovation and competitive advantage are other reasons IBM emphasizes preparing women for senior positions due to rapid technological changes. These programmes leverage diverse talent to propel the development and innovation of the organisation, as opposed to merely meeting quota requirements. The accreditation of the organisation as a frontrunner in diversity and inclusion by the wider market is frequently indicative of the efficacy of such endeavours (Randsley de Moura et al. 2018).

PepsiCo has a comprehensive understanding of the correlation between diverse leadership and business success, especially in the consumer goods industry, as evidenced by its initiatives to promote women to leadership positions (Beba and Church 2020). PepsiCo enhances its comprehension and accommodation of the diverse global market by accessing a more extensive array of insights and perspectives through the active participation of women in high-level decision-making processes. In addition to bolstering ethical standards and corporate governance, this strategic approach establishes PepsiCo as a market leader that is culturally attuned and responsive (Klenke 2017).

Promoting women into leadership positions requires facilitating their career development through mentoring programs and professional guidance (Bompolaki et al. 2021). By adhering to this principle, organizations regularly observe enhanced performance metrics, improved ethical governance, and strengthened leadership systems. The organization is proactive about female leadership, attracting meaningful candidates and prioritizing inclusivity. Employee engagement and retention are also critical.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promote Gender Diversity in Leadership

According to McKinsey & Company, gender diversity in leadership has a major impact on a company's profitability in particular and global economic growth in general (Sundiatu et. al. 2020). In reality, many global companies, such as PepsiCo and IBM, support female leadership to meet specific requirements of the field and have achieved success. A study also claims that organizations that have greater gender diversity at the executives are 25% more likely to reach above-average profitability. (Dixon et. al. 2020) And by 2025, fostering gender equality might add $12 trillion to the global economy. (Dixon et. al. 2020) Furthermore, companies with more female

executives typically have higher employee engagement levels as female employees feel valued, supported and inspired when they see women in leadership positions (Yuan et. al.)

Companies could actively strive to increase the number of female leaders by carrying out the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Philosophy through a clear set of policies that include establishing standards for gender representation in leadership roles, thus, nurturing the values of diverse perspectives. Another effective strategy is to provide leadership development courses for women and other underrepresented groups. These schemes enable individuals not only to enhance the hard and soft skills that are necessary for their career but also build up their confidence. At the same time, the courses also give networking opportunities to meet sponsors and mentors who are expertise in the field.

2.   Training or offer program about equality in workplace (Allyship)

Implementing training sessions and diversity programs is an extremely potential technique to promote gender equality in the workplace. (Hieker and Rushby 2017) These types of programmes can address a variety of challenges regarding discrimination, gender bias and women's rights in professional contexts (Hieker and Rushby 2017). In align with the case study of Google, the company has launched the #iamremarkable program that is instrumental in enhancing awareness of both conscious and unconscious biases, and also point out self-limiting beliefs that might limit women's job promotion and advancement prospects.

Recently, the concept of allyship has arisen as a powerful force in promoting gender equality and individual development (Lyubykh et. al. 2023) Thus, the suggestion calling DKSH to launch an allyship training program in the workplace is appropriate and necessary. Allyship involves individuals in positions of privilege and authority, actively supporting and advocating for their colleagues from underrepresented or marginalized groups. (Lyubykh et. al. 2023) Cultivating allyship requires focused education and training, especially at the senior leadership level (Lyubykh et. al. 2023). The training material should underscore the mutual benefits of gender parity and to motivate managers to perceive the advancement of women as a core aspect of their responsibilities (Lyubykh et. al. 2023). Allyship is not a one-time action but a continuous process of advocacy, learning and development which helps to build a working environment where people from all backgrounds feel valued, encouraged, and empowered to succeed (Cheng et. al. 2019).

V.   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, DKSH should prioritize the promotion of Gender Diversity in Leadership, aligning with the DEI Philosophy and Gender Similarities Hypothesis. Additionally, the concept of allyship should be implemented to address gender issues effectively. One way organisations can improve the representation of women in leadership roles is by implementing Diversity and Inclusion Policies, like PepsiCo has done. Additionally, it would be beneficial to introduce an allyship training programme in the workplace, specifically designed to offer assistance to colleagues who may be marginalized. These strategies foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and support, fostering gender equality in the DKSH business and empowering individuals from various backgrounds.

VI.   REFLECTION

Effective leaders can employ a range of theoretical frameworks to get the most comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the issue, which enables them to create a clear plan of action and evaluate the options. Realistic goals must be successful in order for the team to overcome all obstacles (Belhaj & Tkiouat 2015). Together with assessment using the Cynefin framework, which has the essential components (simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic) for developers, our team acquired knowledge and expertise from the aforementioned approach. According to Snowden and Boone (2007), leaders need to assess conditions and take appropriate action. We learned more about effective collaboration strategies, such as goal-setting, time-management, listening to others, and allocating tasks fairly, to obtain experience that would better each person's development.

Additionally, we apply the Tuckman Theory Model that we have studied, which consists of five phases that serve as the basis for a successful cooperation assignment and serve as a reflection of our experiences as a result of these internal and external influences (WCU 2022).

1.   Acquiring knowledge and establishing shared objectives (Forming-stage)

Establishing common goals is a prerequisite for collaborating effectively and reliably. That gives us a clearer understanding of each person's job and increases our sense of security. Before members can begin to form a group with a defined structure, objectives, directions, and responsibilities,

leaders will set expectations and demonstrate determination via conduct to impact the speed of work affirmation (Stein n.d.).

2.   Sharing ideas while maintaining a positive attitude to avoid conflicts (Storming-stage and Norming-stage)

Each member will be able to do their task more effectively, learn how to listen to other people's viewpoints with grace, and prevent needless confrontations if they continue to have a positive attitude when getting comments on their work, thereby raising performance levels all around and avoiding conflicts or negative arguments (Caprara et al. 2010). Leadership changes from "one" teammate in control to shared leadership to build trust as the group becomes more cohesive.

3.   Being a willingness to take on new challenges to accomplish common goals (Performing-stage)

Challenges are something that leaders cannot ignore, and they present risks. Nonetheless, we may proactively create plans to stop outside influences by taking in the concepts from the previous phase. Members will share leadership responsibilities in the same project to demonstrate that they are developing professional management abilities for both the team and themselves. Taking on difficulties and risks will be a gauge of a person's ability to grow and become capable of making thoughtful, well-informed decisions (Lampton 2023). During this period, we continue to grow personally by constantly finding out professional knowledge because strong foundational knowledge will be essential for participants to differentiate organizations, accomplish remarkable feats, and accomplish their objectives via constant innovation (Singh 2008).

4.   Completed   and   preparing   for   further   action   (Adjourning-stage)

After completing the project and perfecting individual skills, members will be ready for the transition when entering the subject area, each person will have different activities. We will evaluate it and provide helpful feedback on each other's work through task contribution. Feedback will help leaders gain cognitive insight and proficiency in a team's real-world tasks (Kluger & DeNisi 1996).

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