

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

The impact of organizational beliefs, attitudes, and value systems on workplace behavior

BMSW5101 Developing Workplace Critical Thinking

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Executive Summary

The combination of personal values, beliefs and attitudes are a person's moral principles that guide you in life and affect your behaviour. However your views can differ from other's and in an organisation like the place you work in, these may be the opposite of those of the workplace. Even if they clash with those of others in the workplace, one might still need to follow the cultural norms from the workplace because of being afraid of consequences. But this should not be the case only as these are learnt and developed in the workplace and the institution can implement management strategies of change. For the benefit of the entire organisation, employees, and satisfaction of customers, management has to instil behaviours that show the beliefs, values, and attitudes they wish to be followed in practice.

Although it looks easy, it is as important to understand employees' cultural values and beliefs in order to determine their attitudes towards work and in the end to the welfare and success of the company in different circumstances.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Management Theories That Will Underpin the Report.....	5
2. 1 Scientific management theory	5
2.2 Bureaucratic management theory	6
2.3 Contingency Theory	7
2.4 Systems theory	8
2.5 Human Relations.....	9
3. Evaluation of the theories to assess how someone with different beliefs, attitudes and values might interpret the theory differently	10
4. Overview analysis of the difference between - beliefs, attitudes, and values in the workplace	11
4.1 Organisational Beliefs	11
4.2 Attitudes of people within an organisation	12
4.3 Values of an organisation.....	12
5. Marks and Spencer 's beliefs, attitudes and value systems and their impact on workplace behaviour	13
6. Recommendations for M&S with regards to organisational change to overcome future challenges.....	15
7. Conclusion	17
8. References	18

1. Introduction

The aim of this report is to apply the knowledge around management theories to evaluate the beliefs, values and attitudes that influence workplace behaviour in a company of choice. To give an answer to this, a UK organization will be used as a case study to help with the findings.

The organisation chosen for this study is Marks and Spencer, a British public limited company from the retail industry. Marks and Spencer is a leading retailer that serves food, clothing, homeware, insurance, banking, and other services to customers all over the UK and internationally (MarksandSpencer, 2021). The reason for choosing Marks and Spencer to write this report is the experience and knowledge accumulated while working for the company as a customer assistant and operations customer assistant for a period of around two years. During this time the author of this analysis was able to meet new people from different backgrounds with different beliefs and attitudes. Interacting with them has given an understanding of the fact that everyone thinks and acts differently to a change or situation, affecting their behaviour towards people or work.

The management theories used with the analysis of this study are the Systems theory, these forms different subsystems in the company to help with the management of the business and employees. The Contingency theory to help identify the style of leadership within the company. The HR to have an insight into the team that manages 85000 employees. These theories are implemented in an organisation to help manage the employees, increase productivity and service quality.

The aim of the first section is to determine how workplace behaviour is affected by individual's own beliefs, values, and attitudes. To do that an understanding of the difference between these is necessary. Then an overview of the culture at Marks and Spencer to find the beliefs, attitudes, and values system they have as an organisation. Another section will cover the evaluation of the theories to show how a person's values might influence their thinking and interpret this differently than others. In the last section recommendations will be provided if necessary to help with changes arising in the organisation.

2. Management Theories That Will Underpin the Report

2.1 Scientific management theory

The scientific management theory is used in technology and engineering science for the development of better strategy set in the business of the respected companies. This will help to make the work of production of goods better and faster (Bailin, 2020). The theory was founded by Fredrick Winslow Taylor, also being called Taylorism.

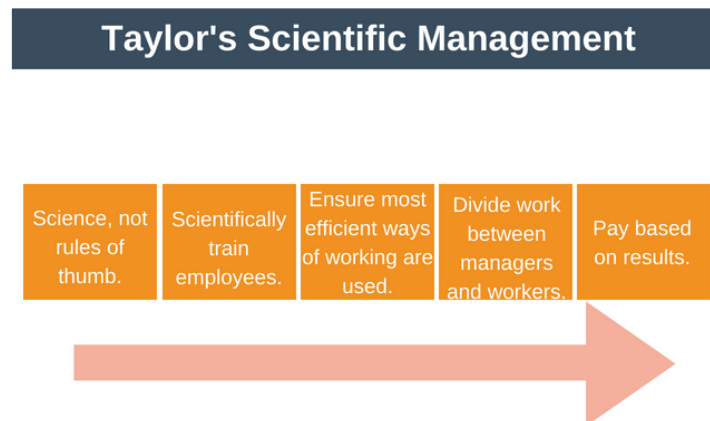


Figure 1: Scientific management theory.

(Source: expertprogrammanagement.com, 2021)

The theory can help in achieving productivity and efficiency of every individual in the company for attaining a better form of production and quality of products (Schein, 2017). The theory implies the use of technology and engineering science in the production methods of the company. This is done through extensive use of technology in all sorts of innovative ways into the company business.

This theory is not applied to the entire organisational work, but specifically to the ones related to the production of goods. This is done so that the company can make the production process faster with less costs. The use of innovation and technology can help the company to be profitable in the long run and help the company to save money, time and effort required for the production of goods (Parker and Jeacle, 2019).

Parker and Jeacle (2019) suggest some aspects of this theory that can be considered:

- Firstly a separate planning is made for the different forms of tasks that have to be performed by the employees.

- The need of good supervision is a necessity. This will help the companies to have a supervisor for every department. This can help to make the work faster and better with constant analysis of the performance of the employees in the company.
- Then the level of achievement of the company targets and the performance level can be measured with the impact of the strategies on the employees. Depending on the level of impact of the new strategies, the company will have to modify the type of tools or time required for the strategies.
- The company will also have to perform a proper analysis of the scientific methods available and select the one which is the most suitable for the company tasks and its employees.
- Lastly, the company needs to choose the correct financial factors. The reason for this is, the proper management of the finances and the usage of it in the form of incentives can help to keep the employees motivated and elevate the efficiency of the workers. This can help in the proper incorporation of scientific methods into the processing of goods of the company.

However, the incorporation of the high level of technology and innovation within the company can make it difficult for the employees to follow the targets of the company. This makes the completion of the individual tasks of the employees difficult (Ahmed, 2020). This can lead to demotivation and conflicts within the company.

M&S uses this theory by paying its employees in order to work and by having able managers control over staff and to implement better innovative techniques into the business. This will help to improve the online services of the company. This is very essential for the continuation of business in the covid-19 pandemic. It can also make M&S increase the number of online customers and attain a great level of competitive advantage in the retail industry (Marks&Spencer, 2021).

2.2 Bureaucratic management theory

The Bureaucratic management has two parts, these are needed for structuring and division of labour into the company in a strategic manner and the set of rules which are related to these divisions. This will help to keep the performance of all employees well organised and the company to accomplish tasks faster (Meisenbach and Jensen, 2017).

Bureaucracy Characteristics (Weber)

1.	Hierarchical Management Structure
2.	Division of Labor
3.	Formal Selection Process
4.	Career Orientation
5.	Formal Rules
6.	Impersonality

Figure 2: Bureaucratic management theory

(Source: expertprogrammanagement.com, 2021)

This theory was developed by Max Weber.

The company should only follow Bureaucratic or legal power within the organisational culture. This will help with the proper execution of the strategies without any form of personal conflicts; designing a set of rules and chain of command will help to continue the work properly, it will also help to make the tasks easier to understand for the employees; division of labour within the organisation and a balance between the responsibilities and the power exercised; the use of better methods of selection and training of the employees, to keep the work efficiency high (Rodrigues, 2021).

M&S can make use of the Bureaucratic management theory to implement a structured form of business within the company. This will help to manage the employees better and make them work safely in stores or at home due to the pandemic. This enables continuity for the business during the harsh conditions of the pandemic.

2.3 Contingency Theory

The Contingency planning is usually done to keep the organisation ready for any form of emergency, which will need the company to act fast and make decisions quickly. The theory helps a company make decisions in advance with reference to the various resources of the company and based on aspects important to that situation. This can help to have a proper management of the factors like human resources, finance, or the communication modes within the organisation better and beneficial at the time of emergency (Burgner *et al*, 2020). This will prevent the company from facing huge losses.

The contingency planning process can be effectively divided into three parts:

- The type of emergency.
- The actions which will be needed at the time of the emergency.
- The actions which can be taken in advance about it.



Figure 3: Contingency planning

(Source: forbes.com, 2020)

The designing process of the contingency theory implementation will have to be in collaboration with the investors, partners, and the government (Burgner *et al*, 2020). This will help to make the plan stronger to overcome the problems that can occur. However, the contingency plans cannot be applicable and useful in all situations. The reason for this is that the type of disasters cannot be known before happening. Even for M&S or other retailers, that have faced the consequences of the pandemic not knowing that it will come so hard on everyone and force people into making tough decisions.

These plans will ensure to provide the necessary needs to the workers to protect them during the pandemic, (such as medical help and work from home policies) in order to contribute and help. Therefore this theory is used by M&S to minimize the risks and leaders play an important role to make changes and help employees to cope with the conditions in the market and the changes in situation.

2.4 Systems theory

Systems theory helps organisations to make a range of decisions based on the way actions are managed and recognition of how different systems affect a worker. It makes people understand that there is no perfect solution to any problem. A solution might be applicable for a particular issue but have a wide impact on the other aspects of the organisation (Caldera *et*

al, 2017). Therefore, the company has to always be ready with a range of solutions to one problem and choose the best-suited one.

The types of problems which are usually handled by the systems thinking process are:

- The problem should be big but does have a solution to it.
- The company will have to understand that the problem is chronic, but it happens only once and gets solved. It will not have more impact on the company events.
- The problem should be such that it has occurred earlier as well. There is the history of it, and what kind of solutions were applied to solve the problems.
- There will also be some history of failed attempts of people trying to solve the problems in the past (Caldera *et al*, 2017).

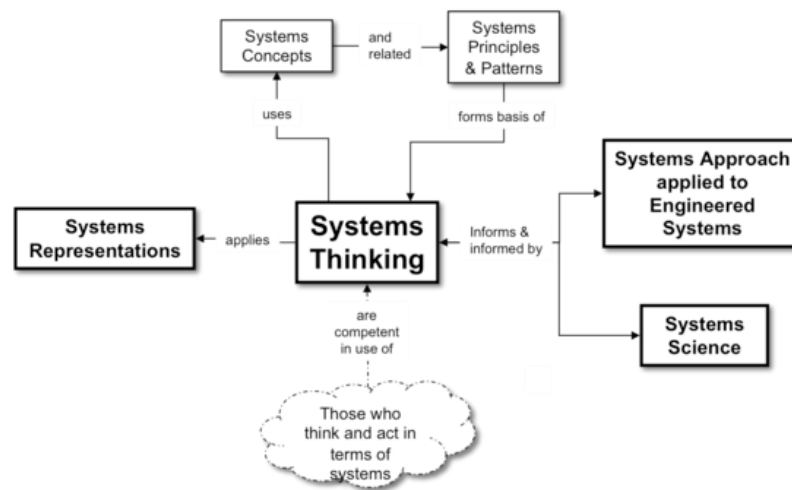


Figure 4: System thinking theory

(Source: forbes.com, 2020)

The usage of the systems thinking theory can help M&S adopt a better form of implementing the targets and tasks assigned to the employees. It will also help the company come with easy solutions to issues that might occur due to remote working.

2.5 Human Relations

Human Relations plays an important role in the function of an organisation as it benefits the company and its employees in various ways. The human relations will comprise of different aspects like acquiring, training, appraisal, and compensation of employees (Taştan and Davoudi, 2017). Marks and Spencer has a recruitment and selection process based on an online application form with different scenario-based questions followed by an interview and 2 or 3 days of training before starting. The performance management used is an appraisal system used every 12 months where staff discuss what can be done, what is going well and what needs to be improved and provide suggestions. The rewards and benefits M&S offers is

very complex with pay reviews every year, employee discount 20%, holiday entitlement, bonuses, pension, life insurance, share save, and salary sacrifice schemes, discounts, health and wellbeing and charity volunteer day. Also offers career development and training with on-the-job learning, job specific learning, development reviews, store attachments program (MarksandSpencer, 2021).

The ways that human relations can help a company are:

- High levels of motivation

Good relations between the employees of the company or the employees and the employer can help to make the employees feel wanted and important. This can lead to an increase in the motivation level of the employees in companies like M&S. For example M&S places a high value on its employees, believing that they must be motivated to deliver for customers and business success through appropriate rewards, making them feel valued in an inclusive and diverse workplace with a respectful corporate culture, and having their colleagues' voices heard in decision-making (Marks&Spencer, 2021).

- Employee retention

The high level of motivation for the employees of the company can help to make them receive better forms of rewards and appreciation for their hard work (Peek, 2020). This helps to make the employees feel more engaged with the company and increases the employee retention rate. Good employee relations help to build a good and healthy work environment, which will motivate the employees to improve their work in the company, serve the customer and add to the success of the business (Marks&Spencer, 2021). With this M&S will be able to achieve their goals and operate properly adding to the brand image they have and help attract more customers too.

- Good quality of services.

Better human relation can help the employees to stay motivated in a good and healthy working environment. This helps the employees to work more efficiently and help the company attain a better level of quality of services.

3. Evaluation of the theories to assess how someone with different beliefs, attitudes and values might interpret the theory differently

M&S employees might have problems in following certain instructions of the company when trying to implement certain theories from the ones mentioned above. This can lead to certain

conflicts with the beliefs and attitudes of the company (CampaignLive, 2021). This can be seen while implementing the scientific management theory and the bureaucratic management theory, as the employees might have problems in working with the new types of innovations in the company. The incorporation of the innovative methods within the company can also make the employees feel insecure about their jobs. This is because, the usage of technologies like artificial intelligence can make people feel that the company might reduce the employee numbers of the organisation. This has increased even more during the pandemic since the unemployment rate has hiked to 19% in the UK during the pandemic (Office for National Statistics, 2021). However, if M&S makes use of the Scientific management theory properly then it can help the organisation to have a great profit margin through online transactions. The advanced technologies will help to make the work of the employees easier and improve the online services of the company (CampaignLive.co.uk, 2021). The advanced online services compensate for the losses faced during the pandemic that had M&S lose sales in clothing and homeware. The sales which were reduced due to the restrictions in visiting the walk-in stores were fulfilled by the online services which were the result of M&S partnering with Ocado that proved to be a real deal.

The Bureaucratic management theory will be helpful in having a structured and well-organised business in the company. This can help M&S to attain better levels of productivity from the company employees. However, it can also lead to conflicts with the values of the company due to the attitudes and beliefs of the employees that differ greatly. This is because, M&S involves the opinions of the employees into the decision-making processes of the company. Therefore, the incorporation of the Bureaucratic management theory disrupts the type of leadership followed by the firm leaders (CampaignLive, 2021). For example if a person has worked for different managers in the past, it often finds that the actual manager's style is different than the previous because of their beliefs, attitudes, and values. A good manager must change his behaviour in a positive way in order to support a different culture and behaviours.

4. Overview analysis of the difference between - beliefs, attitudes, and values in the workplace

4.1 Organisational Beliefs

Beliefs are considered to be the claims people make about themselves, others, and about things that happen around them. They are very important for every individual, and they can be religious, moral, or cultural. Whichever belief a person has, their experiences reflect on

those beliefs (Hale, 2014). People may take others' beliefs, such as a leader, and act in accordance with those beliefs, even if the behaviours are not in their own best interests.

The concept of organisational belief concerns the type of mission and common beliefs that people have within an organisation.

For M&S, the company is a customer driven one. The greatest priority for the company is the satisfaction of the customers. This can help the company to have improved sales and revenue generation (MarksandSpencer, 2021). The different employees of the organisation are mostly focused on attaining a better quality of products and services, with the incorporation of better innovations and technologies. This is done, so that the company is able to make the customers happy and also attain a competitive edge over the other companies in the market.

4.2 Attitudes of people within an organisation

Attitudes are a set of emotions, beliefs, and ways of behaving towards a person, group, concept, or objects, more the way a person responds to certain situations or actions of others (Hale, 2014). Our attitude can be reflected in how we respond to situations and the way we behave.

The attitudes of people within an organisation can be considered as the different beliefs of people and the types of response they have towards different factors present in the company. These factors can be the business environment, or the decisions made in the firm by the leaders (Belas *et al.*, 2019). The attitude of people is very important for having a friendly and effective work environment, since it will help the company to have better contributions from the employees, if the workers are happy and motivated.

M&S follows a chain of steps to ensure that their employees are motivated and have a good attitude towards the internal business environment. This helps to make the colleagues (as they are called inside M&S) of the company stay more engaged with the company and its targets and put in better efforts for completion of objectives.

4.3 Values of an organisation

Hale (2014) adds that morals, practices, or attributes that we or a group of people hold in strong belief are referred to as values. These principles serve as a guide for how we live our lives and make decisions. Values are of great importance for a person especially if that something or someone is relevant or is worth something to them. They also differ depending on the culture a person belongs too and expresses personality of an individual and how these impacts on behaviour and attitudes.

The difference between values and beliefs is that values evolve in time with people gaining more experience, while beliefs are more stable. Values and beliefs are related and influence the attitudes of a person. In a working environment beliefs, values and attitudes are influencing how a person is doing their work, their motivation towards work and colleagues, thing that should be considered and managed accordingly for success of the business. For example a manager's own beliefs, values and attitudes have an impact on employee's motivation to work which is why they need to adapt their style to different situations.

Kumar (2018) considers that learning the necessary knowledge and abilities is the only way to increase performance in the workplace, however being involved and motivated to do a task requires a certain attitude in order to achieve that task. And only having the right values and beliefs will make you change attitudes and increase motivation to do something. He also adds that behaviours are the way in which attitudes, values and beliefs are expressed and for a person to perform well a good understanding of these is necessary and suggests that feedback is essential on behaviour in a workplace as this can change the attitudes of a person.

The workplace values are the most significant guiding principles for a person in terms of how it performs, and they are used to assist you distinguish between what is right and what is wrong in your way of doing things and help you make decisions (MindTools, 2021)

A person's attitude is the way he or she shows or uses their beliefs and values, and it expresses itself in words and actions. Attitudes change depending on experience. They develop as a result of a learning experience. A person's attitude can make him/her ignore the values, views and the needs of others creating a behaviour that can have a negative or a positive impact on people or things within the workplace.

People have different values and beliefs when they think about something or someone and they have an attitude towards it as well that can be changed depending on what outcome that attitude has for a certain person.

The Values, beliefs, and attitudes of someone are always connected with the others around especially in the workplace but are different too as values and beliefs can influence our attitudes and depending on situation can lead to behavioural change.

5. Marks and Spencer 's beliefs, attitudes and value systems and their impact on workplace behaviour

M&S's workplace values establish the context for the company's culture and define what the organisation cares most for. People must understand each other and do the right thing for the

same reason, assisting in the development of outstanding relationships and the organization's mission.

The attitudes and behaviours that a company wishes to see in its employees are influenced by workplace values. Respecting people, honouring promises, and providing good customer service are examples of these qualities. M&S values are “inspiration, integrity, innovation, and in touch”. M&S aims to *inspire* their customers. Uses *innovation* to improve things for the better with designs and materials to technology and sustainability. Has *integrity* striving to do things ethically and believes in treating everyone from colleagues to customers with respect. And *keeps in touch* with customers to listen and act thoughtfully.

Marks & Spencer's success is largely down to their employees. The company wants people to look forward to going to work where there is no discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. Reason why M&S claims to provide a safe and healthy working environment for their workers in the UK and abroad, as well as fostering an organisational culture that values diversity, inclusivity, personal growth, and respect (MarksandSpencer, 2019).

Values and culture are closely linked since culture is the set of expectations and standards that define how a group behaves. Beliefs, behaviours, and actions are all linked as well. Consequences influence beliefs, which subsequently influence behaviour (Perumal, 2021). People's behaviour is influenced by their belief that the consequences will have an effect on them. For example M&S has a dress code uniforms that staff wear that is designed to promote the image of the company and by not coming at work in the M&S uniform thinking that it does not look good on you, or the trousers are ugly because of your beliefs on style are different. Then that person shows unprofessionalism towards the company she works for and there will be consequences as the enforced policy states to wear appropriate uniform to represent the image of the company you work not your individual style. However, in other cases, a leader or manager should encourage people to behave in a certain way because they want to, not because they are scared of what might happen. M&S is having a clear and fair mechanisms in place to manage any misconduct, low attendance, or performance issues with an emphasis on promoting progress and ensuring that all employees are aware of the standards of performance and behaviour they are expected to attain (MarksandSpencer, 2019).

Marks and Spencer shared in their 2021 annual report that through the pandemic's many challenges, the M&S family has performed well, with colleagues responding quickly, courageously, and effectively to hardship and uncertainty. One of the plans of change for the people that M&S had was to develop a culture of simple communication that is data-driven and performance-oriented - the way the company evaluates, and rewards performance has changed with the goal of encouraging a more direct communication style and creating a more

performance-driven culture. M&S re-evaluated their compensation and benefits package to make it more current and matched with the proper behaviours and performance.

Among the things followed by the company during the pandemic was the adaptation to a strong and flexible environment and their response to the events. M&S successfully kept employees and their customers safe in the shops, made use of opportunities like the joint venture with Ocado to make online deliveries which was a first for M&S and brought revenue. Also improved their website capabilities, the M&S app, expanded online fulfilment, click & collect, and home delivery options to quickly respond to customers who wanted more flexibility, accessibility, and safety when shopping, used technology to work remotely where possible.

M&S has a very good internal business environment, such that the workers are happy and satisfied to work in the culture followed in the company. This helps to keep the workers well-motivated and engaged. The good business environment also enables M&S to receive contributions from the efforts of workers which can improve the quality of services and products. Moreover, the concerns of employees during the pandemic were assured by the organisation, that followed and promoted government guidance in the retail sector to ensure that stores and warehouses are safe to operate.

6. Recommendations for M&S with regards to organisational change to overcome future challenges

The values, beliefs, and the attitudes of people within M&S can be modified with the help of the incorporation of new policies to tackle the post-COVID situation. These policies will be designed so it can help to keep the employees safe and maintain the social distancing policies. To avoid breakouts and multiple self-isolations, M&S also needs to build better discipline in their stores and warehouses to follow instructions, such as around social distancing.

M&S can use new forms of technologies and innovative techniques like the use of Artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality in the online business. This will help to make the online business of the company running even in time of crisis. The use of AI will help to make the work of the employees easier and help the company work even in the absence of employees. Virtual reality will help to satisfy the customer's needs, as they can try out the clothes even while sitting in their homes. This will help to make the company improve sales and increase profitability. The new technologies can help to provide better opportunities for the employees

to learn something new and useful and keep them motivated at the same time increasing retention in workers.

The company can also make use of policies to improve the quality of work and the motivation level of the employees during the work from home sessions. The medical need can also help to keep the employees secure about their jobs and the health of their family members. In this way, the company will be able to achieve increase in attitudes of employees towards the business environment of the organisation.

Being better prepared to deal with a comparable crisis situation, such as a pandemic, by ensuring communication with stores agreed-upon reaction plans and actions, giving colleagues more time to plan and execute adjustments successfully.

Also should continue to work hard and maintaining their reputation as a responsible organisation that adheres to relevant environmental, human rights, animal welfare, and ethical standards and responsibilities.

7. Conclusion

This report helps to conclude that the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic have led to the disruption of businesses like M&S. However, the use of appropriate policies and strategies can help to improve the conditions and function of the business, with the incorporation of new technologies and better value systems. These new policies will then aid the organisation to take care of employees' health and wellbeing and their development which will lead to increased customer satisfaction and service and will benefit the overall success of the organisation. This will not be enough if the beliefs, attitudes, and values of employees will not be considered to adapt to changes and motivate employees to change their behaviour towards work and change.

Although M&S has showed incredible perseverance and capability in the face of the crisis faced, the explanation of various theories like Scientific Management Theory, Bureaucratic Management Theory and Contingency Planning has been suggested here, to give an understanding of the implications they will bring if they are considered into the strategies to improve the workplace changes and help overcome situations like Covid-19.

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