

DEVELOPING WORKPLACE CRITICAL THINKING.

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a critical analysis of the impact of beliefs, attitudes and values on workplace behaviours. This report will also identify a management theory that is relevant to my role. I will also evaluate the modern day relevance of this theory and critically assess how it impacts on my beliefs, values and attitude. To begin with, this report will analyse the difference between beliefs, values and attitudes within the workplace.

All individuals hold their own personal beliefs, values and attitudes and these are developed and shaped throughout their lives. All three of these are interlinked and this is because beliefs are a reflection of behaviour and values reflect an individual's behaviour. Values are known to underpin beliefs and beliefs fortify behaviour. Beliefs, values and attitudes are three factors that are constantly interacting with peers and colleagues within the workplace. A definition for each of these will be outlined below;

Beliefs

According to Bennett (2009), beliefs are the core of who we are and what we do, they are emotional and mental, and therefore they resonate in both the heart and the mind. Beliefs are all about having certainty on what something is or what it means. The MOB (2019) states that beliefs can come from different sources, such as personal experiences, what other people have thought them from different methods, such as education and via cultural or societal norms. Therefore beliefs are something that individuals deem to be true, regardless of whether it is irrational or not.

Values

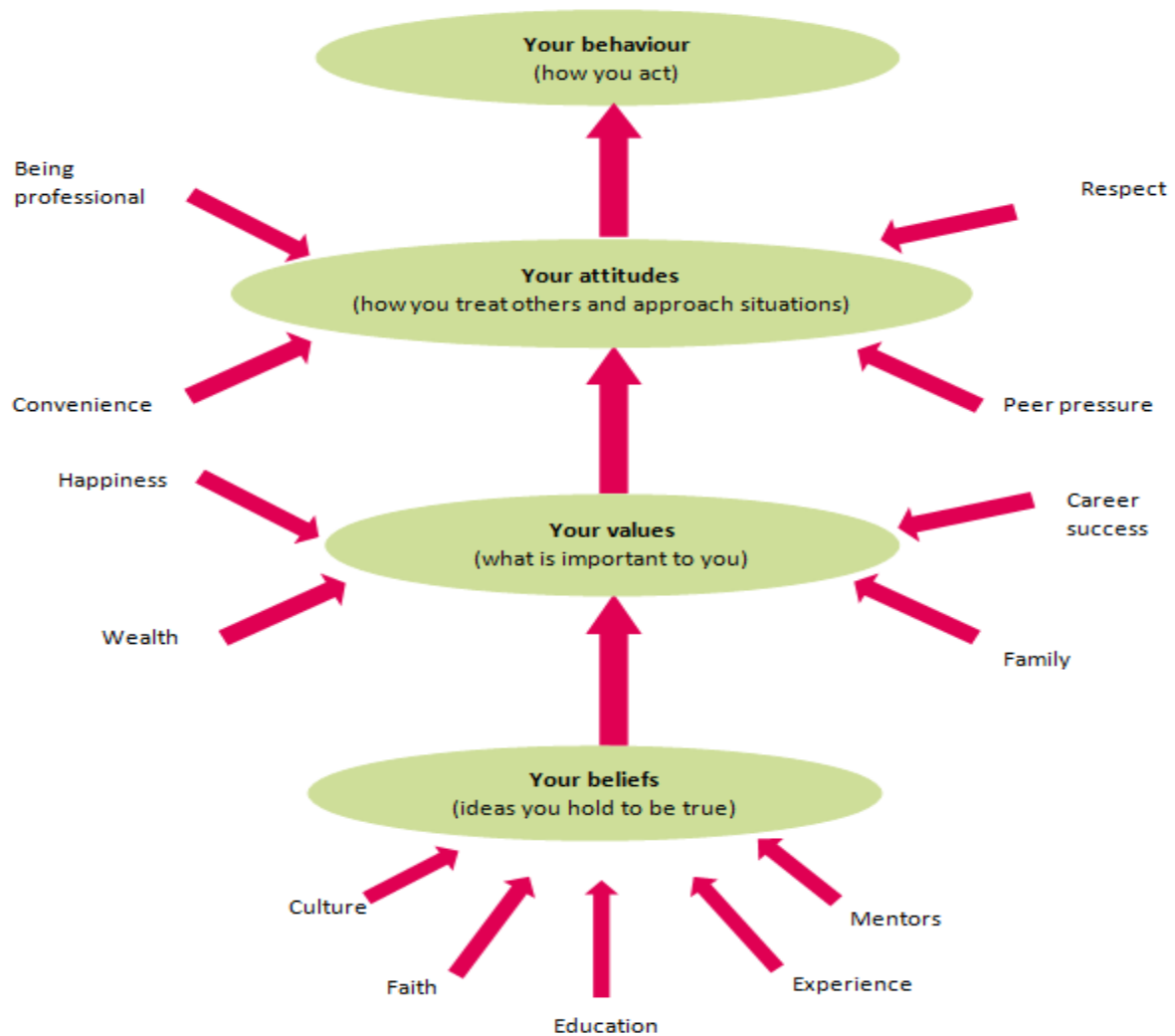
Mintz (2018) defines values as our fundamental beliefs that motivate or guide our actions and attitudes. Examples of this include; the type of person we wish to be the way in which we interact in the world and the way in which we decide to treat others as well as ourselves. According to Hofstede (2001), describes values as "desire" and they are held by collectives as well as individuals. Having values make individuals or groups distinctive. Values are based on principles and they are usually used as a guide to helping individuals make decisions. Core values define an individual's character and these determine an individual's behaviour. Individuals see values as holding high importance and high regard. Values have a high impact on judgements and opinions that one makes. Values can come from a variety of sources, including family, friends, work-settings, culture, religion, media, technology and significant life events. Some values may dominate others and this is because they may be shared by a wide group or community, for instance cultural values and these values reflect what is important to these groups. However it is important to remember that these values can vary

between different types of groups. It is essential that all individuals have a deep understanding of the values that they hold and this is because these values hold high importance in forming relationships. If an individual knows their values well, it can help them in a number of ways, for example they can assist individuals to resolve conflict as well as help them to work more effectively. Ethics are all about the actions that we take and the reasoning behind these; values also play a significant role in ethics as values underpin our ethics. Beliefs are convictions, therefore they are what the individual perceive to be true and this is usually not backed by any evidence or proof and these usually grow and develop overtime. Whereas values then stem from these beliefs and they are related to what we deem as important. Values and beliefs tend to change overtime and this could be down to numerous factors such as challenges that we come across or changes in circumstances. Nevertheless an individuals belief and values can also become stronger overtime, for example in instances where they overcome challenges that they have faced.

Attitudes

According to the MOB (2019), attitudes are the mental dispositions that people have towards their current situations and towards other individuals, prior to them making decisions which results in their behaviour. Attitudes are also the reasoning behind the way in which an individual's behaves and expresses themselves, via their actions or words. This is because attitudes have a strong influence on the way in which we behave. Attitudes can develop for a number of reasons, this includes surroundings at home, educational institutes, social circles or the workplace. Kusluvan (2001) states that attitudes consist of three components and these are; cognition, affect and conation or behavioural tendencies. Cognition is based on what an individual believes, feels or the knowledge they hold about a particular object. The affective component is all about the feelings that are stimulated by the object. The conative aspect is all about what the individual's inclinations, plans and intentions are towards the object, which leads them to behave in certain ways

The diagram below demonstrates the relationship between values and beliefs to an individual's attitudes and behaviours



Source: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (2019)

The Differences

I will now identify the difference between beliefs, attitudes and values within a workplace context. Beliefs are unproven or can be irrational as they are an inner feeling, and values stem from these beliefs, whereas attitudes arise from values and beliefs and they lead to the way an individual expresses themselves due to their beliefs and values. These internal systems result in how individuals behave and express. According to Kumar (2018), although there are distinctive constructs the semantics of all three of these overlap. Therefore from the definitions above, we can see that there are differences between beliefs, values and attitudes, even though they are interlinked and impact on each other.

It is essential that individuals understand their belief, values and attitudes and how these can impact on work as well as the working environment. Attitudes and behaviours within the workplace, not only affect the environment but they also impact on employees within the

organisation such as colleagues and peers. Positive attitudes, values and beliefs have a significant impact on productivity and morale. Whereas negative attitudes, values and beliefs can lead to poor quality of work, poor customer engagement and poor productivity levels. It is very important for individuals to have positive attitudes at work as this can help enhance motivation as well as help them maintain engagement within a task; Kumar (2018). Positive attitudes, beliefs and values can bring a number of positive impacts on the organisation. Having positive attitudes can lead to individuals wanting to learn new skills and increases their passion. Positive attitudes also help individuals to cope with stressful situations, whereas having a negative attitude within the workplace will create a negative aura and can create distrust amongst employees. According to Clark (2016) negative attitudes also causes employees to want to achieve success just for the expense of others. Clark (2016) also states that positive attitudes have an opposite effect and this is because positive attitudes can help inspire others to achieve their best as well as encourage them to contribute their opinions and ideas. In addition to this, positive attitudes can help improve teamwork and better client relationships. It is important to consider the impact attitudes can have on the organisation itself. If leaders have positive attitudes within the workplace then this can help reduce staff turnover and increase productivity levels.

Workplace values are also essential to the success of an organisation. This is because workplace values help set the tone for the organisations culture and it can help individuals to understand how to make important decisions. Some examples of workplace values include delivering quality, meeting deadlines, respecting policies, being responsible and accountable.

Part 2

Management in the workplace

Managers play an integral role in any organisation, regardless of the business sector or field. The role of the leader is to hold the vision of the company's future and facilitate in meeting organisational objectives. Leaders have a number of tasks they have to prioritise and organise in order to ensure the smooth running of the business. They also need to look after employee requirements and this is because employees are critical to an organisations success. Employees and leaders working collaboratively can help an organisation achieve competitive edge. Organisations are not able to depend on technology alone in order to lead them to success, but rather, it is the people behind the machines that drive them to success. It is crucial for organisations to employ managers whom are able to motivate employees as well as enhance productivity and performance.

Managers roles involve a number of tasks, these entail creating plans, strategies and policies that will help them to achieve organisational goals and objectives. They all need to be able to cope with constant changes happening within the market alongside aligning their plans to the organisations mission and visions. Furthermore they need to ensure that all employees, including themselves are complying with organisational policies and procedures.

There are a wide range of definitions for the term leadership, however a common theme occurs within these definitions. According to Chemers (2014), leadership is a process of social influence which facilitates an individual to support and aid other people in achieving tasks. Chemers (2014) stipulates that the process involves interpersonal factors, for instance thoughts and emotions, are interacting with interpersonal processes, such as impact and communication. These all have an impact on external situations which can create complexity.

It is evident how essential and pivotal managers are within an organisation. Other common responsibilities that leader hold are providing employees with instructions, delegating tasks and project planning. However leaders are not only involved in the physical side of operations they are also accountable for demonstrating exemplary characteristics, which include honesty, commitment to the organisation and integrity.

Management Theories

There are a number of management theories that have been developed by researchers and psychologists and they are all based on similar concepts. According to Elkins (2019), management theories were brought into practise due to the high demand and popularity of industrial revolution and mass production, as managers were required to control these operations. Management theories have been categorised into three main classifications; these are known as Classical Management Theory, Behavioural Management Theory and Modern Management Theory; Elkins (2019). These are then classified into further sub-theories.

One of the theories that will be focused on in this report is The Classical Management Theory. This theory is known to be one of the oldest theories known. This theory was developed by Henri Fayol (1841 - 1925) and FW Taylor (1856 - 1951); Cole (2001). Cole (2001) stipulates that this theory is concerned with the structure and activities of the organisation and according to this theory the factors that play the most integral part are the creation of a hierarchy which displays authority, the division of work and the span of control. According to this theory, these factors can determine an organisations efficiency and effectiveness which is why this theory is solely interested in high production and efficiency. The theory is based on unity of direction as employees within a group have one plan with the

same objective, who have a superior to command them. This theory is very similar to the authoritarian leadership

FW Taylor went on to develop the Scientific Management Theory and the aim of this was to discover and establish the most efficient way in performing any job. Taylor developed this theory on the basis that employees were most motivated by pay and money. Taylor developed the scientific management theory by analysing how work was performed and this affected worker productivity; Taylor (2016). Taylor based his theory on the view that work should be optimised as much as possible, rather than making people work as hard as possible. Taylor also emphasised that managers and employees must cooperate with each other and he stressed the importance of this. Furthermore, according to Taylor (2016), employees are motivated by money so he emphasised on the idea that employees who are more productive should be paid more. Taylor has also suggested that employers should seek to employees who are focused on working with high efficiency levels, where possible; Mind Tools (2019). In addition to this, Taylor (2016) suggested that the “rule of thumb” should be eliminated, as an alternative scientific methods should be utilised in order to understand what the best and most efficient method of working is. Moreover, employees should be assigned to jobs that they are most capable of and then trained to work as efficiently as possible, rather than assigning employees to any job; Mind Tools (2019). There are a wide range of benefits that are a result of this theory and these benefits include improved working methods which also enhances productivity. However employees have to understand that their managers are responsible for the rules, what work is undertaken and the method that is used to undertake it. Therefore employees need to be trained according to any new methods that are implemented by their managers. According to Enok (2006), this theory uses a rational approach which consists of high degree of accuracy.

The next theory that will be discussed is the Behavioural Management Theory, which was the formation of the two theories outlined above and this theory takes into account human interests within the workplace. The theory focuses on human behaviour at work and these factors that are analysed are conflict, motivation, group dynamics, improved productivity and expectations. Employees are viewed as individual resources rather than machines, as per the classical approach. This theory is known to increase productivity as employees are addressed individually and they are encouraged to perform as best as possible.

The Herzberg Theory

SIE (2017) indicated that a very popular theory within the workplace is called the Herzbergs theory. In addition to this it is otherwise known as the two factor theory. Herzbergs theory

According to Miner (2007) Frederick Herzberg developed this theory in order to distinguish between what factors help dissatisfy and satisfy employees. This theory is a behavioural type of theory as it focuses on employees as individuals rather than resources. Five factors were identified by Hertzberg that were defined in relation to job satisfaction and termed in other words as motivations. Miner (2017) stated that the five factors are made up of recognition, achievement, responsibility, advancement and lastly, the work itself. In addition to these 5 factors, he also identified five additional factors that are in relation to dissatisfaction. These factors are known as interpersonal relationships; administrative and the company policy; interpersonal relationships; working conditions; salary and supervision. Furthermore, as well as being termed the five factors of dissatisfaction, these were well known as the hygiene factors. If implemented in an appropriate manner, these factors have been said to diminish dissatisfaction as well as being able to provide, to a certain degree, improvement. In order to achieve high level of performance and positive feelings, these factors alone cannot be relied on. For this reason, motivator factors need to be taken into account for the company also. If for some unknown reason hygiene factors are not available, the theory also advises that this can help manifest dissatisfaction as their presence alone does not increase the motivational levels or satisfaction. In accordance to Gawwel (1997), the satisfiers, otherwise known as the motivators, are able to give definitive value to an individual's relationship with the tasks that they perform. It is of great importance for an organisation to be able to recognise the achievement and work done by the employees as Hertzberg theory stated that only motivators can provide motivation.

As great leaders are unquestionably able to create great businesses, it is thereby indisputable the impact and role leadership can have on a business operations. For this reason and many more, it is of great importance that an organisation takes into account the approach of leadership their managers are implementing and to take extra care to ensure it is adjusted to having organisational requirements. The theory can be used by managers to motivate their employees as it can help fulfil the basic needs of their employees by fulfilling their basic needs. This in turn will help improve the attitudes, beliefs and values of employees within the workplace as employees will gain an increased sense of achievement. If employees are happy with their job, the general morale and environment will improve within the workplace as well as the productivity levels. Furthermore, an advantage of this theory is that once the managers have fulfilled and satisfied the basic needs of the employees, they can then concentrate the more complex needs of the employees. However the theory does have some limitations, for instance the theory does not take into account the diverse job factors that can cause satisfaction or dissatisfaction. In addition to this, the theory fails to identify the significant differences that individuals have. This is

because different individuals have different needs, therefore they are motivated by different factors. This can lead to errors and misunderstandings. Therefore it is why it is important for managers to take into account the various job factors as well as the different needs of individuals.

Chosen Organisation: Virgin Group

The organisation that has been selected for this report is the Virgin Group. The Virgin Group is a global organisation founded by Sir Richard Branson and specialises in a number of sectors, including; travel, leisure, media, telecoms, entertainment, health and fitness; Virgin Group (2019). Richard Branson was as young as seventeen when he launched his first two business, one of which was a magazine and the other an advisory centre; Virgin Group (2019). The organisation now employs over 56,000 staff around the world and the business continues to grow. With the organisation being so large and the number of employees so significantly high, it is difficult to tailor one model of leadership to Virgin. The values of Virgin group have been outlined below:

“We are delightfully surprising, red hot, straight up whilst maintaining an insatiable curiosity, giving a heartfelt service and creating smart disruption.” (Virgin Group 2019)

Some of Virgins behaviours include; proud, passionate, supportive, creative, proud and adventurous; Virgin Group (2019).

According to Richard Branson, Virgin Group (2009), good leadership is about taking the business venture forward and discovering new avenues to help the business prosper and develop. Branson defines poor leadership as concerned about protecting the status quo and poor leaders more of a “static” approach. Bransons leadership is recognised on a global scale due to his attitude towards equality and inclusion as well as his approachable nature. He has fostered a creative and an open working environment in which he accepts ideas and opinion at all levels, His leadership style is beneficial for both his employees and the organisation which has made it the successful and efficacious brand it is today.

Relevance of theories to the Virgin Group

The scientific theory still holds relevance to the Virgin group and this is due to the fact that some of its applications are used within the organisation. These applications include, training and motivating employees by rewarding their performance by increasing pay scales. Virgin Group reward their high-performing employees with a bonus scheme; Lowe (2015). Not only does this bonus scheme help motivate employees but it also helps make employees aware of their performance. However, a bonus scheme may not motivate all members of staff and this is because all employees are individuals and are motivated in different ways. Therefore

it is important that all employees are treated as individuals and management makes the effort to get to know their employees. Employees performance within the group are measured by their productivity and financial in as well as their ability to be creative and innovative. The classical management approach does not hold as much relevance to the Virgin Group, and the reasoning behind this is because this approach is restrictive and does not take into consideration individual employee needs. Nevertheless Branson does use authority in his leadership, however his style is approachable and effective. The behavioural leadership style addresses individual needs and capabilities which demonstrates care for employees and this is an approach Branson likes to take within his organisation. Recognising the importance of employees is critical to the success of any business and this is a part of behavioural management styles as well as the aim of the Virgin Group.

Out of the three management approaches that have been identified above, I believe the behavioural theory holds the most relevance to the Virgin Group. This is because the behavioural theory takes into consideration individual talents and capabilities as well as empowers staff, which Branson encourages within the organisation. Branson encourages creativity and innovation which is very difficult through the classical management theory. The classical approach is more concerned with productivity and efficiency whereas the behavioural approach is more concerned with emotions and relationships. These emotions and relationships are then used to determine employee behaviour which is critical to motivating staff and enhancing productivity. One of the ways in which the behavioural theory is linked to the Virgin Group is through the extensive training opportunities that are available to staff. Providing training also demonstrates care for employees and facilitates them with their career development and aspirations. Although the objectives of both theories are the same, it is important to distinguish the significant styles of the approaches and how productivity is determined. In my point of view the Virgin Group have adapted the behavioural approach because the leaders and managers within the group concentrate on how they should personally manage their employees in order to stimulate and influence them to a maximum level.

The Virgin Group also makes use of the Herzberg model as Branson takes into account factors that can satisfy his employees. The hygiene factors are established within the Virgin Group and these are factors that help satisfy the needs of the employees.

Modern Management

The classical management theory and the scientific management theory are both still very relevant in today's modern world and some believe that these approaches are similar to the authoritarian style of leadership. Autocratic leaders prefer to make decisions based on their

own personal opinion and ideas, rather than consulting with others. Authoritarian like to take control of situations and this style of leadership is useful when managing employees who require minimal support or guidance. These theories are still relevant today because organisations need to ensure they can remain competitive within the market alongside making sure they are keeping down costs as low as possible. The theories is particularly useful when working in a labour and/or intensive industry.

Another type of theory that is stills relevant in today's modern world is the Management Behavioural theory. This theory gives more importance the interests of the employees within work. The reason the behavioural theory is relevant in today's modern world, as this theory can be used to understand human behaviour at work and how they can be motivated and how this can improve productivity. This theory focuses on how leaders should behave in order to enhance motivation and this will help ensure maximum productivity. Leaders are known to show care for their employees by taking an interest in the behaviours and also identifying their strengths and weaknesses. The behavioural model is known to be based on these factors and this is an effective and valuable model that can enable leaders to gain maximum productivity whilst ensuring they take into account their employee's needs.

Critical Findings & Conclusion

In my opinion, I believe it is important for leaders to understand the importance of their role and the impact that their beliefs, values and attitudes have on the working environment, the employees and the organisation itself. It is the manager's duty to create a safe working environment, motivate their staff, enhance their potential and inspire them to grow. Staff should also be encouraged to contribute their ideas and opinions. I also believe that there is no one style of leadership that can be used for all organisations. Therefore it is important that leader to take into consideration the environment that they are working in and use they theory and leadership style that is most relevant to the organisation.

To conclude, it has been clearly established that these theories hold significant relevance in todays modern world, however Modern management is based on the view that one size does not fit all. Therefore it is crucial that all organisations and individual leaders tailor the leadership style according to the situation. This is down to the uniqueness of each organisation as well as each situation. It is important for leaders to adapt their leadership styles according to the needs of the organisation and the needs of the employees within the organisation. One of the ways in which this can be done by applying the scientific approach so that leaders and managers can understand how to maximise productivity.

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