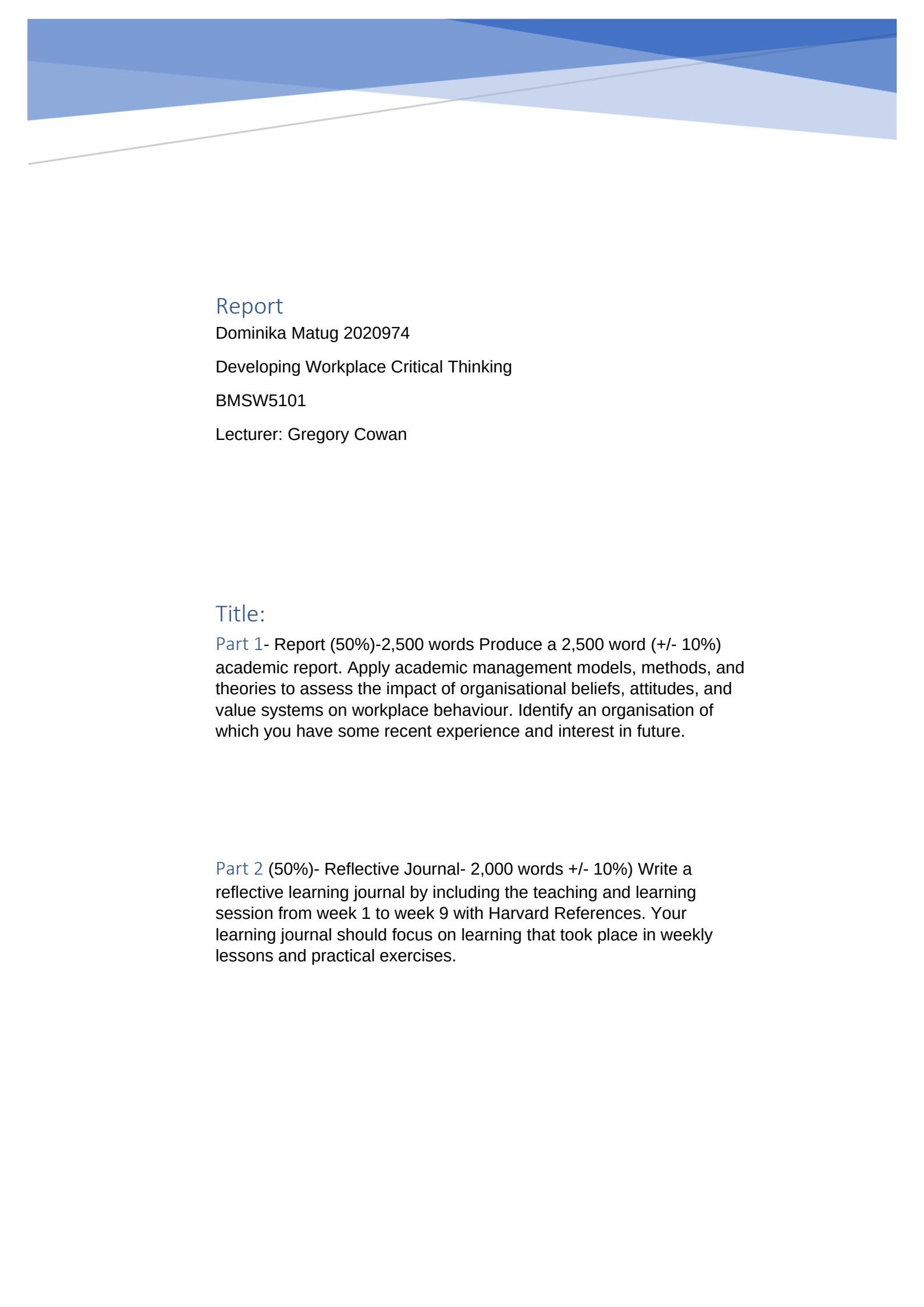




Report

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Developing Workplace Critical Thinking

BMSW5101

Lecturer: Gregory Cowan

Title:

Part 1- Report (50%)-2,500 words Produce a 2,500 word (+/- 10%) academic report. Apply academic management models, methods, and theories to assess the impact of organisational beliefs, attitudes, and value systems on workplace behaviour. Identify an organisation of which you have some recent experience and interest in future.

Part 2 (50%)- Reflective Journal- 2,000 words +/- 10%) Write a reflective learning journal by including the teaching and learning session from week 1 to week 9 with Harvard References. Your learning journal should focus on learning that took place in weekly lessons and practical exercises.

Contents

Introduction	2
Inditex	2
Inditex during pandemic	3
Beliefs, attitudes, and values within a workplace.....	3
Impact on workplace behaviour during this pandemic	4
Management theories:	4
Max Weber's Bureaucratic	4
Kurt Lewin's Human relation theory.....	5
Critical thinking model	5
De Bono's 6 Thinking Hats Method	5
Conclusion.....	9
Reflective Journal.....	10
Week 1	10
Week 2	10
Week 3	10
Week 4	11
Week 5	11
Week 6	13
Week 7	13
Week 8	14
Week 9	14
Conclusion.....	14
References	15

Introduction

Today, organizations function in a developing environment and changing economies, and their management in general - it comes down to setting the goals that the entity intends to achieve in the future, as well as taking actions aimed at their implementation using the available resources. I have decided to write about Inditex, a Spanish multinational clothing company as this giant "Textile Design Industry" is worth to examine. One of the aims of my report is to present a picture of the manufacturing company and the equipment it will present for it, and to present the problems of a clothing company that had to face during a Covid pandemic. The company's leading store is Zara which was founded by Amancio Ortega and Rosalía Mera in 1975 as a family business in downtown Galicia in the northern part of Spain. Its first store featured low-priced lookalike products of popular, higher-end clothing and fashion. Zara is the largest company in the Inditex group, the world's largest apparel retailer., but Inditex consists of several other stores such as Zara Home, Bershka, Massimo Dutti, Oysho, Pull&Bear, Stradivarius, and Lefties. In my report I will use knowledge gained in class, learned theories and critical thinking.

This report is a voice in the discussion on current solutions that optimize the management process in organizations. It includes selected - important and current, issues on the basis of theory and management practices, as well as postulates for changes to improve and support the discussed areas of management, i.e., strategic, operational, tactical, finances, human resources, crisis and other, at the level of economic and public units.

Inditex

The company began its activity in 1963. Industria de Diseño Textil, S.A. operates over 7,400 stores in 96 markets worldwide. In addition, Inditex sells its products to 202 countries in the e-commerce format. According to figures published on the Inditex website, 57 percent of the factories are located near the company's headquarters in Arteixo, Spain. This one is located next to the city of La Coruna, the 18th largest city in Spain. Despite its size, thanks to the company's operations in 2017, the province accounted for as much as 4 percent of the country's exports. The company is also the largest employer in the region. Continuous development and not resting on our laurels is the life philosophy of Amancio Ortega, which guides the company to this day.

The "Career Designers" program has been developed for those store employees who wish to acquire training and managerial skills. Through a series of trainings and monitoring of supporting processes, the program enables the professional development of employees with potential and creates opportunities for promotion for outstanding employees. It is also a great tool for motivating employees. Thanks to this, the Inditex group can be perceived as a good employer and a company in which to develop.

Inditex during pandemic

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused severe disruption to the economy and the activities of enterprises, whether they are able to continue activity. These disruptions have various kinds of effects on businesses, and many of them struggling with financial problems. The COVID-19 crisis has also revealed significant weaknesses points in business activities and supply chains related to working conditions and preparation for disaster situations. A responsible approach to doing business in response to the COVID-19 crisis will help ensure that issues are met environmental, social, and other governance issues set out in internationally recognized standards for responsible business conduct will be addressed crucial in the future

For Inditex, 2019 did not start too well, with 15% of sales, 28% stores closed. In the first week of March, 15 percent was closed. stores, and sales fell 4 percent. In the world, the concern already has over 6.8 thousand. shops.

The company said that in 2020 its sales finally dropped 28 percent. (25% taking into account local currencies) to EUR 20.4 billion. The company also said it considered the result a success as all its brick-and-mortar stores were temporarily closed because of pandemics. In turn, online sales calculated in local currencies increased by 77%. up to 6.6 billion euros. Within a year, Inditex managed to tighten its belt, according to the Financial Times. It cut operating costs by 17 percent and inventories by 9 percent, keeping the gross margin at 55.8 percent. It succeeded despite temporary store closings in the traditionally busiest fourth quarter of the year. Seller's online sales rose 77 percent in local currencies to 6.6 billion euros. In March 2020, concerns about the impact and the pandemic brought inventories to a value of € 287 million.

Beliefs, attitudes, and values within a workplace.

The workplace is an important factor in shaping social bonds. It seems that it is worth reflecting on the possibility of building and developing self-esteem at work and through work, potential, sense of agency and belief in the possibility of changing the environment, establishing, and maintaining relationships with others, finding the meaning of work in the fact that others need it. This is related to the perception of work as an area of human fulfilment in relation to reality and the acquisition of experiences that contribute to his development. Commitment to work is an attitude that is displayed in place work results in obtaining benefits for both the employee and the employer.

Inditex believes in the strength of people. Everyone is unique and everyone can learn and communicate. They grow together. They work closely together. There are no differences between the managers and the rest of the team. They want everyone to share their ideas, so they think they are going in the right direction. In order to learn, develop and adapt to the situation every day, one must remember about modesty. It is the basis of the work. Employees also need to do their job well. Interpersonal relationships at work include all the relationships that occur between Inditex employees at various levels, including behaviour, standards of conduct, the way of relating to others determined by mutual business relationships, performing joint tasks, and caring for the well-being of the company and the people working in it. They can be formal, related with the organization of work, or informal ties, e.g., friendship.

Employees' involvement in the life of the organization should be directed not only at their participation in the management of the company, but above all at the possibility of developing their potential, strengthening participation in shaping the working conditions and functioning of the organization. Culture is created primarily by the leaders of the organization, their behaviour, and expectations towards employees. It is also shaped by important situations and critical events, which form the basis for drawing conclusions.

Impact on workplace behaviour during this pandemic

Because of restrictions, lockdowns, and people's fear of getting Covid once they are out, first; sales in-stores dropped then stores were closed, and second; shopping online became very popular, as during a pandemic, that was the only way for shopping. A lot of employees lost their job, some could work remotely. Working remotely from home could create work-life balance problems, especially if employees had caring responsibilities, e.g., due to school closures. I think, the isolation from the workplace and all the colleagues, staying at home and working remotely was given a huge impact on employee's confidence. For example, in Inditex, working together, sharing ideas, concepts and project was essential for creating and working on new lines of clothes. I believe, doing so through the camera and mails was not quite efficient for them. If it comes to teamwork, I think nothing compares to face-to-face conversations, planning, creating, and enjoying working together in person, not online.

In addition to affecting employees, the COVID-19 crisis was creating many new and unforeseen problems for business. Continuous flow of goods and employees was a potential vector of pollution and could also lead to increased environmental impact. On the other hand, there has been a significant shift in the concentration of CO2 emissions between sectors and regions due to the dramatic closure of supply chains or industries.

For Inditex it meant that materials deliveries were facing minor delays or suspensions. Before pandemic, using the computerized system, the company has reduced its design to distribution process to just 10 to 15 days, especially for Zara stores. Because of shortages in material deliveries, this process extended.

Management theories:

Max Weber's Bureaucratic

WEBER - the "bureaucratic model of organization" - believed that bureaucracy was a model of organizational structure, that the bureaucratic form of organization was logical, rational, and efficient.

According to Weber, an ideal bureaucracy has 5 basic features:

- The organization should be clearly divided, and each position should be taken by an expert.
- The organization should establish a coherent set of rules to ensure the uniform performance of tasks.

- The organization should prioritize positions by creating a line of command from the top to the bottom of the organization.
- Managers should conduct the business in an impersonal manner and maintain an appropriate distance with subordinates.
- Hiring and promotion within an organization should be based on technical expertise and workers should be protected against arbitrary dismissal.

The best examples of bureaucracy today are, for example, government agencies or universities.

Kurt Lewin's Human relation theory

The basic model of research in action by Lewin assumes the following phases.

After researchers identify a problem in the organization, in consultation with its representatives, the stage of collecting data using established techniques (interviews, surveys, observations, etc.) begins. After collecting the data, they are consulted and analysed with the representatives of the organization:

- The basic model of research in action by Kurt Lewin
- Collecting and analysing facts about the identified problem
- Planning ways to solve the problem
- The action of implementing the change
- Observation and analysis of the effects of introducing a change
- Reflect on the effectiveness of solving the problem and re-act

In this way, a common position is developed in terms of solving the problem and possible change. The mere consultation of the problem with the members of the organization may already result in the form of change, but the researchers can design (in consultation with the members of the organization) the change and implement it together.

Critical thinking model

De Bono's 6 Thinking Hats Method

The Six Thinking Hats method was developed by Edward De Bono, who is a leading authority on direct teaching of thinking as a skill. De Bono proved that the effectiveness of thinking can be improved and can be improved through practice. Each hat is named after one colour. I think they have been colour coded because the colours are easy to remember and related to their function.



White hat - facts and figures

The white hat is neutral, therefore presents facts and figures.

WHITE HAT THINKING

- >> Imagine a computer that gives you facts and figures, for which he is asked. The computer is neutral and objective.
- >> No interpretation or opinion.
- >> The person responsible for information should issue on the questions to get the full or missing ones information.
- >> First Class Facts - Proven and Proven.
- >> Second class facts - considered states, but not fully participants.



Red hat – emotions and feelings

A red hat is associated with anger and emotions and is opposite to white hat.

Thinking in a red hat is all about portraying your emotions and allowing you to say how you feel without making excuses or making excuses. The purpose of revealing emotions is to name them to find out about them. Hidden emotions can influence the process of thinking what is not the desired state. Under the red hat, you can recognize the emotions that exist.

RED HAT THINKING

- >> Wearing the red hat allows the thinker to say:
"That's what I think about it."
- >> Legitimizes emotions and feelings as an important part of thinking.
- >> Emotions that are part of the value system that takes the route on the map.

- >> No attempts to justify the feelings.
- >> Ordinary emotions: From strong emotions such as fear and resentment down to subtle emotions such as suspicion.
- >> Complex judgments: intuition, sense, taste, etc.

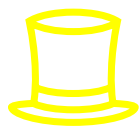


Black hat – what is wrong

The black hat represents negative aspects. It focuses on obstacles and why something is a bad idea or shouldn't be done

BLACK HAT THINKING

- >> Associated with a negative evaluation.
- >> Indicates what is wrong.
- >> Indicates why something will not work.
- >> Indicates risks and dangers.
- >> Indicates errors in the project.
- >> Can judge ideas from the past.
- >> Can point out errors in the thinking process and the method itself.
- >> Should not be used to hide negative feelings, because that is the job of the red hat.



Yellow hat – speculative - positive

The yellow hat should include positive evaluations, and for new ideas, the yellow hat should always be used before the black hat.

YELLOW HAT THINKING

- >> Associated with a positive assessment.
- >> It has a positive spectrum which ranges from logical and practical on the one hand for vision and hope on the other.
- >> Investigates and seeks value and benefits, and encourages you to find logical support for them.

>> Constructive and generative, provides concrete suggestions and suggestions.

>> I do operations and "do these things".

>> Effectiveness and goal are constructive thinking in yellow hat.

>> The yellow hat is not for the usual positive euphoria (red hat) or directly with generating new ideas (Green hat).



Green Hat - creative and lateral thinking

The green hat is associated with growth, vegetation and fertility, and points to creativity and new ideas.

GREEN HAT THINKING

>> Creative thinking above all.

>> The search for alternatives is a fundamental aspect thinking green hat.

>> Need to go beyond what is known and satisfactory.

>> The thinker tries to go further from the idea to reach a new idea.

>> Provocation - to go beyond the usual thinking patterns.



Blue hat - control of the thinking process

The blue hat is associated with coolness and represents the control of the organization in the process of thinking and using other hats.

THINKING A BLUE HAT

>> "Control" - organizes the thinking itself.

>> Specifies the subject to which thinking is to be directed.

>> Defines problems and shapes questions.

>> Responsible for summaries, hearings and conclusions.

>> Monitors the thinking process and ensures that the rules of the game are adhered to.

>> Freezes arguments and enforces discipline.

>> Even if the role is assigned to one person, that person is still there open to anyone who can offer comments and suggestions for a blue hat.

(E. Bono, 2016)

Conclusion

In times of increasing competition, companies must answer many issues related to the organization of their business. It is not clear what the best solutions are. It all depends on the goals set by specific companies. The topic of opportunities and challenges facing the clothing industry is very wide, especially after the Covid pandemic. I think that critical thinking is an important part in managing a business. Primarily because of the development of clear and effective thinking, based on rational argumentation. Critical thinking models and management theories can be good support tools for company managers. Inditex, thanks to its organization and employees' efforts, has a bright future ahead of even after such a devastating time of the pandemic, which, hopefully, is already behind.

Reflective Journal

Over the last century, the world has sped up tremendously, new discoveries are made every day, and the amount of readily available information that is worth reading is growing rapidly. As a result, there is not enough time to explore at least some selected topics. In this journal I will reflect in the context of my education in module Developing Workplace Critical Thinking in University of Wales Trinity Saint David over the past 10 weeks.

Week 1

The aim of first lecture was to discuss workplace and change, management theories and logic (reasoning) (Moodle)

I think, management should always characterize effectiveness and efficiency in the long term. It should be systemic, flexible, and open to the changing environment and adapt to it, and where possible, shaped to achieve the goals of the organization. For the organization, the most important are customers, who are the main driving force of the organization. Therefore, management should be focused on them and be efficient, i.e., effectively lead to the achievement of the intended goal, and at the same time beneficial, i.e., within a specific period, the obtained results should be greater than the costs incurred.

We also had some class activities in groups of five, there was separate meetings in Teams for particular groups. Although, it was hard to communicate as some participant was not really for joining. I am quite shy person so for me online learning is quite ok. But when it comes to communicate with colleagues through the internet, it can be problematic.

Week 2

The aim of second week was to talk about critical thinking, beliefs, values.

For me, critical thinking is information analysis. Considering all aspects of a given problem and evaluate it objectively. The problem of our busy present.

“A belief is an internal feeling that something is true, even though that belief may be unproven or irrational. e.g., I believe that walking under a ladder brings bad luck, or I believe that there is life after death”. (Anderson & De Silva, 2009). I agree with this definition as belief is a state of mind when we believe that something is true even if we are not completely sure about it or we cannot prove it.

Values can be different to each one of us. It is to define importance a person attaches to something.

Week 3

The aim of third week was to focus on critical thinking.

For me, Critical thinking was mostly often associated with a reaction to a read a book or a watched movie. Critical thinking is something that a tool called logic helps us to do.

Critical thinking allows us to let go of superstition and learn, instead of wandering in the fog. And I do not mean learning as a thoughtless absorption of information, but also its processing and use. It is thanks to critical thinking that we have a real chance that we will not fall for clever advertising. It also allows us to solve a difficult problem by rejecting, for example, a depressive breakdown due to a hopeless situation.

Thinking critically, i.e., analysing, we try to find out which party is the most effective, which scandal is a real problem, and which is only artificially inflated, whether the insurer is honest, or is trying to ruthlessly use us. Thinking critically, we come to the truth we are looking for, because to what else? And why "only truths"? This is really a lot. The rest is a matter of using that truth with certain skills.

Week 4

The aim of forth week was to discuss problem solving and decision making, how creative and critical thinking can help in business.

Stages in problem solving and decision making:

- ❖ Recognition of a problem
- ❖ Identify alternatives
- ❖ Evaluates alternatives
- ❖ Make decision

When it comes to problem solving and decision making, I think the best way is to consider multiple solutions first, and then try to choose the best suitable solution.

What can bring creative and critical thinking in business:

- ❖ comprehensive problem solving,
- ❖ team management skills,
- ❖ the ability to work with people and support them emotionally,
- ❖ ability to make decisions
- ❖ emotional intelligence,
- ❖ strategic, logical, and critical thinking.

Week 5

- Conceptual tools to enhance critical thinking: 6 Bono thinking hats
- Bureaucratic Management by Max Weber

I have never heard before about 6 Bono thinking hats. That lecture was really inspiring because I found 6 Bono thinking hats method very clear and possibly can be very useful for me in the future. Each stage is clearly described and are identified with coloured symbols which is also very helpful. It's a real pity you can't go to the store and buy yourself such a thought hat. De Bono proved that the effectiveness of thinking can be improved and can be improved through practice. The main purpose of the six thinking hats method is to separate

emotions, information, logic, expectations, hope, ideas, creativity, etc. The challenge is to separate them from each other and to think about one of them at a time.

Each hat defines the thinking of a specific aspect of the case. It allows people to change their usual mindset to make them think differently about an issue.

Six thinking hats

What are my powers when wearing each hat?



Asking questions:
- What do we know?
- What do we need to know?
- How do we get this information?



Expressing emotion:
- What are my gut feelings?



Judging:
- What are the difficulties
& weaknesses?



Being optimistic:
- What are the strengths
& opportunities?



Being creative:
- New ideas?
- New opportunities?
- How can it be improved?



Thinking about thinking:
- What's been learned?
- What's next?

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Bureaucratic Management by Max Weber

Weber's theory of bureaucracy relies on the impersonal the administration system based on universal, universally binding legal norms. Moreover, according to M. Weber, the bureaucratic model of organization assumed that administration was subject to legal regulations.

Typical elements of a Bureaucracy

- Rigorous division of labour
- Authority limited to clearly defined scope
- Knowledge & competence - appointment - functional authority
- Hierarchy
- Defined processes
- Emphasize on documentation/written communication (Lecture 5, Moodle)

Week 6

Aims: discussions about decision making, Contingency Management Theory.

Decision-making is the most important element of human and material resource management processes in a modern company, allowing the achievement of organizational goals. It is worth emphasizing that despite the use of objectivized tools to optimize the processes of searching, selecting, and implementing a solution, it is ultimately the decision-maker who takes responsibility for the decisions made. Managerial choices and decisions often determine the successes and failures of companies, and the power to make decisions inevitably involves responsibility for their effects, which will concern not only the fate of companies, but also individual people who work in these organizations, cooperate with them, or experience the effects their actions.

Sometimes, due to the nature of the problem and the way in which management functions are carried out, certain phases of the process may be simplified, others - more elaborate. While the basic criteria used in making decisions may differ from one organization to another, the decision-making processes and sets of conditions in which decision-makers make choices are always similar.

Contingency Management Theory

The contingency theory examines miscellaneous factors that accord to a leader's efficacy by relatedness with his leadership actions. Conforming to contingency theory, there is not any specific leadership way matching all circumstances.

I understood that the theory concludes that the level of favourable attitude towards the leader depends on the degree to which the situation allows the leader's influence on the behaviour of group members. This angle of the theory defines successful leadership as the capability to impact others to achieve organizational goals.

Week 7

Aim: Critical Thinking Summarized

We had an in-class activity to discuss, making use of Critical Thinking, which came first the bird or the egg? I think this question is one of the best and simplest ones to ask when it comes to Critical Thinking. We had brainstorming and some interesting answers. At first it seems obvious that the hen had to be the first. Eventually the hen lays an egg. But then you quickly realize that the hen must have come from somewhere, and since chickens come from eggs, the egg must come first. Even if the reverse is not true, consider that it may lead you to find a solution.

A critical thinking person rigorously challenges ideas and assumptions, rather than accepting them at first glance. They will always try to determine if the ideas, arguments, and findings represent the whole picture, and will be open to stating that they are not.

Critical thinking is a tool to implement when I need to make important decisions or solve difficult problems, but I don't need to think critically about everything. Even in important

matters, I experience errors of reasoning. What matters is that I can recognize these shortcomings and try to avoid them in the future.

Week 8

Managing Innovation & Creativity Changing Work / Business Environment

The development of technology creates new expectations and human needs, which forces enterprises to react quickly to the growing requirements of customers and adjust their offer to their needs. This is possible thanks to innovation. Creating and introducing innovations is a necessary condition for achieving a competitive advantage and is the basis for the development of enterprises. Generating and implementing new ideas is closely related to creativity.

Creativity, as the most important feature of human capital, influences the implementation of innovations and is the basis of the innovation process. It can be defined as creating useful and valuable products, services, ideas, procedures, or ideas by cooperating units.

Innovations, the ability to create and use them, are nowadays considered one of the important factors in building a competitive advantage of enterprises. Thanks to the implementation of innovations, it is possible to satisfy the existing ones or shape them new customer needs.

Week 9

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is not a process in itself. It must be embedded in the realities of the business it concerns; therefore, it must bring specific benefits. Among them, it is worth mentioning:

- improving the company's image in the eyes of clients and job candidates,
- optimizing processes and introducing significant innovations that
- they allow us to provide better products or services,
- strengthening the sense of mission among employees, reducing stress related to threats resulting from environmental changes,
- improvement of the planet's ecosystem, better living conditions for everyone.

Conclusion

What can I do next with my knowledge? Above all, use it! I will analyse and ask questions whenever I can. I will use my ability to think critically, and the more I use it, the faster I will learn it and the more skill I will get. Nowadays, it will be much more useful than before, seeing a lot of fake news, unverified information or opinions expressed as facts.

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