



**DEVELOPING WORKPLACE CRITICAL
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ABSTRACT

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their state of mind.”-William James

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to discriminate and analyse the difference between beliefs, attitudes and values and critically assess what is their impact on workplace behaviour. Additionally, apply an appropriate management theory to evaluate how someone with different beliefs, attitude and values interpret the theory differently. "Values are desired ways of behaving or desired end-states. "

The impact of covid-19 and lockdowns on Next plc fashion retail due to adapting to workplace changes for the post covid mindset and how the company deal with challenges the face now, also how will they create more resilient business in the future.

There are various management theories and critical thinking models that helps organisations not only make better decisions but also understand how and why their employees behave certain ways, how can they motivate them, how to increase companies' efficiency. Most managers use several management theories depending on the workplace, purpose and workforce.

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of critical thinking in an organisation is a valuable skill that helps organisations identify their problems and find possible solutions as well as resolving conflicts in the workplace. This soft skill is the basis for innovation and problem solving because critical thinkers gather more information, analyse them then come to a logical conclusion especially important at times of uncertainty due to Coronavirus epidemic.

The world suffered losses in terms of global economy and health which forced organisations to change the way people were working and prioritize employee's wellness and mental health because poor workers health and their wellbeing affect business continuity. Without a doubt the importance of critical thinking to tackle the challenges organisations face is more than important to create more resilient business in the future. For instance, critically assessing the suitable management theories to provide the best stable frameworks for business efficiency, innovation and employees behaviour.

Certainly, how people behave at work can have a major impact on the whole organisational culture and company consequences. Therefore, it is important to take steps and ensure all employees know what behaviour is acceptable to prevent improper behaviour. Most organisations outline their expectations in their handbooks, but the management and application of those standards can be sometimes challenging. However, every situation needs different approach which can sometimes lead to misunderstandings. The key for any employee is to focus on their own behaviour then to others.

Work values can strongly affect work attitudes therefore employees job satisfaction and organisational commitment. It is up to managers to monitor employee's behaviour and focus on the future outcome. Specifically finding the right management theory that will work perfectly with organisations goals.

Recommendations of buy now pay later for Next Plc that shoppers could enjoy purchasing brand items on affordable instalments.

NEXT PLC, COVID-19 AND LOCKDOWN

NEXT Plc was founded by Joseph Hepworth in 1864 as a tailoring business and now it is the largest British International fashion retailer offering beautifully designed, excellent quality clothing, footwear, accessories and furnishing which has around five hundred stores in the United Kingdom and its head office based in Enderby, Leicester. The company expanded its beauty business and launched its own brand of skincare called WOA. The business distribute stock from the storage warehouse to the stores every single week and operates three main distribution channels: Next Retail, Next Directory, Next International.

The company follows hierarchical structure due to its size and use task-based culture which supports motivational and personal growth of the workforce, which means that employees are provided flexibility in order to manage their work and accomplish set goals of organisation. They also follow centralised decision making with autocratic leadership style that helps the managers to centralise the power of decision making which must be strictly followed by employees. Next plc commitment is to offer excellent quality, well made, functional and safe. In addition to that provide outstanding value to meet customers expectations.

Due to coronavirus and lockdown situations, Next plc fashion retailer full price sales were predicted to recover from the third quarter of 2020 as their sales and supply chain operations turned out to be of major disruptions. The value of cancelled orders was 450 million British pounds-(Smith, 2021)

On Thursday 26th of March Next stated short-term closure of online business along with warehousing and distribution operations in order to adapt for next operations to work safely in coronavirus world. This adjustment enabled the organisation completely to reorganise the way they used to work before pandemic and implemented extensive additional safety measures also consulted with colleagues the decision on reopening online operation during lockdown in limited way.

As noted above managers agreed the selection process on who could return to work. For example, they only asked individuals who wished to return to work but did not ask or allowed to return employees who had symptoms of coronavirus and those who were required to isolate because those employees were classified by the government as vulnerable due to their health conditions.

ONLINE SHOPPING

When the company reopened, they certainly expected the shift in the consumer behaviour towards online sales. In order to continue for some time their one of the main priorities during the lockdown has been to continue the development of their online platform.

However, hybrid shopping become a new trend that basically involves purchasing online and collect products in store. Many people find this shopping preferable as they can collect items immediately.

LIMITED VOLUMES AND DELIVERY OPTIONS

Despite most of stores being closed in 20/21 and total sales decreased, Next plc cash resources have been managed carefully with several actions taken to protect their cash during the year. They have limited the number of customer orders that could be taken each day to ensure the safety. Customer orders were delivered to the entrance of their homes.

NEXT PLC STAFF

As a result of the crisis, they made their warehouse and delivery operations safer for the employees and worked on introducing them the extra safety measures to ensure the staff who want to come to work are safe and how to work safely and feel safe.

BELIEFS, ATTITUDES AND VALUE

BELIEFS

People can believe in something different and believe in the same idea. Beliefs drives behaviour and is influenced the most by people's feelings. Beliefs matters regarding people's profession because what they believe about their work is the way they will approach it. For instance, if the person is doing a work, he is not happy about and doing it to just get paid, then the person will do as little as it is required to do. Work can help human being to grow as it is one of the ways where people can gain new skills such as working with other people in a team.

VALUES

Work values and attitudes capture the range of beliefs and feelings that make up the experience of work. The way people think and feel about their jobs and organisation affects their behaviour at work. Values together with beliefs both are important concepts that are connected since they both at the same time affect people's attitudes.

However, there is a difference between values and beliefs even they seem to be quite similar, but values are principles, standards of behaviour while beliefs are convictions that people usually accept to be true. For example, some people might think that having a sense

of success through their work is a major priority in their career or having a healthy work-life balance while some companies see the value in teamwork and communication.

Increase in salary and promotions are also more common to ones who value their work because it is easier for them to stay motivated thus, they perform better when they get the meaning in what they do. Therefore, to attract and keep top talents, companies should build greater meaning into the workplace because people want to find the meaning in their work.

ATTITUDES

An attitude is based on many factors along with beliefs and feelings of an individual towards anything. Attitude is human personality that falls under two categories, positive and negative. This two categories impact human interactions with others. For example, if an employee work on task that involves collaboration with others, the attitude determines the success or failure of the group.

CONCLUSION

Organisational values can be described as behavioural guidance which show what the company stands for and beliefs in. Values helps to guide humans' behaviour and attitudes are the response, thus the result of our values. Values drive people's actions, and they motivate people's goals, and those goals help individuals establish their priorities in life, guide their decisions making and affect their evaluation of their success. ("B100 TMA01.docx - Introduction to business management B100 ...") In an organisation, the behaviour plays an important role in the success so in order to obtain maximum level of output from employees is to use an appropriate method for managing the workforce.

Sustainable ethical fashion development approach towards sourcing and designing clothes maximises the benefits of fashion industry and society while at the same time minimizing its impact on the environment.

NEXT PLC ORGANSATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

Most retail businesses shifted from physical environment to online so did NEXT. Shopping online became the standard. Warehouse and delivery options were made safer as the pandemic has changed the needs and requirements of workers and workplaces, health and wellbeing. The company believe that engaged employees are essential in achieving their aims and they understand that helping to support their health and wellbeing is their priority. Next created a website to support the access to mental health and wellbeing information for their employees and created a workplace where everyone is treated with respect.

While Next plc have adapted to changing circumstances they still need to develop and review their strategies to improve their resilience to future shocks. To build and maintain

resilience it is necessary to learn from the past year and be prepared to respond quickly and effectively to be able to adopt new business models as the future is still uncertain.

One of the original definitions of resilience through strategy was proposed by Holling (1973) and summarized by Angeler and Allen (2016) as “the amount of disturbance that a system can withstand before it shifts into alternative stable state.” (“Frontiers | Propositions for a Resilient, Post-COVID-19 ...”)

Currently the organisation moved in the direction of recovery approach and is earning money out of its website by selling their products.

McKinsay Global Institute estimated that fourteen percent of the global workforce would have to switch professions or acquire new skills by 2030 because of automation and artificial intelligence. (“COVID-19 and reskilling the workforce | McKinsey”)

MANAGEMENT THEORY

Although there is no best way to organise a company or to make decisions, there is always importance to find the right management method that will work perfectly with the organisation goals since pandemic crisis affected the retail inventory, supply chain and significant drop in sales. Innovation is critical characteristics that describes these days business success. All organisations are taking flexible working, e-commerce, digitalisation and employee wellbeing as top priorities.

The selection of management theories Next plc will be Contingency theory because it provides a realistic view of management, managers are situation oriented and building on innovation and secondly Just-In-Time inventory management to cope with the changes.

CONTINGENCY THEORY

In general, this theory highlights those decisions are based on the present situations which means an action is taken by the manager depending on the situation. In the workplace there are various factors that can affect effectiveness. Both internal and external factors affect how businesses approach this management theory.

Managers can use many different tools to better understand employee effectiveness. The contingency theory focuses on management’s approach between staffs and situations. An example is when a manager is encountering a situation where an employee is often late for work and there might be only one option to give the employee notice, but the manager might decide to find out why the employee is often late and make different decision.

Workplace management changes can be disturbing, and peoples’ attitudes might change, depending on the difficult situation they face. Due to covid-19 crisis, economic and everyday work stress caused to many individuals a range of mental health responses like anxiety and

people believed that others are a treat. Some people were against Covid vaccine and lost their job. The wellbeing of employees has never been so urgently in need of attention. ("Reshape the Workplace: Five Post-COVID Behaviours and Attitudes") How organisations adapted to this new mentality and created a comfortable, supportive environment? Answer is the flexible working arrangements which is a necessity that suits an employee need.

(Next Plc Pestle Analysis 2022)

Political	Economical
• Impact of Brexit • Government support during Covid-19 pandemic	• Impact of the pandemic on retail customer spending power
Social	Technological
• Internet empowering • Promotion of diversity • Community support	• Digital marketing for overseas business • Digital asset management system
Legal	Environmental
• Regulatory compliance in consumer credit business	• Reduction in carbon emissions • Responsible water management

JUST-IN TIME

Just in Time dominate global chain operations. Companies are now trying to be less risk tolerant, and retailers are dealing with out of stock. Just in Time is used widely across industry. Pandemic will modify JIT supply. (Ashcroft 2022)

JIT requires organisation to work closely with suppliers because the process involves ordering and receiving product only as needed and provides many benefits like lower inventory costs, increased efficiency and decreased waste. The goal is to increase company's return on investment. Pandemic issues such as product shortages are likely to continue for some time. According to Frank Pish analysis, JIT supply chain management practises are economically important because companies can invest less in addition maintain cash flow.

Retail organisations participate in an environment where business plans change so it is the method by which all merchandise supply activities are being managed from the supplier to the distribution centre or directly to the stores in a timely manner and in the quantity required for the sales.

CRITICAL THINKING MODEL

R.E.D model is about recognising assumptions in other words beliefs, whether the information is true and supported with evidence then it means that it is a fact and not just opinion.

During pandemic consumer behaviour changed especially in their shopping habit. They all prefer shopping more online then ever before. “Covid crisis online shopping at Next rises to sixty percent in sales “– (Wood and Jolly, 2021) Despite the fact that Next plc has around five hundred shops and all had been closed during lockdown, the organisation is moving now towards direction of recovery. Next mostly benefited from having more people purchasing their outfits as many people returned to offices and socialising.

Next reopened their physical stores but many people become conscious of their shopping behaviour, they are anxious visit physical stores or touching public surfaces. Pandemic forced people to reconsider their spending habits as a result of worrying about their incomes. This is the new post-pandemic mindset that needs to be adapted because shopping experience in physical stores will be different then it was before.

How can retailers continue with the latest trends? Consumers habit changed and their attitudes also. Due to online presence, they can purchase anything they want but hybrid retail shopping experience is more convenient option for customer's because they can choose how they want to shop.

How to understand what customer wants and what brands they are prioritizing?

The system that allows retailers collect data through people's mobile connection. For example, loyalty schemes can be linked with information on what customers are buying together with collecting hard data and create customer profile to get to know what they want. Retail store then send their customers offers with their favoured products.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consumers want touchless experience; they prefer trusted brands and value for money.

Organisation must invest in digital methods and security. Many customers prefer buying on instalment. To make customers experience

Next plc should take the steps to offer their customers more options with online and in store instalment payments to allow them to choose whatever payment plan is convenient. Many customers use Klarna- buy now pay later that provides three monthly payment solution.

However, there are more flexible options like Laybuy interest free six weekly payments or Clearpay payment method where customers choose to pay in four interest free instalments over six weeks instead of paying the full price for things they cannot afford.

CONCLUSION

Organisational behaviour is knowledge or understanding about how people act and react in order to achieve organisation goals and accomplish the highest quality of performance. To become innovative is important to engage employees in organisational tasks and decision making, prioritize employee wellbeing.

Historically, many approaches of management were autocratic and dictatorial in nature.

Things began to change in 19th century. (Ward, 2021)

Management theories attempt to provide one or more ways to solve problems of management. In practice, most organisations employ variety of strategies that match the efficiencies of each style with the recruiting and retention needs of their market.

The approaches of the management such as contingency theory and just in time inventory help the company to improve the production and products quality.

Pearson has developed the RED model as a way to view and apply critical thinking principles when faced with decisions.

Organisational behaviour, management theories and critical thinking means business. Work settings are changing, employees are changing roles, everything is changing therefore good decisions require focusing on critical thinking skills to make the best decisions.

PART 2 REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

INTRODUCTION

This reflective journal will outline my learning experience through weekly online lectures which were very interesting, and I really enjoyed them. Critical thinking skill module is quite difficult, but it gave me the tools of thinking to use and practise my critical thinking skills. Critical thinking is not easy but can be learned.

WEEK 1

The first day everyone introduced to a class and the business report assignment description of critical thinking was explained to us. Then we have been asked to have a look at book (Cottrell 2017) Critical Thinking on page 13 where is self-evaluation exercise and asks to answer first 12 questions where I have scored 34 points. After class I continued with the self-evaluation exercise and scored 66 and understood that there is a need for an improvement. Critical thinking is a process that uses logic to separate reasonable beliefs from unreasonable beliefs. Logic is important in making better business decisions and consist of two types of reasoning: inductive and deductive.

- Inductive reasoning is fast and easy reasoning in our daily life that moves from observation to conclusion. For example, deciding when to leave for work depending on the traffic.
- Deductive reasoning is difficult to use and based on facts which means that if premise is true then the conclusion must be true as well. If traffic gets usually bad at 4pm and you leave work at 4pm then you will experience traffic on the way home.

(Blackwell 2011)

WEEK2

Beliefs, attitudes and values – is important to understand the connection between those concepts. Being able to understand our own values and other people's values will predict each other's choices and we will understand each other better. For example, when you interact with people and their different beliefs, values and attitude in the workplace that could lead to conflicts.

Watched TED-Ed -5 tips to improve critical thinking:

- Formulate your question
- Gather information
- Apply the information
- Consider the implications

- Explore other point of view

These tips are very useful, and I use them every time when I must make important decisions especially beneficial is to explore other people's point of view because then I can compare all the alternatives and make decision that I think is best for me.

(Debbink and Meshan 2020, ch4) Evaluating Evidence explains the critical thinking tips.

WEEK 3

Assessment outline part 1 -2

(Cerruti Grodowski 2020) Five Post-Covid Behaviours and Attitudes That Will Reshape the Workplace reading material.

Management theories:

- Human Relations Approach focuses on employees needs and behaviour. For example, when employees are involved in decision making in their workplace.
- JIT reduces workflow time and cost within production and distribution. Complete control over the manufacturing process.
- Scanlon plan combines workforce and leadership participation with a reward in organisational performance where savings are calculated by the sales of production with employee cost.

WEEK 4

Business decision making is making a choice where the process starts with important steps such as identifying the goal, gathering information, finding alternative solutions, evaluating evidence and choose the best alternatives and act and review my decision. It has a five process stages that will help me to develop decision making skills and improve my thinking. These is a key skill to make better decisions whether in the workplace or life.

There are many ways to improve and practice my critical thinking and the steps were discussed in class. Life is very busy with everyday stress and problems.

For example, RED Model three simple habits that include to recognise facts from opinions, evaluate argument and draw conclusion. This skill is essential to develop mainly because we live in a world that is often made of fake news especially online information's.

WEEK 5

Critical reading is a reading strategy. When you look for specific information to find the specific facts or you are looking for answers or reasoned arguments for research or study. Learned how to practise critical reading in addition with note taking. Read slowly and writing down authors main points.

De Bonos 6 Thinking Hats tool to boost productivity. It is interesting problem-solving technique that involves looking at the problem and decision making from different viewpoints. Each hat has different colour and thinking process. Learned how to separate each hat into six thinking ways that is helpful in improving productivity in organisation. (Herby Jonung Hanke 2022) Meta-analysis whether "lockdowns" reduce COVID-19 mortality.

- This week discussion about our assignment, additional guidance notes assessment.
- Critical reading
- Note taking is very helpful during classes because it makes me listen more carefully and later remind me of certain things.
- De Bonos Thinking Hats

WEEK 6

Case studies of critical thinking 6 Hats Model.

Decision making:

- Key decision criteria – the objectives and goals of an organisation, the priorities, analyse conditions, select best option, measure the importance of decision and review.
- Evaluation of alternatives – tools to evaluate such as swot, 6 Thinking Hats.
- Decision making

Contingency theory, the importance of studying this management theory and the impact of the external environment on organisations requires planning and managing operations.

Managers must monitor any factors that can affect the business functions. This theory approach is basically about how the management will flexibly adapt and adjust to a specific situation the best way in terms of organising, decision making and the approach to organisation employees which is more advantageous then disadvantageous.

WEEK 7

- Systems Theory is a system process of understanding, analysing and thinking about organisation. The function is to convert information into planned outcome outside the system. There are two types of systems:
 - Closed - fixed relationship and no interaction with environment
 - Open – interact with environment

The basic elements are Input-Process-Output-Feedback. Study of this systems approach management was quite complicated to understand. I had to research more to understand that decisions and actions in one area will affect other area. This was discussing in class as well by a lecturer but anyway I was still totally confused.

Examples:

- Human being is an open system that interacts with environment which result in changes such as when we eat to get energy.
- Workers in open system communicate with other departments about their activities so are giving and receiving information's.

Closed system has hard boundaries, they dictate terms to customers

- A cup with a lid on it.
- Workers in closed systems do not communicate with other departments so they do not receive inputs from other departments.

WEEK 8

Innovation – launching new products or services, a workflow improvement, anything that improves the business and lead to higher revenue when it is done right.

Characteristics of successful innovating companies:

- Systematic collection
- Creativity of employees
- Ability to evaluate the innovative idea
- Good teamwork
- Ability to manage project
- Risk taking

WEEK 9

The connection between beliefs, values and attitudes affects our choices and behaviour.

Sustainable developments are also called as global goals that demands for action to adopt business strategies that meet the needs of an organisation while protecting the human and

natural resources. There is a need for changes in human values, attitudes and behaviours in order to protect the planet.

Economic sustainability refers to companies' capability to ensure they will have sufficient resources, workers and customers for their products.

Social sustainability refers to business impact on employees, customers and local communities. When they feel safe and respected, they stay loyal.

Environmental sustainability is responsible for protecting global ecosystem to support health and wellbeing.

Sustainable development is essential because the development which is done is without damaging the environment.

Sustainability ensures that resources are not overused and helps the future generation to get their part, encourages us to gradually change the ways in which we develop and use technologies

WEEK 10

Assessment tips and feedback.

Belief 2

Sustainable development activity to discuss which Belief is the strongest argument.

To be honest I have never really thought about sustainability issue and the effect on our world, but I realise how important the issue is for our future. What I believe is that as humans we cannot control everything however as individuals we can contribute to sustainability and become eco-friendly.

The sustainable development goals describe future development agenda that should be achieved by 2030. Nature must be protected as part of human environment because unsustainable conditions can cause environmental damage but there is still a lot, we can do to create more sustainable world as individuals by changing our lifestyles and pressure local people to collaborate in sustainable development. People needs to understand the benefits of sustainable development.

REFERENCES FOR PART 1 AND 2

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