

DEVELOPING WORKPLACE CRITICAL THINKING

PART 1: BUSINESS REPORT “HOW DO ORGANISATIONAL BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND VALUE SYSTEMS AFFECT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR? HOW WILL WORKPLACE CHANGES FOR THE POST-COVID BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT TACKLE THE NEW BUSINESS CHALLENGES, AND CREATE MORE RESILIENT BUSINESS IN FUTURE?”

PART 2: REFLECTIVE REPORT (LEARNING AND TEACHING SESSIONS ON WEEK 1-9)

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PART 1: BUSINESS REPORT “HOW DO ORGANISATIONAL BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND VALUE SYSTEMS AFFECT WORKPLACE BEHAVIOUR? HOW WILL WORKPLACE CHANGES FOR THE POST-COVID BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT TACKLE THE NEW BUSINESS CHALLENGES, AND CREATE MORE RESILIENT BUSINESS IN FUTURE?”

Executive Summary

This report analyses how Tesco's responded to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic through the application of management theories. It explores the use of Scientific Management Theory, Systems Management Theory, Bureaucratic Management Theory and the De Bono's Six Thinking Hats Method in decision-making during the crisis. Additionally, it examines how beliefs, attitudes, and value systems impacted employee responses and organisational culture during the pandemic. Based on this analysis, the report recommends post-Covid strategies for Tesco's focusing on ethical leadership and corporate responsibility, cross-functional collaboration and communication, and investment in technology and digital transformation. Aligning these recommendations with the company's core values can strengthen Tesco's resilience and success in an unpredictable business environment.

Introduction

In the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic, businesses worldwide, including Tesco, have faced unprecedented challenges that have reshaped the way they operate. As a leading global retailer, Tesco has navigated these challenges while prioritising the safety of its employees and customers, ensuring business continuity, and adapting to rapidly changing market conditions. However, as the world transitions to a post-pandemic reality, Tesco must continue to evolve its organisational strategies to remain resilient and thrive in the new normal.

Company Background

Tesco's journey from its founding by Jack Cohen in 1919 to becoming a global retail giant with over 3,400 stores worldwide is a testament to its enduring success commitment to excellence. Throughout its history, Tesco has remained dedicated to providing diverse products and services while also prioritizing sustainability initiatives and community support. Tesco's emphasis on innovation has enabled it to adapt to changing market dynamics and consumer preferences, shaping the retail industry with its forward-thinking approach. By consistently evolving and embracing new technologies and trends, Tesco continues to meet the needs of millions of customers worldwide. With its rich history, commitment to sustainability, and focus on community engagement, Tesco is well-positioned to continue making a positive impact in the retail sector for years to come.

Key Management Theories

Management Theories offer a range of strategies, frameworks, and guidelines for modern organisations. Professionals typically blend concepts from different theories to create a management approach that fits their specific workforce and company culture. This approach allows for a more flexible and customised implementation of management practices, ensuring they are well-suited to the organisation's unique needs and dynamics.

Scientific Management Theory: Frederick Taylor's scientific management theory revolutionised traditional approaches to work by introducing scientific methods to optimise productivity. Taylor's emphasis on simplifying tasks and providing fair wages reshaped the relationship between employers and employees, moving away from solely relying on job security as a motivator. His ideas paved the way for greater collaboration and teamwork in the workplace, marking a significant shift in management practices towards a more systematic and efficient approach.

Systems Management Theory: Systems Management Theory is an alternative approach to organising and managing businesses. It compares organisations to biological systems, emphasising the interconnectedness and interdependence of various components for optimal functioning. According to this theory, success hinges on elements such as constructive collaboration, interdependence, and the relationships between subsystems. Employees, departments, workgroups, and business units are key components of a company, with managers tasked with assessing patterns and events within the organisation to determine the most effective management strategies. By fostering collaboration and viewing the organisation as a cohesive whole rather than isolated units, managers can maximise the potential of their teams and achieve collective success.

Bureaucratic Management Theory: Max Webber's conception of bureaucracy is a highly structured and formalised organisation characterised by impersonality. Weber believed that an organisation should have a defined hierarchical structure and clear rules, regulations, and lines of authority to govern it. Ideal characteristics of Weberian bureaucracy include specialisation of labour, a formal set of rules and regulations, a well-defined hierarchy within the organisation, and impersonality in the application of rules. These principles are foundational to the bureaucratic form of organisation advocated by Weber.

De Bono's Six Thinking Hats Method: The six thinking hats method, developed by Dr. Edward de Bono, is a framework designed to enhance creative conversations by ensuring a diverse range of viewpoints and thinking styles. Through six distinct roles or "hats", teams can structure their thinking process more effectively, leading to productive outcomes. This approach enables participants to approach problem-solving and decision-making tasks with greater clarity and creativity, fostering innovative solutions.

The Six Thinking Hats are:

The White Hat: Objective and logical, focusing on facts and information.

The Red Hat: Emotional and intuitive, exploring feelings and instincts.

The Black Hat: Cautious and critical, considering potential risks and negative outcomes.

The Yellow Hat: Optimistic and positive, seeking opportunities and benefits.

The Green Hat: Creative and innovative, generating innovative ideas and possibilities.

The Blue Hat: Control and organisation, managing the thinking process and ensuring productive discussions.

R.E.D. Model of Critical Thinking: The RED model- Recognize assumptions, Evaluate arguments, and Draw conclusions- is a structured framework by Pearson for applying critical thinking principles in decision-making as outlined by Chartrand, Ishikawa, and Flander in 2018.

Recognize assumptions: Recognizing assumptions involves distinguishing between facts and opinions, which is crucial for critical thinking. It's common to accept information without evidence, especially if it aligns with our beliefs or comes from a trusted source. However, questioning assumptions can uncover gaps or flawed reasoning. Considering various perspectives enhances understanding and enriches decision-making.

Evaluate arguments: Evaluating arguments requires objective analysis, setting aside biases and emotions. It involves scrutinizing evidence quality and recognizing how emotions impact perception. Common obstacles like confirmation bias can hinder impartial evaluation. Remaining objective allows for a more accurate assessment of different viewpoints, leading to informed conclusions.

Draw conclusions: Drawing conclusions involves synthesizing diverse information to reach logical outcomes based on available evidence, without overgeneralizing. Individuals with these skills demonstrate adaptability, changing their stance when new evidence demands it. Their ability to make quality decisions is often attributed to their sound judgement.

How do organisational beliefs, attitudes, value systems affect workplace behaviour in Tesco?

During COVID-19 pandemic, organisational beliefs, attitudes, and value systems in Tesco played a crucial role in shaping workplace behaviour, especially in the context of implementing management theories.

Scientific Management Theory

Beliefs: Tesco's belief in maximising productivity while ensuring safety likely drove the application of scientific management principles to standardise processes and mitigate risks during pandemic.

Attitudes: Employees' attitudes toward compliance with safety protocols and productivity goals may have influenced their behaviour in adhering to scientific management practices, such as maintaining hygiene standards and optimising workflow.

Value Systems: Tesco's value of providing essential goods and services to the community aligned with the core principles of scientific management, emphasising efficiency and effectiveness in resource utilisation to meet customer demand during the pandemic.

Systems Management Theory

Beliefs: Tesco's belief in the importance of efficiency and adaptability likely reinforced the implementation of systems management principles to streamline operations and respond to changing circumstances during the pandemic.

Attitudes: Employees' attitudes toward flexibility and process optimisation may have influenced their behaviour in adapting to new procedures and protocols introduced to ensure safety and efficiency.

Value Systems: Tesco's value of prioritising customer and employee well-being aligned with the core principles of systems management theory, emphasising the need to agile and responsive systems to meet evolving needs during the pandemic.

Bureaucratic Management Theory

Beliefs: Tesco's belief in the importance of clear guidelines and hierarchical structures likely reinforced the adoption of bureaucratic principles to ensure consistency and accountability in decision-making during the pandemic.

Attitudes: Employees' attitudes toward following established procedures and protocols may have influenced their behaviour in adhering to bureaucratic processes, such as reporting incidents and following chain of command.

Value Systems: Tesco's value of maintaining stability and order in operations aligned with the core principles of bureaucratic theory, emphasising clear roles and responsibilities to minimise disruptions during pandemic.

De Bono's Six Thinking Hats Method

Beliefs: Tesco's belief in fostering innovation and problem-solving likely led to the application of the six thinking hats method to encourage creative solutions to pandemic-related challenges.

Attitudes: Employees' attitudes toward collaboration and open-mindedness may have influenced their behaviour in engaging with the six thinking hats method to explore alternative approaches and perspectives.

Value Systems: Tesco's value of continuous improvement and customer satisfaction aligned with the core principles of the six thinking hats method, emphasising creativity and customer-centricity in addressing pandemic-related issues.

In summary, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Tesco's organisational beliefs, attitudes, and value systems influenced workplace behaviour by guiding the implementation of management theories to ensure operational efficiency, employee safety, and customer satisfaction in a challenging and rapidly changing environment.

How will workplace changes for the post-Covid business environment tackle the new business challenges, and create more resilient businesses in future?

Scientific Management Theory

Workplace Changes: Tesco apply scientific management principles to optimize productivity and resource allocation in the post-Covid business environment. This involves analysing data to identify inefficiencies, standardising processes to improve consistency, and implementing performance metrics to track progress and identify areas for improvement.

Resilience-building: By embracing scientific management principles, Tesco can enhance its operational efficiency and effectiveness, enabling it to adapt quickly to disruptions and changes in market demands. This increased resilience allows Tesco to maintain its competitive edge and withstand external shocks more effectively.

Systems Management Theory

Workplace Changes: Tesco implement systems management principles to streamline processes and enhance efficiency in response to new challenges posed by the post-Covid business environment. This involves leveraging technology to automate tasks, optimizing supply chain and management processes, and improving communication and collaboration across departments.

Resilience-building: By adopting systems management principles, Tesco can create a more adaptable and responsive organizational structure capable of quickly adjusting to changing market conditions. This enhanced resilience enables Tesco to anticipate and mitigate risks effectively, ensuring continuity of operations and sustained business performance.

Bureaucratic Management Theory

Workplace changes: Tesco leverage bureaucratic principles to establish clear lines of authority, formalize decision-making processes, and ensure accountability in the post-Covid business environment. This involves clarifying roles and responsibilities, implementing standardized procedures, and enhancing communication and coordination among different departments.

Resilience-building: By adhering to bureaucratic principles, Tesco can create a more stable and predictable organizational structure, reducing the likelihood of miscommunication, conflicts, and errors. This enhanced resilience enables Tesco to maintain operational stability and continuity even in the face of uncertainty and volatility.

De Bono's Six Thinking Hats Method

Workplace changes: Tesco integrate the six thinking hats methodology into its decision-making processes to promote creative thinking, collaborative problem-solving, and informed decision-making in the post-Covid business environment. This involves organizing cross-functional teams to explore different perspectives,

brainstorming ideas using the six thinking hats framework, and evaluating potential solutions based on diverse viewpoints.

Resilience-building: By adopting the six thinking hats methodology, Tesco can tap into the collective intelligence of its workforce to identify innovative solutions and adapt quickly to changing market dynamics. This enhanced resilience enables Tesco to leverage its employees' creativity and expertise to navigate uncertainties and capitalize on emerging opportunities more effectively.

Overall, by applying the principles of management theories, Tesco can implement workplace changes that address new business challenges and create a more resilient business in the post-Covid environment. These changes enable Tesco to enhance its operational efficiency, organizational stability, and adaptability, positioning it for sustained success in the future.

Critical Evaluation of Key Management Theories

Scientific Management Theory:

A Tesco employee who values autonomy and creativity may perceive scientific management theory as overly controlling and dehumanizing. They might interpret Taylor's focus on standardization and efficiency as prioritizing productivity over employee well-being.

On the other hand, a manager who values precision and optimization may see scientific management theory as a valuable tool for maximizing productivity and reducing waste. They might view Taylor's principles as essential for streamlining Tesco's operations and ensuring cost-effectiveness.

Systems Management Theory:

A manager who values innovation and flexibility may view systems management theory as overly rigid and bureaucratic. They might interpret the emphasis on standardised processes as inhibiting creativity and adaptability within Tesco.

Conversely, a manager who prioritizes efficiency and consistency may see systems management theory as essential for ensuring smooth operations and quality control. They might view standardised processes as necessary for maintaining Tesco's reputation for reliability and customer satisfaction.

Bureaucratic Management Theory:

A manager who values flexibility and innovation may view bureaucratic theory as stifling and outdated. They might interpret Weber's emphasis on hierarchical structures and formal rules as hindering Tesco's ability to adapt to changing market conditions.

Conversely, a manager who values stability and order may see bureaucratic theory as necessary for maintaining control and accountability within Tesco. They might view Weber's principles as essential for ensuring consistency and reliability in Tesco's operations.

De Bono's Six Thinking Hats Method:

A Tesco team member who values independent thinking and creativity may see the six thinking hats method as a valuable tool for fostering systematic and inclusive decision-making within Tesco. They might view de Bono's approach as essential for promoting clarity and focus on team discussions.

Overall, different beliefs, attitudes, and values can lead to diverse interpretations of management theories. While some individuals may perceive certain theories as beneficial for promoting efficiency and consistency, others may view them as restrictive or outdated.

Recommendations

Ethical Leadership and Corporate Responsibility- Justification: Upholding ethical standards builds trust with stakeholders and enhances Tesco's reputation.

Cross-Functional Collaboration and Communication- Justification: Promoting collaboration breaks down silos, fosters innovation, and enables Tesco to respond effectively to market changes.

Investment in Technology and Digital Transformation- Justification: Investing in technology enhances efficiency, improves customer experiences, and ensures Tesco's competitiveness in the digital age.

These recommendations provide Tesco with a strategic roadmap for building resilience and navigating the complexities of the post-Covid business environment. By prioritizing these areas, Tesco can maintain its position as a leader in the retail industry.

Conclusion

In conclusion, each management theory contributed uniquely to Tesco's approach amid uncertainty. Recognizing the significance of beliefs, attitudes, and value systems enables Tesco's to cultivate a positive workplace culture and foster resilience in the face of adversity.

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PART 2: REFLECTIVE REPORT ON LEARNING AND TEACHING SESSION ON WEEK 1-9

INTRODUCTION

Reflective journaling is an incredible tool that allows us to delve into our learning and teaching experiences. It gives us a chance to reflect on our growth, discover new insights, and make connections between theory and practice. Through this journal, I will be sharing my thoughts, observations, and lesson learned from these sessions.

Week 1

Week 1 started by introducing ourselves and sharing our goals for Workplace Critical Thinking. This was fantastic way to kick off the course. It helped create a supportive and collaborative environment right from the start. Everyone had unique aspirations and insights to bring to the table. Additionally, we examined the evolution of management theories, tracing the historical development of key concepts and approaches in the field of management. One of the highlights of the week was the exploration of different research methodologies through activities such as video-based learning and discussions on inductive and deductive research. These activities not only expanded our understanding of research methods but also encouraged us to think critically about how knowledge is generated and applied in management studies. Moreover, the discussion on the importance of change management resonated deeply with me. In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, the ability to effectively manage change is essential for organizational success. Through insightful conversations and case studies, we explored strategies for navigating change, highlighting the role of leadership, communication, and adaptability in driving successful transformations. Critical Thinking emerged as another key theme during Week 1. As future managers and leaders, honing our critical thinking skills is paramount for making informed decisions and solving complex problems. The discussions on critical thinking challenged us to question assumptions, analyse information rigorously, and evaluate alternative perspectives, equipping us with the tools necessary to thrive in dynamic environments.

Week 2

In week 2 we had DWC Lecture 2, focusing on Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values. I was excited to dive into topics like critical thinking and explore the tips to improve it. Exploring the concepts of beliefs, attitudes, and values within a workplace context provided valuable insights into understanding organisational dynamics and individual behaviour. The discussion helped me recognise the interconnectedness of these elements and their influence on decision-making and interactions among colleagues. The inclusion of video tips and resources further enhanced my ability to evaluate arguments, analyse evidence, and make informed judgments. Moreover, the opportunity for reflective journaling enabled me to introspect on my own beliefs, attitudes, and values in relation to the workplace environment.

Through this process, I gained a better understanding of my strengths and areas for growth in terms of critical thinking and decision-making. Overall, the class provided a rich learning experience that not only expanded my knowledge of workplace dynamics but also equipped me with practical tools for enhancing my critical thinking skills. I look forward to applying these insights in my professional endeavours and continuing to develop as a critical thinker.

Week 3

Week 3 provided a comprehensive exploration of the importance of critical thinking in the workplace and introduced key management theories, particularly the human relations approach. The discussion on critical thinking underscored its relevance in problem-solving, decision-making, and fostering innovation within organizations. Understanding how critical thinking contributes to effective communication and adaptability highlighted its role as a foundational skill for success in today's dynamic work environment. Exploring the human relations approach to management offered valuable insights into the significance of employee satisfaction, motivation, and social interactions in driving organizational performance. Contrasting this approach with classical management theories deepened my understanding of how organizational culture and productivity are influenced by different management philosophies. Engaging with the case study on Just-In-Time (JIT) and the Scanlon Plan provided a practical application of critical thinking principles and management theories. Analysing the benefits and challenges of these approaches allowed me to critically evaluate their effectiveness in improving organisational performance and fostering employee engagement. Overall, Week 3 was enriching and thought-provoking, providing a solid foundation for applying critical thinking skills and management theories in real-world scenarios.

Week 4

Week 4 was about "Creative and critical thinking to make better business decisions" and the principles of scientific management theory. We also had video and reading on RED Model of Critical Thinking. Recognizing assumptions, evaluating arguments, and drawing conclusions are essential components of effective decision-making in business contexts. Applying this framework can help me approach complex issues with greater clarity and objectivity, leading to better-informed decisions. Week 4's class provided valuable insights into optimizing processes and efficiency within organizations. Understanding how to streamline operations while maintaining quality is crucial for staying competitive in today's dynamic business environment. Looking ahead, I aim to integrate the principles of critical thinking and scientific management theory into my approach to problem-solving and decision-making. By continually honing these skills, I believe I can contribute more effectively to my team and organization, driving innovation and success in the ever-evolving business landscape.

Week 5

Reflecting on Week 5's class, I found the exploration of De Bono's Thinking Hats Method to be particularly enlightening. This approach offers a systematic framework for approaching problems and making decisions by considering various perspectives. I appreciated learning about the different "hats" and their roles in fostering critical thinking, as it provides a practical tool for analysing complex issues in both personal and professional contexts. Additionally, delving into Max Weber's bureaucratic management theory provided valuable insights into

organizational structures and management practices. Understanding the principles of bureaucracy and how they shape decision-making processes within businesses is essential for navigating modern workplaces effectively. The activities, including watching the “Critical Thinking Skills” video and analysing the Brexit case study, offer opportunities to apply the concepts discussed in class to real-world scenarios. Overall, Week 5 class deepened my understanding of decision-making processes and provided me with practical tools for approaching challenges in structured and systematic manner. I look forward to applying what I have learned in both academic and professional settings.

Week 6

Engaging with contingency theory during Week 6 offered insights into how organizational structures and leadership styles can vary based on situational factors. This theory emphasizes the importance of adapting management practices to fit the unique circumstances of a given situation, rather than adhering to a one-size-fits-all approach. The discussion on “Putting Theory into Practice” provides an opportunity to explore real-world examples where contingency theory has been applied successfully or faced challenges. By examining case studies or firsthand experiences, we can gain a deeper understanding of how theoretical concepts translate into practical decision-making processes within organizations. Throughout the discussion, participants analysed the effectiveness of contingency theory in addressing complex and dynamic situations, such as changes in market conditions, technological advancements, and organizational restructuring. By critically evaluating the strengths and limitations of this approach, we can enhance our ability to apply theoretical frameworks to real-world scenarios and make informed decisions in diverse contexts. Overall, Week 6 offered a chance to bridge the gap between theory and practice, fostering critical thinking and decision-making skills essential for effective leadership and management in today’s dynamic business environment.

Week 7

Week 7’s focus on system theory provided a comprehensive understanding of how systems operate and the characteristics that define them. System theory emphasizes the interconnectedness and interdependence of various elements within a system, highlighting feedback loops, boundaries, and emergent properties. Understanding the importance of adopting a system perspective is crucial in tackling complex issues. By viewing problems holistically rather than in isolation, we can identify underlying patterns, anticipate unintended consequences, and devise more effective solutions. For instance, during our discussion on the importance of a system perspective, I realized the significance of considering multiple variables and their interactions when addressing real-world challenges. The activities, particularly the discussion on system perspective, prompted insightful exchanges among classmates. Exploring diverse viewpoints and examples helped deepen my understanding of how systems operate in different contexts. However, I found that applying system theory to practical scenarios requires careful consideration and analytical skills, which could be further developed through direct exercises or case studies. Overall, Week 7 was enriching, reinforcing the importance of embracing a system perspective in both academic and professional endeavours.

Week 8

Week 8 focused on managing innovation and creativity in the ever-changing work and business environment. This topic is particularly relevant in today's dynamic landscape, where organizations must continuously innovate to stay competitive. Throughout the class, we explored strategies for fostering a culture innovation, harnessing creativity, and adapting to evolving market demands. One of the standout activities was the video on innovation, which provided valuable insights into the key principles and practices of successful innovation management. The video not only showcased real-world examples of innovative companies but also highlighted the importance of collaboration, risk-taking, and experimentation in driving innovation. As for formative feedback, I found the content engaging and informative, offering practical strategies that can be applied in various organizational settings. However, I believe incorporating more interactive elements, such as case studies or group discussions, could enhance the learning experience and facilitate deeper understanding of the subject matter. Furthermore, while the video provided a comprehensive overview of innovation management, additional resources or guest speakers from industry expert could offer diverse perspectives and practical insights into implementing innovative practices in different contexts. Overall, Week 8 was thought-provoking and inspiring, emphasizing the significance of embracing innovation and creativity as drivers of organizational growth and success.

Week 9

In Week 9, we delved into the critical topics of sustainable development and futureproofing, exploring how organizations can balance economic growth with environmental and social responsibility to ensure long-term viability. This week's activities provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with sustainability and underscored the importance of proactive measures to futureproof businesses in rapidly changing world. The highlight of the week was the debate on "sustainable development and futureproofing". This interactive activity facilitated lively discussions among classmates, allowing us to explore different perspectives on the role of sustainability in business practices. Through debating various viewpoints, we gained a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in balancing economic, environmental, and social considerations in decision-making processes. Additionally, the video on sustainable world offered compelling examples of how organizations are implementing sustainable practices to mitigate environmental impact and create shared value for stakeholders. Furthermore, the discussion of the assignment brief provided clarity on expectations and requirements for upcoming assessments. It serves as a valuable opportunity to ask questions, seek clarifications, and gain insights into how we can apply course concepts to real-world scenarios. In terms of feedback, I found the activities engaging and thought-provoking, fostering deeper exploration of sustainability issues and their implications for business. However, to further enrich the learning experience, incorporating more interactive elements such as group activities or simulations could facilitate collaborative learning and enhance retention of course material. Overall, Week 9 provided a holistic understanding of sustainable development and futureproofing, equipping us with the knowledge and tools necessary to drive positive change in the organizations we serve.

Conclusion

In conclusion, completing the reflective journal has provided me with a deeper understanding of the lectures and has enhanced my comprehension of the topic “Developing Workplace Critical Thinking”. Through the process of reflection and analysis, I have gained valuable insights into the importance of critical thinking in the workplace. I now recognize the significance of applying critical thinking skills to address various challenges and make more informed decisions. The lectures have inspired me to adopt critical thinking as a fundamental approach to problem-solving in all aspects of my professional and personal life. By embracing critical thinking, I am better equipped to approach issues systematically, evaluate information objectively, and devise effective solutions. This mindset shift will enable me to navigate future challenges with confidence and efficiency, ultimately contributing to my growth and success in the workplace and beyond.

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