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Part 1- Individual Business Report

Part 2- Reflective Journal

Lecturer: Akinseye Aluko

Elena Radu

STUDENT ID: 2121862

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Part 1- Individual Business Report

1. Executive Summary

This report discusses the impact of organisational beliefs, attitudes, and value systems on workplace behaviour, particularly considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adapting to the post-COVID mindset and addressing the associated challenges has emerged as a critical priority for various organisations, including that under consideration.

Additionally, while using the "Red model" of critical thinking to assess how someone with different beliefs, attitudes, and values might interpret these theories differently, the paper will analyse various management theories, including contingency theory, human relations theory by Elton Mayo, and system theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy. It will also examine how Audley Group was able to accomplish an easy journey from the pandemic to post-Covid.

2. Introduction

The solid values and fundamental beliefs of the organisation, as well as the staff members' principles and expected productivity at work, all affect mentality and behaviours. In an effort to accomplish the organization's goals, managers regularly adapt and adjust their style of leadership, which has an influence on workforce commitment. To build successful workplace behaviour and tackle any future challenges the company might encounter, it is essential to recognise the relationship between organisational culture, beliefs, principles, and job satisfaction (Linkedin, n.d.).

3. Introduction to the organisation

Since its formation in 1991, Audley Group has been at the forefront of the retirement living industry, consistently discovering methods to assist their owners and consumers "Live Better, Longer" (Audley Group | Live better for longer, n.d.).

Nick Sanderson, founder and chief executive officer of Audley, recognised from his first involvement in the industry that it should be a viable alternative to a care facility. By establishing the sector, Sanderson has helped introduce independent living to the UK's aging population by offering consumers the chance to reside in a home they own, with membership to a Club that offers exceptional health and wellness amenities, as well as care and assistance when needed. With 20 villages and over 800 employees, Audley Group is known for its luxurious retirement community; in 2022, the group launched "Mayfield Villages," its second component, a mid-market retirement community (Audley Group | Live better for longer, n.d.).

It has been determined that Audley is a highly focused organisation on diversity, equality, and inclusion, with its values being "Proud, Caring, Enriching, and Exceptional." This

conclusion was reached based on the many pieces of information and views that were offered by the owners and employees of Audley (Audley Group | Live better for longer, n.d.).

Because Audley Group is in the service industry, the organisational beliefs, attitudes, and value frameworks that guide the company have a direct impact on the conduct that occurs inside the company's walls. There are many situations in which the beliefs and values that produce mindsets may affect how workers behave inside an organisation (Audley Group | Live better for longer, n.d.). This is especially true when the workplace undergoes changes from the post-COVID perspective to develop greater resilience for the companies in the future. In these cases, there are many occasions where the concepts and beliefs that form attitudes can impact how employees perform (Work Design Magazine, 2020).

4. Introduction to Management Theories

According to Indeed Editorial Team (2022), management theories are principles intended to guide an organisation, business, or another group. The workplace has become much more dynamic since the time these ideas were developed, which was centuries ago. It is not uncommon for modern business executives to adopt a mix of techniques for inspiring their teams and formulating plans to achieve their objectives. Managers can use them to formulate strategies for achieving organisational objectives and methods for motivating employees. Even though the manner in which each of these ideas might be used can vary, it is essential to recognise that actual leadership utilise principles from a variety of different theories concurrently.

a. Human relations theory by Elton Mayo

As motivational factors, the human relations theory emphasises praise and collaboration. This essentially contradicts the bureaucratic approach. While emphasising individual considerations is a beneficial concept, excessive attention of a positive thing can be detrimental. Relationships that are prioritised above all else can lead to challenging circumstances such as romances in the workplace and promotions based on personality traits rather than accomplishments at work. Mayo believed an individual's productivity would rise if they had the sense that they were a valued member of the team that they worked on (Conlin, 2019).

b. System theory by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1950)

According to the systems theory of management, each firm is a system as a whole similar to a living creature, with multiple activities being carried out to keep the operation performing well. A company is more than its CEO, and an individual is more than an intellect. A person cannot survive without their other organs and essential aspects. Likewise, a company requires not only an executive director to thrive (Romero, n.d.).

Alternatively, as explained on the website Environment and Ecology, systems theory is an approach for investigating and/or describing any group of elements that operate collectively to generate an outcome. Systems theory can be applied to a single organism, any electromechanical or informational artifact, a society, or – most pertinent to this discussion – an organisation, such as a business organisation (Chron, 2019).

c. Contingency theory

According to StudySmarter UK (n.d.), in 1964, the contingency theory concept was popularised by Fred Fiedler. The fundamental principle of this theory is that there is no ideal method to manage an organisation or reach conclusions.

Although there are numerous contingency theories, all of them share a common belief that a single leadership style is insufficient in every circumstance. Therefore, the key to every theory of contingency is determining the type of leadership that is appropriate for each circumstance (StudySmarter UK, n.d.).

All contingency theories support for a degree of management method flexibility in order to accomplish the best outcomes for the organisation (StudySmarter UK, n.d.).

5. Application of Theories

As determined by McLaughlin (2022), during the COVID-19 pandemic, women across various industries have assumed a greater share of domestic duties, resulting in a higher proportion of women experiencing fatigue. The previously mentioned challenges may be exacerbated for female healthcare professionals, as they encounter limited prospects for telecommuting and express a heightened sense of obligation to prioritise occupational responsibilities over familial duties. Despite the obstacles faced, the healthcare industry has demonstrated superior performance in terms of gender representation compared to other sectors. Specifically, women constitute over two-thirds of entry-level personnel and 53% of senior-managerial or higher-level employees, which is 18 percentage points greater than the average across all industries.

Audley Group confronted the obstacles listed above since it is a market leader in the retirement living industry, registered with ARCO (Associated Retirement Community Operators), and has an overall CQC (Care Quality Commission) rating of "Good". In this company, women make up more than 80% of the care department (Audley Group | Live better for longer. n.d.).

In the last ten years, notably after COVID-19, mental health has improved significantly. Professionals in psychology are noting a variety of mental health reactions brought on by the present situation, from anticipatory grieving to repercussions on those who currently suffer from depression. Employee well-being has never been more desperately under attention, especially considering current economic conditions and daily job stress (Work Design Magazine, 2020). The management at Audley may thus use Ludwig von Bertalanffy's system theory better to comprehend the requirements and values of their personnel. Most of us were greatly impacted by those difficult moments, but not everyone experienced the pressure in the same way. To adapt and change the needs and desires of the workforce and to fulfill the company's objective, this management philosophy may thus be ideal (Audley Group ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS, 2020).

The company has implemented a variety of benefits for its employees, including a virtual general practitioner and mental health first aiders in each village who can assist both owners and employees. In addition to increasing the length of pauses, the company has also incorporated training and advocated for female issues such as menopause awareness (Audley Group ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS, 2020).

It is true that, based on individuals' beliefs and values, these actions may have generated conflict within the team, but using system theory and the "Red model" of critical thinking, the issues can be identified and addressed (as Audley Group has lately conducted), alternatives can be identified and evaluated, and the outcome will benefit all parties without negatively impacting the business (Audley Group ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS, 2020).

As per Khalifa et al. (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic poses a significant challenge to nations around the world, as millions of people have become victims of the spread of infection and adopted a socially isolating approach. People in numerous countries have been required to self-isolate and remain in their houses for many weeks to months in order to stop the transmission of the virus. Social isolation practices have had both beneficial and detrimental impacts on economies, occupations, schooling, transport, supplies of food, social life, and psychological well-being. There was a real sense of loneliness and isolation brought on by the social and psychological effects. Social distancing measures have been observed to have adverse effects on familial relationships. Moreover, extended cohabitation during unusual circumstances frequently intensifies familial conflicts, leading to the manifestation of violent behaviour.

To address the various challenges posed by the pandemic, including disruptions to social life, it may be beneficial to consider the Human Relations Theory developed by Elton Mayo, as evidenced by Audley's response to overcoming previously established barriers. As an illustration, each retirement community within this group actively promotes inclusivity and diversity through the coordination of various events, including but not limited to movie nights, Turkish cultural celebrations, Caribbean-themed festivities, Indian cultural observances, and other similar activities on a regular basis. Additionally, the organisation encourages its employees to generate innovative concepts and a carefully planned strategy for the execution of noted activity. The company is composed of a diverse range of cultures and backgrounds among its staff and owners. According to the Human Relations Theory, an individual's productivity can be enhanced by fostering a sense of value and a sense of belonging within the team. In this particular instance, the company is demonstrating a commitment to prioritising the well-being and significance of both its members and owners.

Research from several academic fields has shown that correctly structured online learning may increase curiosity among learners, satisfaction, and comprehension. A study comparing online and face-to-face versions of the same curriculum from 1996 to 2008 led the U.S. Department of Education to reach the conclusion that online learning might result in educational outcomes that were on line with or higher than those of face-to-face learning. Online learning is at least as successful as in-person learning, according to a more recent systematic research study by Pei and Wu (2019).

In response to the pandemic, Audley Group has established an Academy Team that collaborates with each retirement village to provide the necessary support to staff members who aspire to advance and flourish in their career path within the organisation (Audley Group ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS, 2020).

In order to provide tailored and outstanding services, particularly in the field of care services, it is essential that team members receive top-quality training through a blended learning approach. The organisation employs an e-learning system, Flow, to facilitate remote learning and training for its staff, enabling them to acquire knowledge and fulfill their training requirements from their homes. The above-mentioned measurements were implemented in response to the challenges posed by the pandemic. The aim was to equip the company with the necessary tools to address the post-COVID mindset and establish a more resilient

environment for the villages in the future. Consequently, Audley has provided funding for sessions where experts from various disciplines conduct on-site demonstrations and practical exercises with employees. During the pandemic, these demonstrations have been conducted remotely through platforms such as Zoom (Audley Group ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS, 2020).

It can be concluded that the management was adopting the contingency theory, highlighting flexibility in different circumstances, by considering all of these measurements and adaptations made by the company leaders to ensure that the workers and the owners are having a smooth transition from the pandemic to the post-pandemic time.

In addition, Audley Group used its size, expertise, and culture over a tough year to keep owners safe and engaged during the Covid-19 outbreak.

During the pandemic, the facilities were closed to external customers and subsequently to owners. The team operated in a rotational schedule to offer homemade meals to owners and established a digital programme of both physical and mental exercises. Additionally, the company transformed its commercial food distribution system into a retail enterprise, offering essential grocery items through the Audley Pantry. Furthermore, they procured necessary supplies for the owners as needed.

Primarily, the Care business demonstrated a remarkably elevated standard of service and essential aid to both owners and clients within the community, particularly during challenging circumstances Audley Group ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS, (2022).

Diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and equality (DE&I) are everyone's business, according to Audley Group ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS, (2022). In addition to those specified above, the following efforts were put out in reaction to that: a drive to get team members to provide their own DE&I status-related personal information; The workstream "Racial equality matters" was launched during Black History Month, and each month they conduct a tea break conversation with a particular subject. Being Black in Britain, Proud to Be, and Cultural Isolation have all been discussed so far. All team members are encouraged to attend these sessions, and attendance is often favorable.

98% of the owners felt safe and protected during the pandemic, 99% of the owners said they are treated with dignity and respect by their carers, and 90% of the owners were satisfied with Audley's response to the pandemic, according to a survey conducted by the executives Audley Group ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS, (2022).

6. Recommendations

- I. It is essential to consider alternative approaches and online tools for interacting with and working with the parties involved. To be able to achieve this, it is vital to interact with all of the company's departments internally and keep them informed about business continuity strategies so that employees, customers (owners), legislators, and collaborators have access to a central point of information.
- II. Without affecting anyone's beliefs or objectives, the organisation must clearly articulate how it intends to operate and socialise as well as how productivity is determined inside its walls, among the generations, cultures, and backgrounds.
- III. In following events of a global pandemic, effective leadership and employee motivation necessitate a compassionate approach towards staff members and

community members. Consequently, they will possess the ability to exercise leadership that is both emotionally and intellectually informed. In order to effectively manage a prosperous system, it is crucial for leaders to balance their strategy with their actions, while simultaneously demonstrating consideration towards the prevailing thoughts, beliefs, and values within the workplace.

7. Conclusion

A significant concern for many different businesses, including Audley Group, is the process of adjusting to a post-COVID perspective and resolving the problems that are linked with this shift in perspective. The organization's unshakable ideals and core convictions, as well as the principles of the staff members and the desired level of effectiveness at work, all have an impact on the attitude and actions of the employees. As per SpriggHR (2020), managers often modify and change their leadership styles in order to achieve the objectives set for the organisation. This, in turn, influences the level of commitment shown by the workforce. It is essential to identify the connection between corporate culture, values, and principles, as well as job happiness, in order to establish effective workplace, conduct and address any future difficulties that the organisation may face.

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Part 2 – Reflective Report

1. Introduction

Writing down our thoughts, emotions, observations, and interactions in relation to a particular event or scenario is known as reflective writing. As it promotes critical thinking and reasoning, reflective writing may help us learn from experiences to advance our knowledge and skill set (Rasmussen University, n.d.).

In classrooms that are overloaded with material, reflection—a process where students explain their learning, how it evolved, and how it could connect to future learning experiences—is often ignored. But for pupils to understand and benefit from a learning experience, reflection is a crucial practise (Arts, C. of L., 2021).

The report that follows is a reflection on the lessons I learned this year in the course on improving workplace critical thinking, which covered the content from weeks 1 to 9.

The Gibbs Reflective model will be used to ensure that the reflection on the learning outcomes is carried out effectively.

2. Gibbs Reflective Model

As per The University of Edinburgh (2020), Graham Gibbs created the Gibbs Reflective Cycle in 1988 to organise learning from experiences. It provides a structure for analysing events, and because of its cyclical character, it is especially well suited to repeated experiences. This enables you to learn and prepare from things that either went satisfactorily or didn't go as planned in the past, depending on the circumstances. It has six stages:

- The experience's description
- Thoughts and feelings on the event
- Evaluation of the experience, both positive and negative
- Analysis to understand the circumstances
- Summary of the observations and suggestions for improvement
- A plan of action for how we would handle such circumstances in the future or consider making any necessary general modifications.

3. Application of the Gibbs Reflective Model on the Critical Thinking learning sessions

This part provides a reflection on the learning material from week 1 through week 9, and the Gibbs model is utilised to appropriately explain the learning throughout this section.

a. Description

We learned about critical thinking in the workplace and how crucial it is while working in an organisation in many different sections of the coursework on developing workplace critical thinking. First, we learned what critical thinking is. According to Cottrell S. (2017), it is an activity that requires more than just the ability to analyse logic; it also requires exact conceptualization and rationalisation of events. There are several benefits of critical thinking, including the creation of a critically engaged and inventive workforce and political participation by those who are critically informed. I also learned about the potential for changes inside an organisation as a result of elements like employee opinions, mindsets, principles, and attitudes. These elements tend to vary depending on the person, which may provide possibilities and difficulties within a company. Competition, pricing systems, and reorganisation are just a few of the factors that may cause change inside an organisation. These factors might alter management, personnel, organisational structure, and workplace procedures.

I came to understand that critical thinking may be prompted by a variety of experiences, including good ones like happiness, excitement, and rewarding occurrences as well as bad ones like grief and traumatic experiences.

According to the course content, critical thinkers often have wide-ranging perspectives, an open mind, and a compassionate nature. They are often receptive to other various points of view as well as different people's beliefs, values, and mindsets (Haber J., 2020).

I also gained knowledge of the processes involved in the process of problem-solving and decision making, which include recognizing the issue, determining the alternatives, performing an assessment, and finally making a choice. In addition to that, I was given the opportunity to acquire knowledge about the resources that are available to strengthen critical thinking as well as the methods by which critical thinking may be used in the process of decision-making. Finally, I was able to gain knowledge on managing creativity and inventiveness in the workplace, where I discovered that plans and strategy, logistics, advertising, human resources, and technology all have significant room for innovation.

b. Feelings

The content of the class was relatively new to me, and it was challenging for me to understand it all at once, so I was feeling somewhat stressed out while I was studying it. Before I finally got an understanding of it, I found myself frustrated. We were given the opportunity to share our thoughts and feelings towards the material, which helped us go over any imagined barriers to understanding critical thinking. In the first week of the course, we received information about the attitudes, beliefs, and values that people have and how they might vary from individual to individual. Following a few open discussions that took place throughout the course, I became aware of the significance of those characteristics, aspects that had never previously caught my full attention.

c. Evaluation

Within the framework of the class, we were given the opportunity to acquire knowledge about the advantages and disadvantages of a variety of management characteristics. To begin, we gained an understanding of the attitudes, beliefs, and values that exist inside an organisation. According to Immigration Advisers Authority (2018), attitudes are the conceptual dispositions individuals have towards others and the present situations prior to taking actions that lead to behaviour. People construct their dispositions predominantly based on their underlying values and beliefs. However, factors that a person may not have embraced as beliefs and values may continue to affect their attitudes at the time of decision-making.

From week 1 to week 9, I learned that a workplace's attitudes, values, and beliefs present a variety of challenges and complexities. It contributes to the achievement of the fundamental purpose and objective, fosters inventiveness, and expands the workplace's diversity. Regarding the challenges I've established, the diversity of perspectives may affect work fulfilment and lead to misinterpretation and disputes at work.

In addition to that, we concentrated on the steps involved in making decisions, which, from what I've gathered, is one of the main essential components of effective management in workplaces. I was able to recognise that alterations in beliefs and values can affect a person's decision-making and work-related attitudes. For instance, I had a hard time learning the material covered in the class, which contributed to the attitude that I had toward the topic. On the other hand, one of my peers was much more comfortable with the concepts that were covered, which led to a positive mindset. It is evident, based on the circumstances and lessons learned, that attitudes, beliefs, and values have direct effects on critical thinking, decision making, and behavior in the workplace.

d. Analysis

Overall, everything went efficiently, and I was capable of to comprehend the content and apply my knowledge in both the business individual business report and the self-reflective report. Personally, I think it is essential, when employed by an organisation, understand and interpret the beliefs, values, and attitudes of the employees, as they can influence behaviours at work. We were given an overview of a range of management theories, including the bureaucratic theory, human approach theory, systems management theory, decision-making theory, contingency theory, among others, over the course of nine weeks. Each theory outlined a distinctive approach for tackling how management adopts techniques to achieve the corporate objective of motivating individuals to perform at their utmost performance.

The human approach is, in my opinion, the most effective management strategy for addressing the influence of beliefs, values, and attitudes on workplace behaviour. As stated by Peek (2020), the human approach was intended to increase effectiveness, and it was this strategy that paved the way for the development of human relations. Its primary focus was on modifying aspects of the working environment, such as the length of breaks taken, and the total number of hours worked each day. Each evaluated adjustment contributed to an increase in productivity. Ultimately, the notion found that the modifications were the result of the researchers concentrating on consideration to the employees and helping them feel valued, as compared with the changes themselves.

e. Conclusion

I was able to develop an understanding of the concept of critical thinking as well as the significance of it in the working environment simply due to the course. I also learned that each person's beliefs and values in the workplace are different, which affects how they form their attitudes. When attitudes are formed and strong, they affect how people act at work, which can be beneficial or detrimental for the company. Thus, it is essential to navigate these attitudes, beliefs, and values appropriately in decision-making and critical thinking in order to effectively operate within a workplace toward future success.

f. Action Plan

The skills and knowledge I have gained in this unit will be beneficial for me in my future learning, as it will enable me to consider analytically about my job as well as help me appreciate the personality traits of other teammates in a collaboration-centered task. Likewise, I am optimistic that the understanding I have about opinions, principles, and mindsets will allow me to keep a flexible perspective at my present and possible places of employment, as well as that the knowledge I have about critical thinking and decision-making will allow me to reach agreements as well as to react appropriately within different situations in order to have a successful professional life.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is undeniable that the critical thinking module allowed me to gain knowledge about how mindsets, beliefs, and values evolve within an organisation and how issues associated with these shifts may be minimised with thorough preparation and awareness. It is obvious that views, values, and attitudes may influence workplace conduct, and how those factors are expressed theoretically can vary from individual to individual. To examine the problems it poses to the workplace and employee conduct, an organisation must comprehend different principles, attitudes, and beliefs. This requires critical thinking and decision-making.

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