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Organisations Beliefs Attitudes and Values post-Covid-19

Developing Workplace Critical Thinking – BMSW5101

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Executive Summary

This assignment aims to introduce the beliefs, attitudes, and values within the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD), Students Union (SU). A student's Union who has been supporting students over the years. The study is outlined given that Covid-19 has taken over the world in the last year. This assessment is an extensive study which highlights the current challenges that the SU continues to face. This study is segmented in five major sections and a high-level implementation of method and systems is proposed. The introductory of the study focuses on the importance of critical thinking within the SU taking Covid-19 into consideration. The subsequent section of the study emphasises on analysing and applying key management theories within the SU, such as Taylor Scientific Theory" and "Scalon human relation approach". The third section of the Study focuses on critically assessing the SU's own belief, attitudes, and value systems and their impact on the SU's behaviours. The Fourth section involves, critically assessing the "System Theory" to evaluate how someone with different belief, attitudes, and values might translate the System theory otherwise. The fifth segment of the study, emphasises on discussing critical models such as the "De Bono Hats Method", and the Red Model, which reflects the pandemic working environment. The final section of this study will be sustained by recommendations and in class activities exhibited in the appendix.

1.Introduction

As Covid-19 escalates worldwide, students have been unable to explore, benefit from experiences and learning facilities as it were. They have been separated from campus life, and reassigned to virtual learning environment (VLE). As a result, there has been chaos in student democracy. Consequently, the prominence of the student union has become of an emphasis to students representation and student engagement within the Universities. Similarly, student union's have been facing unprecedented challenges, adapting to a new way of life, while learning new ways to engage, communicate and represent students. However, they have been and continue to fulfil their role while for some working remotely may appear to be a difficult task, the management has shown a substantial amount of resilience by creating emotional skills and digital training to enhance the teams strategic daily plans while ensuring promotion of positive impact.

The Student's union, has been around for many years, however after merging with other student unions, this SU have been founded in 2016. I have chosen this organisation purely because I have only just joined the team. I now represent the students as a Group President by ensuring that their voices are being heard. Being an active student myself has given me the opportunity to have a different perspective on how the SU really operates and a clearer understanding of its values and cultures.

The SU is a charity which functions by democracy and by governance. They are working in partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD). In addition, the SU is a student run organisation which dedicates its entire time to student community by empowering students, creating opportunities, engagement and providing advice. In other words, they are actively responsible for various organisational social space of the student body and their environmental wellbeing (UWTSD Student Union 2021).

1.1 The Importance of Critical Thinking within UWTSD Student Union

According to the article *"A role for Reasoning in a Dialogic Approach to Critical Thinking"* a critical thinker is regarded as consistently exercising epistemic vigilance (KUHN, D.,2018). Critical thinking is the ability to constructively analyse tasks ahead. It is essentially a complex process which requires an extensive variety of acquisitions and attitudes (Cortelle, S., 2017)

Similarly, taking the Pandemic (Covid-19) in consideration, the SU has seen a great importance of critical thinking within its organisation. The SU has had to think creatively, as in the light of Covid, it was not business as usual. The students needed support, advice but more importantly ensuring that their wellbeing was being maintained in whichever ways or platforms possible. As a result, the SU had to continually think unconventionally, by constantly asking the “why” question with every approach. Similarly, critical thinking within SU is a paramount skill to attain, it promotes problem solving and decision making skills, while creating new avenues and strategies to enhance their achievements, in addition, it is a crucial tool in communication at the Student Union. The idea of being a critical thinker has propelled and prepared the SU to make decisions that are rational by seeking the truth on the students behalf, by being open minded while being empathetic.

1.2 Key Management Theories/ Models

There are many influences which affect critical thinking and its development. Individuals, identity, and characters can have a large implication on how other individuals, processes information and essentially, their learning and communication styles.

In this report, I will further discuss critical thinking process by applying methods and models such as the “De Bono’s 6 thinking hats methods” and further elaborate with the “Alfred Lefevre 4 -Circle Critical thinking Model” which learnt this term and analyse the differences between beliefs, attitudes and values within the SU. Furthermore, I will critically assess the SU’s own beliefs, attitudes and values systems and their impact on their behaviours in the light of Covid-19.

This report will further conduct a critical assessment of the most suitable management theories such as “Taylor Scientific Theory” and “Maslow human relation approach” to help support my evaluation further by understanding how a person with different approach to beliefs, attitudes, and values may decipher or translate the theories.

Finally, the report will demonstrate, by suggesting recommendations for any changes within the SU if needed in relation to post Covid-19 regarding their belief, attitudes, and values systems which may enhance and help support any challenges that they may face or will face in this transitioning period.

2. Beliefs Attitudes and Values within UWTSD Student’s Union

Everyone has a different perspective on the outlook of beliefs, values, and attitudes; this pertains essentially on each person’s experiences, through several walks of life. In addition,

everyone who we may encounter directly or indirectly has a great impact on how we envision the universe. Similarly, the three above has a great combination of one's moral principles which navigate us through daily and impacts our behaviours (Future Learn, 2021). However, one's view may decipher tremendously to others; moreover, within an organisation such as the SU from having staff and student from every walk of life, with different opinions and behaviours. Essentially, beliefs, values, and attitudes amongst staff in a workplace involves and enhances efficacy. Consequently, colleague's perceptions and personalities, within a workplace is what precepts the reaction of dispute and predicaments. Similarly, critical thinking is a mutual element found in the SU vision and mission statement.

For instance, within the SU the executive manager, ensures that the sabbatical officers are informed about their new roles daily, by ensuring that the adequate training is given, and the overflowing amount of support is constant, such as a conveyor belt. Similarly, there are times where sabbatical officers may not understand their role straightway which is not required of them. however, the chief executive will maintain a one-to-one meeting at least once per week to ensure personnel wellbeing and any additional support required were met. There had been instances where the one of the sabbatical officers had to deal with bereavement and instantly the support of "belief", "values" of the SU were spontaneous, offering support such as, counselling through signpost but also a twenty-four-hour break to a breath. Admittedly, this staff member was in total disbelief, however this is an example where the SU used their company values and beliefs to do the right thing towards the sabbatical officer.

There had been another instance, where the one and only Group President London based was elected, the SU had to think critically and assess their thought process while ensuring that the new team member was supported and as soon as possible. He had considered many ideas which enhanced and focused on the decision making and problems solving, as this staff member, needed co-ordinators of her own. Similarly, the recruitment process for two other staff members begun, to support this individual. There were great factors considered, such as hiring which cost the organisation perhaps more than they had originally anticipated. Nevertheless, these decisions are made by a certain board where all members had to critically assess rather or not this option was feasible.

2.2 Contrast between Beliefs, Attitudes and Values

Comparatively, most personnel have their own perspective of beliefs, attitudes, and values. Being a vital part of the team, working alongside students, being part of a trustee board, with a contrast approach to belief, attitudes, and values it is paramount to be inclined to embrace competent values while ensuring that one's views are not enforced unto stakeholders.

Beliefs – essentially, are expectations that we own, and think that it relates to stakeholders and are under that they belief the same as ourselves. It is important for people to understand that everyone has their own belief which enhances their daily routines. For instances, one's religious beliefs, faith, or confidence in something, may well be different to our own.

Attitudes – in comparison, are practices and behaviours used to acknowledge an event where admittedly learned based upon our expectations of belief. For example, someone might get irritated if someone speaks about a religion that they do not necessarily believe in.

Values – on the contrary, are standards and ethics that we think colleagues should attain based upon their upbringing and education, such as integrity, respect, and boundaries (Silva, 2009).

3. Beliefs, Attitudes, and Values Systems during Covid-19

Critically, this report will assess the beliefs, attitudes and values systems which contemplates to the SU's and their impact, behaviours during the pandemic. These are great factors which enables us to grow by embodying our perceptions and approach within the workplace.

According to George Bernard Shaw *"Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything"* (Black, 2019).

Beliefs are at times what we learn from a cultural prospect such as faith, this might be a factor that is experienced or read about. In order for beliefs to be somewhat activated; it is vital that we voice that opinion while expressing our sentiments towards how true it can potentially be. Moreover, values are our standards again based upon one's upbringing which we tend to hold dear to our hearts which can be enhanced by daily life experiences. For instance, one of our students has been invited to an event planned by the SU in the light of the summer break celebrating exams results, there are quite a few Muslims, and their belief is that a woman must remain covered especially if they are out in public. However, her peers might have their own beliefs along the lines of, it is not what are you keeping all this material on.

Similarly, at the SU, they serve students by providing experiences, activities and advice which reflects the workplace beliefs, attitudes, and values. For example, as a student I have been elected by the student to work alongside the SU to be a voice to represent students at large. However, there was an unusual issue that the SU had to critically assess, one of which was ensuring that I was treated well as a student, but more importantly as a staff. Moreover, the SU has ensured that the company values were there but also the mission and vision towards their students were aligned with their attitudes. Now, I am very unsure rather this was a conflict

for the chief executive and team members; however, I can say that there are a good team who came together to create a positive outcome.

Consequently, critical thinking is to translate and emphasise own beliefs, attitudes, and values while ensuring, not to dictate the delivery in daily assignments to the organisation so that the operation is successful. The managers, ability to take on board other team members values is a skill of great leadership.

3.1 Impact of Workplace Behaviour – Covid-19

Critical thinking is often triggered by either positive or negative sequences. Due to these unforeseen circumstances, the Pandemic, there has been a great impact on the Student Union environment behaviour.

In the past year, Covid -19 has drastically changed the way in which we all interact with each other; from social distancing, to face mask and for some working from home. The changes in the SU happened quite rapidly as students had to leave their campuses and study from home and the list goes on. The SU came up with protocols to keep their staff safe by following the government guidelines. Such as masks wearing, I still wonder if this has helped, hand sanitising and more importantly social distancing. Everyone reactions were with shock and disbelief as most of us have never seen such disruptions in our lifetimes. However, it was the SU top priority to ensure that staff were safe, the work environment was viable and comfortable, while ensuring that every staff member were supported. The challenge was imminent and elucidated. The SU had to adapt, with all the unwanted emotions and feeling such as anxiety and fear which the pandemic has brought upon the team which created other behaviours that they were not ready to be essentially like robots (Thomas, 2020).

Comparatively, the SU has always had well-being and mental health as a top priority rather it is for staff or the students they represent. The SU had to create a different approach on health and safety as they could only have a certain number of staff in offices, at times I wonder how awkward it might have been, for managers to ask staff about the safety of their own homes as this was one of the new rules of covid-19 for those who worked from home. This behaviour has come about with several safety behaviour but at times paranoid ones. Staff members avoid touching surfaces and door handles. The building had to be always ventilated, some desks were removed to minimise traffic and to subdue infection rate. The workplace has also closed a few cubicles to minimise how many personnel were able to be using those facilities. There was also one way in one way out with arrows to direct staff in case of confusions other graphic showing to constantly wash our hands while keeping at bay from each other. Enhanced cleaning protocols were enforced, the cleaning department had worn an excess

PPE while offices had never been an environment with a lot to clean, this pandemic has ensured that keyboards were cleaned for example (Agrawal, 2021).

Finally, technology has had a great impact during the pandemic, to create a minimal contact, the SU conducted most of their meetings via platforms such as teams and zoom, which in theory might of cause the meetings not to be as effective due to poor connections. Consequently, companies as the SU may have to continually review their health and safety and wellbeing policies to ensure that staff are comfortable, considering that the staff might be shielding, and may have fears returning into the office. Many staff members have lost a loved one or might be connected to someone with a lost. This is a very sensitive area that the SU may need to consider in their reviews. As a result, teammates have been connected in such a way, for some they have never meet in person, yet repeatedly suggest that they cannot wait to meet face to face. Although social media has helped tremendously, I believe that SU and other workplaces may appreciate time together much more, moving forward post – Covid.

4. Management Theories applied to UWTSD Students Union

Evidently, management theories will enhance tailoring, and shaping the SU`s changes for covid-19 and beyond. These theories have been in essence connected to promote such crisis which they were not privy to. However, by creating an effective and successful structure to beliefs, attitudes, and values of the SU and by tackling these challenges, they may face while creating a resilient future, these Behavioural theories otherwise known as human relations, will be critically assessed and compared to enhance, and promote the most suitable for the SU.

4.1 Scanlon Human Management Theory

One of the greatest American philosopher, Thomas Scanlon, born in 1940, was a former professor at the Havard University. In addition, he had been teaching on moral and political philosophy. The Scanlon Human Relation Approach, focuses on employee suggestions, and ideas which in return the employees are rewarded to improve productivity. The workers would then gain through steady employment and increased of pay (Scanlon, 2000).

Scanlon believed and suggested in this process where can be applied in the workplace.

- Employee provide ideas to the SU`s management team or Human ressources (HR) department.
- These ideas, hope to identify ways and channels to improve and promote productivity.

- The SU's management team transfer this knowledge or data to a screening committee which in this case is the board of trustees.
- The board of trustees which consist of staff and other members together meet to review all suggestions and create a plan to improve or promote performances

At the SU, there are frequent trustee meetings where reviews are periodically assessed with their employees' bonuses.

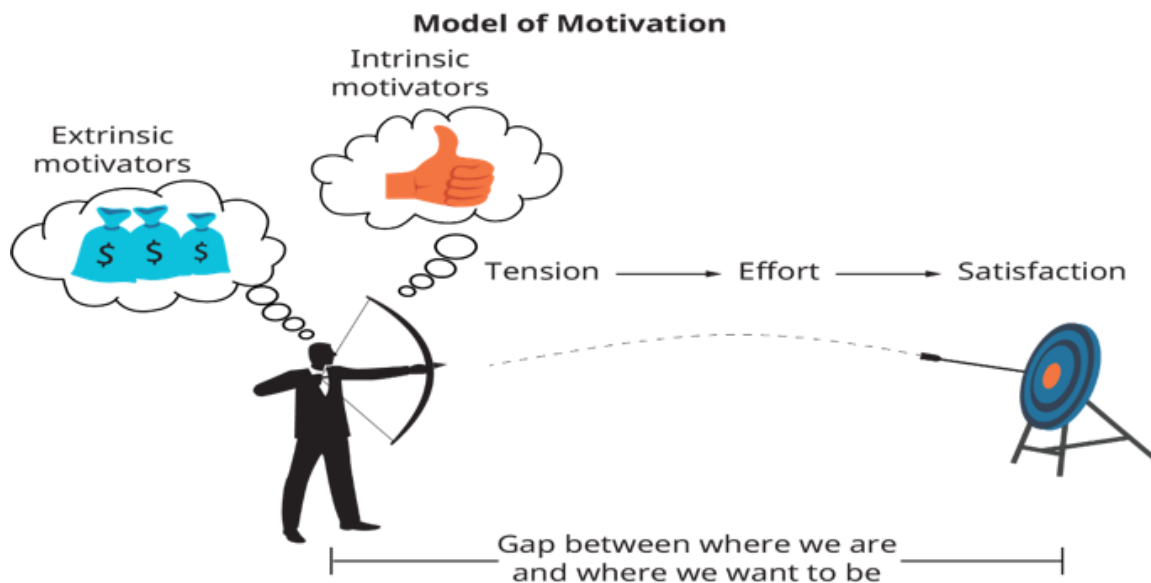
Ethically, the comparison of culture can be challenging for the chief executive whilst working alongside staff who have various beliefs, attitudes, and values. At the SU, managers motivate their staff by handing out awards to acknowledge their efforts.

4.2 Taylor Scientific Management Theory

Frederick Taylor was otherwise known as the father of scientific management. He was born in 1856; he was the very first who worked in a systematic observation behaviour. The Taylor Scientific management Theory, which was published in 1911. He investigated how work ethics were performed and how those were affected by productivity. He focused on the belief that making people work as hard as they could, was not efficient and productive. This approach was essentially different in other companies, such as coffee factories or coal mines; They believed in the separation among management and staff but more importantly believed that staff work ethics were focused on how hard they worked to get a higher wage (Mindtools, 2021).

There are four principles which the SU adheres to such as:

- Observe workers and determine a practical way to perform through training
- Create work ethics in compliance with staff abilities and motivation
- Monitoring staff performances and provide support to ensure that all avenues are explored
- Apportion the work among the team and leadership team, so that the chief executive is able to plan and train regularly.

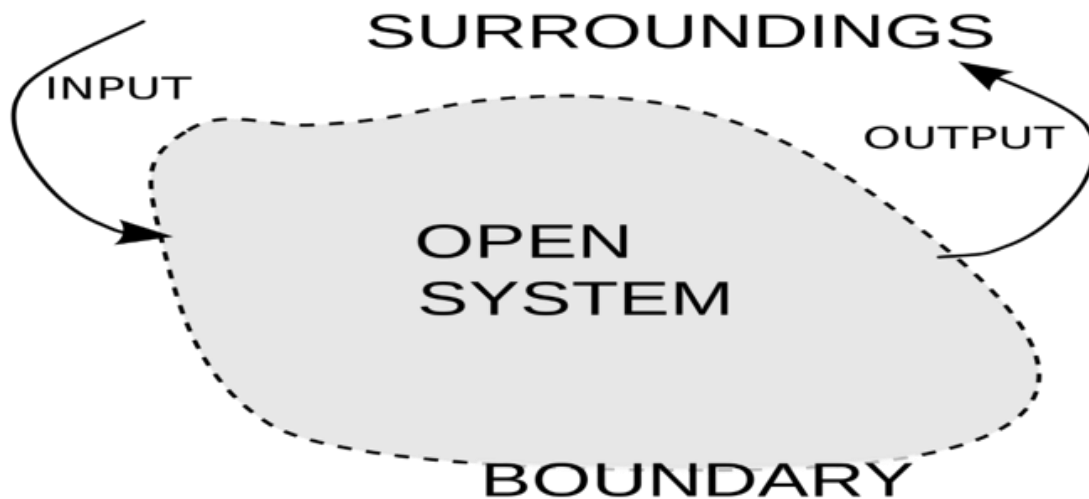


Vanessa Liverpool

Analysing my findings, as a Group President, It is paramount to get staff members views and ideas prior to solving a problem or making a decision. However, specifically during the pandemic, the team efforts and ideas are welcomed at the SU. As a result, this theory might cause conflict due to nepotism or even discrimination. Making crucial decisions with students experiences such as mental health can have a negative impact on the SU if for any reason they were given the wrong advice. However, another organisation might interpret this approach differently and their ideas may not come to fruitions. Taylor` Scientific Theory, impacts on their staff empowerment and productivity.

4.3 System Theory

The orgins og this approach are from the 19th century, Spencer influenced by Charles Darwin theory of evolution came up with the system theory. Similarly, System theory is a complex arrangement elements including individuals and their belief, as they relate to a Pandemic for instance (). Similarly, system theory is a descision making tool which focuses on the way, an organised environment responds in an adaptable way with great coping mechanisms while ensuring that the external environment is intact (Encyclopedia Britannia, 2019).



Vanessa Liverpool

Consequently, the SU has Hierarchical Structure, with an open system which inputs information and collects data from students and Human resource, thereafter processes that information into knowledge through a system to plan and create several activities such as clubs and societies and technology and operations methods; considering that all students are no longer on campus due to COVID-19. The information is then processed, and delivered with students taking part in activities, such as baking clubs, or gardening clubs via technology-based platforms such as Teams. The staff is then able to deliver these programmes based upon the training received during the transformation process. As a result, there is a feedback period where students are generally happier and staff, where they essentially get recognised for various performances, as they would have achieved their goals collectively, based upon the activities in class, system theory is one of the main theories into which the SU follows yearly (Monroy, 2003). (See Appendix 1).

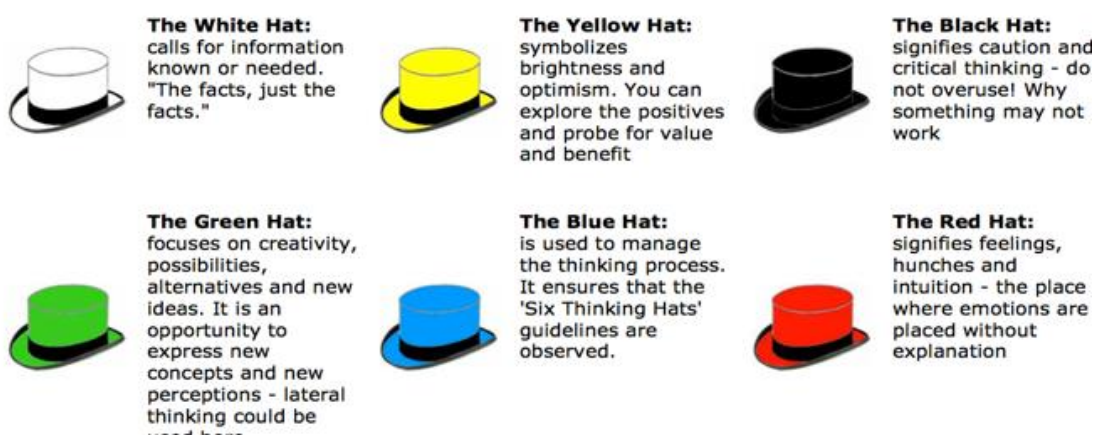
5. Critical Thinking Models applied to Student Union

Critical thinking is thought to be self-guided, self-disciplined thinking which attempts to reason at the highest level of quality in a fair-minded way. People who think critically consistently attempt to live rationally, empathically (Elder, L., 2007).

5.1 De Bono Six Thinking Hats

Edward De Bono, born in Malta in 1933, a physician and philosopher who initiated lateral thinking by writing books and teaching "The Six Thinking Hats" method (Mindtools, 2021). Similarly, the six thinking hats will investigate the pandemic crisis within the SU in six different aspects. As a result, we will look at different approaches in a conflict-free aspect.

The Six Hats:



Vanessa Liverpool

As stated above, the "blue hat" manages the thinking process while ensuring that guidelines are observed, similarly, at the SU (Mick) who is the main staff members who focuses on human resources. In the light of the pandemic, even more as staff member should and must adhere to government guidelines.

Similarly, the "red hat" is the hat for the heart. represents feelings and intuitions; when a team member is engaged in this type of thinking emotions are expressed without someone is having to justify them. at the SU, (Steve) is the empathic person who ensures about everyone feelings without Judgment, more so, during the pandemic.

However, with the "yellow hat" I think all sabbatical officers (Becky, James, Liam, and Vanessa) as they are the mediator between student and any obstacle. In addition, they are optimistic generally as they all look at things in the most positive light one way or the other; however, in the light of covid-19 optimism tends to fluctuate considering that there is uncertainty and might find it challenging for students such as – freshers, welcome week and other activities, which the student cannot perform due to the pandemic.

The "black hat" is the hat of caution and critical thinking and assessing risks, at the SU (Mick and Steve) would both be the black hat as they must be aware of things such as how we spend money and how productive campaign can be for student.

Similarly, the "white hat" focuses on information gathering, I think that there are two set of teams who handles being a white hat a the SU, the sabbatical officers initially, as they are the students primary contact, also the co-ordinators who work closely with the officers while taking notes.

The "green hat" represent creative thinking, focuses on possibilities and new ideas, I strongly believe as a team, we all think creatively, we work together, bringing our values and beliefs to

enhance the student's experience. At the SU, we constantly think creatively, however, the challenges around covid -19 have made decision making and problem solving a slightly difficult as everything almost focuses on the guidelines to be adhered to during the pandemic (See appendix 2).

5.2 Red Critical thinking Model

Critical thinking consists of many aspects and elements which focuses on rational and logical thinking. Instead of welcoming and concluding arguments placed before you it is important to think critically by asking questions while analysing evidence provided (Rutherford, 2018).

The RED model is defined as follow:

Recognise Assumptions – it is deceptive to listen to a statement, or presentation and accept that the information is factual, while no evidence was presented. Asking questions, may help to reveal any hidden agendas and unjustified cogency. Probing assumptions from another standpoint.

Evaluate Arguments – the ingenuity of measuring arguments implicates analysing information equitably, and precisely, by scrutinising the nature and qualities of the evidence, while understanding how emotions can influence the situation. Frequent barriers such as conformation bias or allowing feelings to get in the way of evaluating objectively.

Draw Conclusions – gathering diverse information, to conclude which entails a logical process from the available proof is paramount when deciding. When this is enabled, we can careful not to incorrectly take a broad view with evidence so that their position can be adjusted when the evidence justifies doing so. They are most considered to have a decent verdict.



Vanessa Liverpool

The Student Union critical thinking analysis is based around the RED model critical thinking and evaluated in three segments:

Initially, the chief executive has had to come to terms with the guidelines alongside the Human resources manager. Similarly, ensuring that information was always from credible sources. Lastly, once the information had been processed, it is vital that the team focused on how they would maintain these rules, which were essentially, definite outcomes.

6. Recommendations

As a Group President for the SU, it is paramount and ethical to assess the workplace own belief, attitudes and values when critically making decisions such as misunderstanding among other staff members, who may have a contrast way of looking at things and may need to be impartial. Moreover, in the light of covid -19, staff members might have several perspectives in the strategies in going back to the office; while the SU should adhere to the guidelines, team members might not adapt to the new normal straightway. There might even be stigmas to be aware of relating to vaccinated and unvaccinated staff. All these prospects are conversations of conflict. The assessment of values, beliefs, and attitudes will constantly be under review while ensuring staff wellbeing being a top priority. consideration in implementing flexible and remote work in vital, as parents within the organisation are faced with school quarantine.

7. Conclusion

The world is wrapped in a huge health crisis with an economical and medical strain upon humanity since the World War two. Similarly, the risks and loss of lives, from lockdown to social distancing and mask wearing, we must always remember that we have never come across such invisible attack. The is so crucial that it has affected the way work is organised. Moreover, the challenges that business are facing are affecting their own beliefs, values, and attitudes. The leadership team of organisations would need to navigate new strategic plans with strong values and ethics to maintain their company running effectively. Consequently, creating new opportunities, by adapting to the new normal such as IT training. As in the last year, virtual platforms were and still is the way forward. The process in accessing post covid return to work will help managers if the government guidelines focused on remote learning policies. As a result, the appropriate training should be in place having a balance will be more feasible.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Discuss the importance of System Thinking approach and identify various subsystems/ components in UWTSD. Explain how the application of 'System Thinking approach' can help UWTSD to achieve its objective.

Share your findings in the meeting chat or discuss in class.

- Hierarchical Structure
- Environment: Open System
- Input: Information and data
- Process: Transform information into knowledge through teaching and learning sessions
- Output: Knowledge (final product) E.g.: Degree to success in personal life, or career or different objectives
- Feedback: Employability, Career performs, lifestyle success, interpersonal knowledge, Ranking, Recognition, Performance.

Appendix 2

Luca's workplace issue (Lack of Communication)

repeated tasks, wasting of time and resources, conflicts, bad behaviour between colleagues, miss of opportunities, less productivity, less awareness, stress and confusion, poor leadership, and management.

Ivanovitch- **Green** (employees different culture background, different languages, different perspectives, undermotivated)

Vanessa- **Yellow** (put problems in place and calculate the benefits only, increasing productivity and interpersonal relationship with others, reduces stress, facilitated better communications, uses problem solving skills and emphasises situations)

Dapaah- **Blue** (providing training session, mentoring and supportive, consultants and monitoring)

Shemeka- **Red** (body language, emotions, tone, managing compassion and empathy, safe and comfortable environment which produces better results)

Raquel- **White**- (providing surveys, questionnaire, collecting data and planning further events with the aim to create good atmosphere within the company)