



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Problem Solving and Decision Making

Student Name: Teodora Katsarova

Student Number: 2132878

Module Name: Problem Solving and Decision Making

Lecturer's Name: Mr. Balendran Kandasamy

Report Title:

Discrimination at the Workplace.

A case study of ASDA Brighton.

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Introduction

Problem-solving is the act of defining a problem, determining the cause and then selecting alternatives for a solution and implementing that solution (Kaplan, 2022). Problem-solving skills are highly appreciated by employers across many different industries because they help people to achieve their goals by overcoming obstacles. While some problems are easy to fix, others may require funding, research and other processes in the path to identify possible solutions. For example, if a person loses his pen, he can solve the problem simply by asking his colleague to lend him one. However, complex problems such as inside trading, unethical behaviour, discrimination, equality and diversity problems etc. cannot be solved that easily. This essay provides an overview on the discrimination in the workplace and explores possible solutions.

Background of the Organisation

ASDA is a British supermarket chain that was founded in 1949. The business was founded when the Asquith family merged their retail business with the Associated Dairies company of Yorkshire. Today, the business is the second largest chain of supermarkets operating in the country. ASDA Brighton opened in 1976 after ten years of planning at Black Rock and is one of the first in the country to be built on land formerly part of the sea. The store offers a wide variety of groceries, drinks, clothes and household items. The business has a wide target market as it offers budget friendly as well as more expensive luxury products.



The Workplace Problem:

Discrimination at the workplace occurs when a person or a group of people treat other unfairly or unequally because of their specific characteristics. The Equality Act of 2010 provides a list of protected characteristics including race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religious belief, or national origin (Cooks-Campbell, 2021). As an employer, ASDA Brighton needs to be proactive in preventing discrimination by ensuring a fair recruitment process, by implementing adequate anti-discrimination policies, by providing regular equality, diversity, and anti-discrimination training, by encouraging respect and by dealing with complains fast.

Unfortunately, workplace discrimination occurs often as 40% of full-time employees in the UK have experienced discrimination of some kind. This means that despite efforts to eradicate discrimination, it is still a part of the modern business world (Smith, 2022).

Recently, ASDA Brighton was involved in a discrimination claim where female workers alleged that they have been underpaid in comparison to their male counterparts. The claim stated that female workers working at the shopfloor were paid less than males working in ASDA's Brighton warehouses despite the fact that both jobs were of equal value for the

business (Butler, 2021). The store was also involved in another claim where a 75-years old woman with dementia was dismissed due to her age (Hampson, 2022).

Potential and Actual Impact

Discrimination is a serious problem because it can have a devastating impact on the organisations. It has numerous detrimental effects as it leads to a lack of diversity, equity and inclusion (Penny, 2020). The lack of diversity impacts the potential performance of the organisation because a diverse workforce is more productive, creative and innovation. Therefore, the lack of diversity leads to a lower productivity and innovation rates. The lack of equality and inclusion also has a direct impact on the employee morale. In turn, the lower employee morale has a direct impact on the financial and actual performance of the organisation because the employees are less motivated and thus, less productive. Lower motivation and productivity may also impact the quality of the customer service as well as the quality of the output.

Discrimination also has a direct impact on the financial performance of the business because discrimination often leads to costly lawsuits. For example, ASDA Brighton was involved in several discrimination-related lawsuits as a result of which, the business had to pay legal and court fees as well as any compensations that were ordered by the court. These costly lawsuits also have a devastating impact on the reputation of the business because mass-action lawsuits are usually discussed by all major media outlets.

Discrimination may also cause staff shortages because applicants are less likely to apply to work at organisations with a problematic brand reputation. Staff shortages is a massive problem that most supermarkets are experiencing because the employees feel that they are underpaid and underappreciated (Goncalves, 2022).

Analysis Information

Fish Bone Analysis



The fishbone analysis has identified several different potential root causes that lead to discrimination at the workplace. In the context of ASDA Brighton, the problem is imbedded in the company organisational culture due to the lack of focus on equality and diversity issues. This means that the leadership of the business is failing to exercise effective oversight and control over its lower manager employees because they are allowing discrimination at the workplace to occur. For example, when the HR department has created the job description for the shopfloor and the warehouse workers, they have decided to pay shopfloor workers less than warehouse workers.

Discrimination at the workplace in ASDA Brighton also occurs due to lack of knowledge (Soken-Huberty, 2020). ASDA has failed to provide regular training on equality and diversity, which would have equipped the employees to identify, employ and manage discrimination issues. As a result of this, the business is frequently involved in discrimination related lawsuits like in the case of the 75-years-old woman who was dismissed due to her age.

Discrimination at the workplace in ASDA Brighton is also occurring due to poor organisational policies because the employees do not have the means to report discrimination issues (Soken-Huberty, 2020). Sometimes the nature of the problem may cause the employees to be afraid to report the issue so, there must be a way to report discrimination problem privately or even anonymously.

Situational Analysis – PESTLE

PESTLE analysis is a framework used to assess the external macro environmental factors that may impact the operations of the business (CIPD, 2021). These macro-environmental factors may also influence complex workplace issues such as discrimination. PESTLE considers political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental factors.

The UK is one of the most diverse countries in the world so, workplace diversity is of the essence to achieve organisational success. There is also a growing pressure from the public to create more diverse workforces and to offer the same opportunities to all. The responsibility to create diverse workforces and to provide equal opportunities to all is not only a public demand but a legal responsibility that all employers have (Carrasco, 2023).

Unfortunately, due to a range of different economic factors that are having a detrimental impact on the national economy, more people fear losing their jobs because they would not be able to survive long financially. This forces them to be more careful at their workplace and more fearful at reporting issues of discrimination. For example, if a manager makes a biased decision due to his relationship with another employee, others may be afraid to report the incident out of fear of losing their job or out of fear of being treated unfairly.

Range of Alternative Solutions

Solution 1:

Provide regular training on equality and diversity in order to educate managers and employees about the ethical standards of the business.

Solution 2:

Implement a feedback system that the employees will be able to use to report discriminatory behaviour without fear of repercussions.

Solution 3:

Imbed respect, equality, diversity and inclusion into the organisational culture by implementing stricter organisational policies.

Evaluation of Alternative Solutions

Providing training on equality and diversity is an excellent way to combat discrimination because the managers will become more capable of managing equality and diversity issues while the employees will become more educated about the anti-discrimination policies of the business.

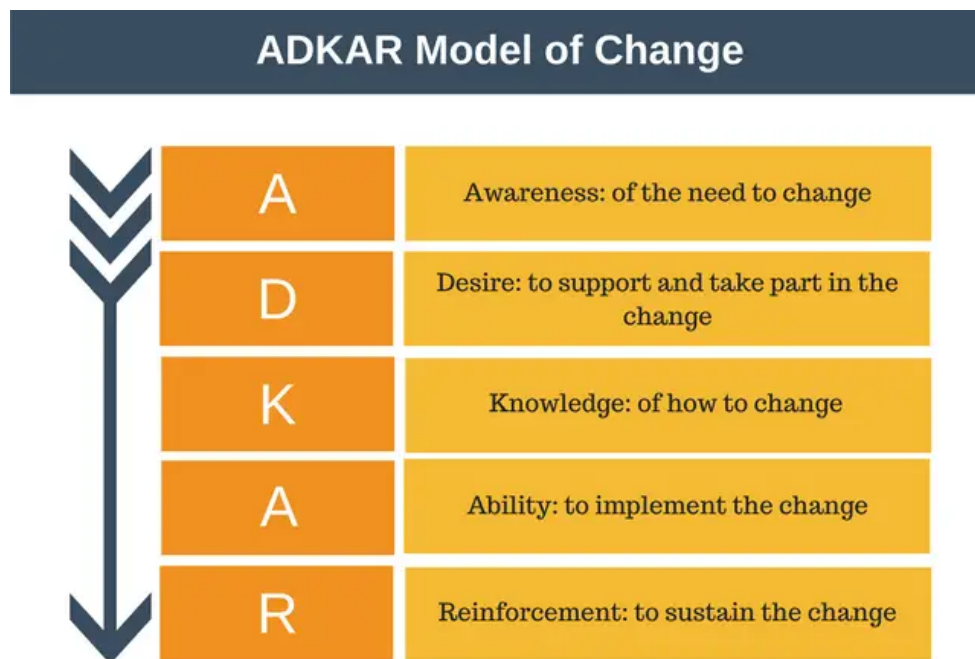
The implementation of a feedback system where the employees can report discriminatory behaviour anonymously is an excellent way to increase the rate of reported incidents. This is because the employees will feel more confident and less scared of repercussions when speaking out. For example, if a manager acts unethically by discriminating an employee based on his protected characteristics, he as well as his colleagues will be able to report the case to the senior managers who will be able to take immediate actions against the unethical manager.

The organisational culture refers to the collection of values, expectations and practices that guide and inform organisational and individual behaviour (Wong, 2020). Therefore, by implementing equality, diversity, inclusion and mutual respect into the organisational culture, the organisation will effectively encourage more people to act ethically, which will reduce the frequency of unethical behaviour. This strategy will have a long-term effect because organisational cultures are developed through time and the principles that shape ASDA's organisational culture are likely to remain as long as the company exists.

Implementing the Solution

ADKAR is a model that helps organisations to apply effective change management (Johnson-Woods, 2022). In this case, the solution that is going to be implemented in order to reduce the discrimination at the workplace is the implementation of a feedback system that

the employees will be able to use to report discriminatory behaviour to the senior management.



To implement the solution successfully, the first step would be to make the employees across the whole organisational structure aware of the need to change. ASDA Brighton can use a range of different communication methods to explain that discrimination continues to occur so, the business needs to take immediate actions. The next step would be to encourage the employees to take part of the change process. The best way to do that is by explaining the benefits that they will receive as a result of the change. The third step is to inform them of how the change will occur. The fourth step refers to the ability to implement the change. At first, the employees may be reluctant to use the new feedback system but with time, the change will be reinforced, which will allow the business to sustain the change and to use it to combat discrimination at the workplace.

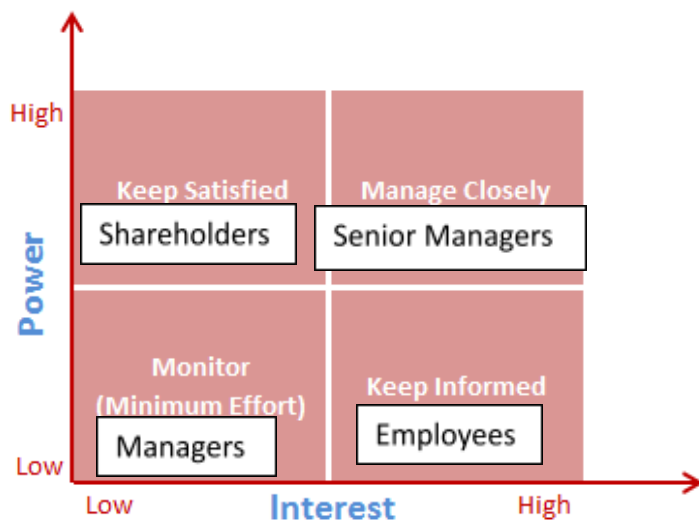
Milestones:

- Present the idea to the employees.
- Create the feedback system.
- Implement and test the system.
- Encourage the employees to use the system.

Communication Plan with the Stakeholders

ASDA's Brighton stakeholders are the shareholders, the employees, the managers, the customers, the suppliers, the investors, the creditors, and the local communities. However, the stakeholders that will be impacted by the solution are the shareholders, the employees and the managers.

Power Influence Matrix



Stakeholders' Communication Plan

Stakeholder	Power/ Interest	Key Interest & Issues	Communication Vehicle	Frequency	Comments
Shareholders	High Power/ Low interest	Whether it would reduce their dividends	Email	Monthly	N/A
Senior Managers	High Power/ Low Interest	To create the feedback system	Meetings	Weekly	N/A
Managers	Low interest/ Low power	To implement the system	Training	One-Off	N/A

Employees	High interest/ Low Power	To be able to report discrimination	Training	Two one-off sessions	N/A
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Conclusion

To conclude, diversity is a serious issue that affects businesses in many different industries. However, the problem must be solved immediately because discrimination can have a devastating impact on the overall performance of the business. One way to reduce discrimination is by implementing a feedback system where the employees can confidently report discriminatory behaviour without fear of the consequences of doing so. This will increase the rate of reported incidents and will hopefully reduce the rate of discrimination at the workplace, which, in turn, will allow ASDA Brighton to create a more peaceful and productive working environment.

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Appendix

9:16



Role Play McDonald's Brighton

PPTX - 6,5 MB



ASSESSMENT TITLE

STUDENT NAME: TEODORA KATSAROVA

STUDENT NUMBER: 2132878

COURSE: PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING

NATURE OF THE COMPLEX PROBLEM (McDonald's Brighton)

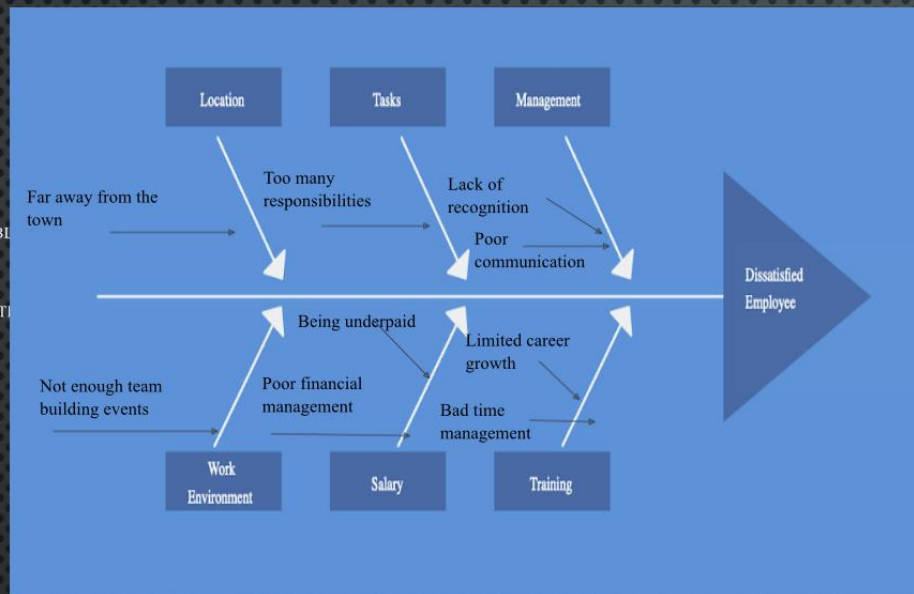
- A RECENT SURVEY HAS SHOWN THAT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE (72%) ARE UNHAPPY IN THEIR ROLES. THIS SHOWS THAT JOB DISSATISFACTION IS A VERY COMMON PROBLEM.
- McDONALD'S IS THE WORLD'S LARGEST FAST FOOD CHAIN BUT JOB DISSATISFACTION IS STILL A BIG CHALLENGE FOR THE BUSINESS.
- THIS IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM BECAUSE JOB DISSATISFACTION AFFECTS PEOPLE'S PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING.



IMPACT OF THE COMPLEX PROBLEM

- JOB DISSATISFACTION LEADS TO LOWER EMPLOYEE MORALE.
- JOB DISSATISFACTION AFFECTS PRODUCTIVITY RATES.
- JOB DISSATISFACTION LEADS TO A HIGHER EMPLOYEE TURNOVER RATE.
- JOB DISSATISFACTION AFFECTS THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF BUSINESS.
- JOB DISSATISFACTION MAY ALSO AFFECT THE REPUTATION OF THE BRAND.

ROOT CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM
BEING UNDERPAID.
LIMITED CAREER GROWTH
LACK OF RECOGNITION.



ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

PEOPLE ARE OFTEN UNDERPAID FOR THEIR EFFORTS AND THE ONLY WAY TO IMPROVE THIS IS BY OFFERING THEM A HIGHER PAY, INTRODUCING BONUSES

TO INCREASE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES THE BUSINESS MUST OFFER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO TALENTED PEOPLE IN ORDER TO PREPARE THEM FOR CRITICAL POSITIONS IN THE FUTURE.

THE EMPLOYEES WANT TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY ANNOUNCING THE EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH.

EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

	Business Expenses	Efforts by the business	Added value to the employees	Total Weight
Weight	3	4	5	
Higher Pay	$1 \times 3 = 3$	$3 \times 4 = 12$	$5 \times 5 = 25$	40
Development Opportunities	$2 \times 3 = 3$	$1 \times 4 = 4$	$5 \times 5 = 25$	32
Employee of the Month	$3 \times 3 = 9$	$3 \times 4 = 12$	$2 \times 5 = 10$	31

The weight matrix clearly shows that offering a higher pay will be the most effective solution to the problem. This is because money is the greatest motivator!