

SOLVING THE COMPLEX PROBLEM:
FAVOURITISM AT THE WORKPLACE

Module	Problem-Solving and Decision Making
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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to introduce **Favouritism** at the workplace as a complex problem, propose alternative solutions by using problem solving tools and techniques which will help to choose the best solution along with a plan implementation and review techniques.

This report will be supported with citations, articles, examples and definitions along with personal experience which supports the finding of the right solution to solve this complex problem at the workplace.

DEFINING THE COMPLEX PROBLEM.

“A “problem” is a non-beneficial situation which needs to be changed right away.”
(UWTSD,2020)

Employees in the UK are amongst the most dissatisfied around Europe as they face daily complex problems at work such as discrimination, lack of communication and attitude problems, amongst others, causing employees stress and lack of motivation.

The complex problem proposed for this report is “Favouritism”, as along with the problems mentioned above, it is one of the most common problems which employees experience around the UK.

By “**Favouritism**” we understand that “is an action mainly caused by managers to employees which consists in giving preferences to one person or group in comparison to another because of their characteristics.”(Nolo,2020)

Favouritism is considered an “illegal discrimination” accordingly to research as “If favouritism at the workplace is ground on preserved characteristics, it is considered an illegal discrimination” (Nolo,2020)

ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION

The following evidence of this complex problem occurring at the workplace are examples of past situations, which supports the analysis of information addressing favouritism as a complex problem.

- As the first example, we found “Manager treats a much younger employee better than an older one where no performance differences occur. Favouritism and discrimination exist due to age-related”.(Lucas. S, 2020)

Treating an employee better than another because of age difference is an example of favouritism, as unintentionally this manager relies on the younger one more although there was no evidence of such different performance.

- A second example of Favouritism at the workplace, was my personal problem, where I saw myself doing Assistant Manager duties without getting paid for. What was more, another employer, with clearly less experience and knowledge, came all along from the same country as my manager. Exclusion from meetings, unapproachable conversations due to the use of another language when holding a professional discussion. For instance, there were lots of key facts which other employers also noticed when this other employer got promoted quicker after 3 months at the company with no previous managerial experience.

- As last example found “Last year, an article from the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority wrote that family members employed by Members from Parliament, were paid more than average staff, causing potentially disproportionate work”. (*Bennet. C, 2017*)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.

“Problem-solving is a way of aiding the things how they are and how they are supposed or want them to be.” (*UWTSD,2020*).

According to research made in Russia, they mention that Favouritism was not analysed as an “organisational phenomenon” but more a sociocultural one. Therefore, as it was not considered a “problem” at the workplace, it was psychologists and historians who were studying this, and that was due also because of the lack of evidence. (*Safina. D, 2015*)

As favouritism is somehow a less evidence supported problem, being creative is a key point to find solutions as “Creative processes support to obtain solutions in a less but creative controlled way involving different points of view from all parties”

(*UWTSD,2020*).

Therefore, the following 3 creative possible solutions were made after the analysed information based on examples of favouritism at the workplace, which were implemented in many companies around London as an example, LEON Restaurants.

I. To bring a sincere consultant.

The purpose of a sincere broker or consultant is to bring an external point of view which will analyse the situation by being present in meetings hold, proposing

recommendations based on their analysis, facilitate the managers and employees with their thoughts and create solutions with them. As an example, LEON restaurants allowed internal consultants (HR employers) to stay for a period of 3 days once a month to evaluate manager-staff relationships, where they would attend to Team Briefing held every day before breakfast and lunch services.

II. Monthly employees of PDP's.

The purpose of Personal Developmental Plans is to know employees' desires and goals given by managers. This tool will help analyse and discuss employees' opportunities and talk about what they would need to improve in order to achieve it in equally ways. It is a very helpful tool which allows managers to know more about their employers and it gives an insight of how they can help them to achieve it. As an example, as per my restaurant reference, PDP's were given every six months to understand the needs of their employers thus managers were providing equal training opportunities to employers who were seeking to be promoted as managers.

III. Switch management team every so often.

As last solution, the purpose of switching managers every six months or so often, would be a beneficial experience for employers and managers as it allows both parties to adapt to changes through a constant brainstorm of new projects and initiatives, but also to thrive in promotional plans and encourage employers (including managers) to perform better, in an equally environment and outside their comfort zone.

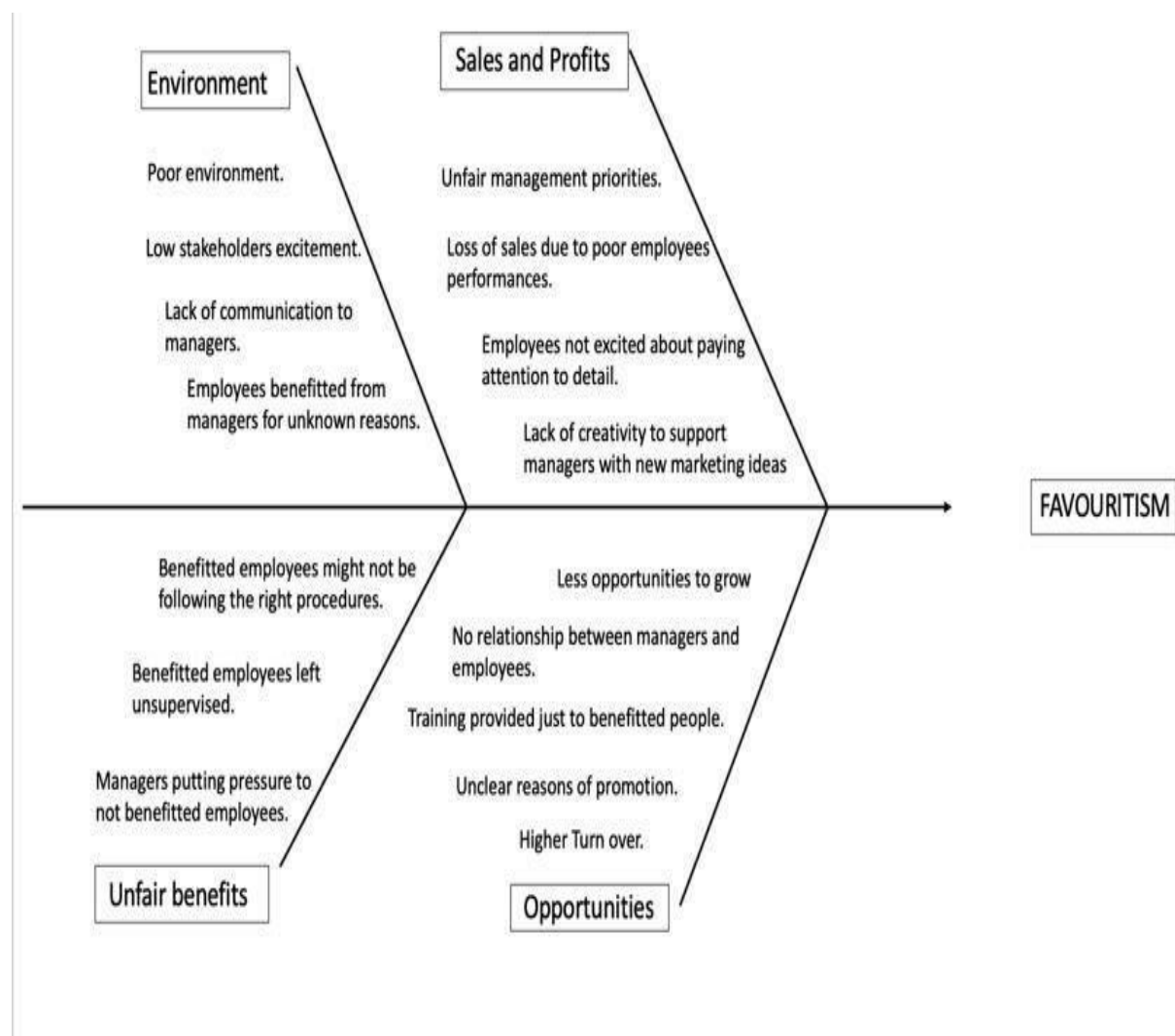
DECISION-MAKING TECHNIQUES: CAUSE AND EFFECT ANALYSIS AND PMI.

As mentioned before, favouritism is addressed as "illegal discrimination" as there are not many approved evidences which support the existent problem.

Therefore, the solution chosen which suits better this problem is **“Switching management every so often”**, as it is a creative and dynamic solution.

To support the choice of solution, the following decision-making techniques were used.

The **Cause and Effect analysis**: “best known as Fishbone Diagram, is a tool to help to analyse the causes of the problem to support the right solution.” (UWTSD,2020)



The four key elements reflected on the fish bone which were leading to this problem were the lack of opportunities, unfair benefits, the loss of sales and profits and the environment.

The **PMI**: “it stands for Plus-Minus-Interesting and is used to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the solution.” (UWTSD,2020)

PLUS	MINUS	INTERESTING
Ability to meet new people. (+6)	Adapt to constant management changes. (-4)	Stores may get higher profits as stakeholders keep good performances. (+7)
Better performance gives more chances to grow. (+7)	Stakeholders are not confident about their communication skills. (-5)	Managers can gain different perspectives based on their constant movement, ability to bring new ideas. (+4)
Ability to develop new skills such as communication skills. (+5)	Higher chances of growing, bigger internal competition. (-3)	Higher management turnover. (-6)
More chances to build stronger relationships with management. (+5)	Management can be not so confident with constant changes therefore it might not be beneficial for them. (-2)	
Less chances of favouritism at the workplace as		

management are new and different. (+7)		
Excitement driven to stakeholders to perform better. (+5)		
+35	-14	+4

After evaluating the positive, negative and interesting points of the problem's solution, positive and interesting points were highly more valuable than the negatives as each of them provides efficiency and future interesting changes.

DECISION IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.

"A plan implementation process is a step guide to address and carry the action plan for the solution proposed from a problem found at the workplace.

The plan implementation should be divided in 3 change stages as how the things are going today, how they will be in the future and how the things will be between those two stages **(Current, Transition and Future stages)**."(UWTSD,2020)

The following tables represent the 3 stage situations which are required to implement the plan.

- **Stage One:** Current Situation.

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AND NOTES
Managers benefits employer with same background, cultural and language characteristics leading to unfair promotion leading to stress and	Supervisor and other team members are affected therefore employers from both departments (HR and store) hold

unsatisfied employees as HR becomes aware.	current meetings to analyse the situation.
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▪ **Stage Two: Transition Situation.**

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AND NOTES
HR decides a change of management every 6 months for that specific store, switching a manager from a completely different area with 5 five years experience and good managerial and interpersonal skills.	Employers hold new meetings to get to know the new manager to discuss them future goals along with giving feedback to improve their performances.

▪ **Stage Three: Future Situation.**

ACTION	RESPONSIBLE AND NOTES
After a period of six months, the manager is changed to a different store. A new manager arrives and thrives in new ideas, opportunities and developmental plans equally, holding meetings with the presence of HR staff.	Managers and employers' benefit from a variety of different ideas and plans while they can carry on with their developmental plans and contribute to increased motivation to better performances from all parties.

PLAN COMMUNICATION TO STAKEHOLDERS: ADKAR MODEL.

To help communicate the plan proposed to stakeholders (the employees directly affected by this problem), the ADKAR model proposed will help this process.

The ADKAR stands for (Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement) “ is a tool to acknowledge how the plan implementation should be divided; in which stage the employees should be aware of the situation, when to make employees desire to participate, when to provide the knowledge further changes, how and when show abilities of different behaviours towards the changes and lastly how to reinforce-support stakeholders.

Current situation:

AWARENESS

To make all the employees aware of the current problem, to understand upcoming changes in management.

DESIRE

To make the stakeholders excited and committed to the new changes which can benefit them.

Transition Situation:

KNOWLEDGE

Hold meetings with new management every so often so they do not feel left out and they would understand that the changes are for a good purpose.

ABILITY

Set up goals with stakeholders. Follow ups, feedbacks or any other training-coaching which all parties can benefit from.

Future Situation:

ABILITY

Make stakeholders understand the new vision they must have in either the transition situation or the future one.

REINFORCEMENT

Analyse with stakeholders the process of change. How they were benefited thanks to those small changes and provide feedback to encourage them.

MONITORING AND REVIEW TECHNIQUES.

“There are 3 types of controlling and reviewing the plan implemented for the solution proposed. Those are “Feedforward control, Concurrent control and Feedback control”.

The feedback is to review the plan before it occurs, the concurrent control is to review the plan implemented as it occurs, and the feedback control is when the problem has occurred” (UWTSD,2020)

The best control, monitoring technique for the plan solution implementation is the feedback control, as switch management affects all the employees inside the store or organisation, therefore feedback from employers would be needed in order to know if the plan has changed or succeeded.

The 2 ways to review the plan would be:

- **Feedbacks:** stakeholders will be providing management and HR feedback forms where they will be asked questions such as how the new manager is

treating them or based on their performance how they think they are doing in comparison to 6 months previous.

- **1-2-1's:** "this review technique is based in a formal meeting which will occur outside the workplace between employees and the new managers. In these meetings they can discuss about both manager and employee priorities, opportunities and developmental feedbacks which can help both parties."
(qub,2020)

CONCLUSION

To conclude this report, the best solution for the defined complex problem "favouritism" supported by the examples the workplace found was to switch management every so often. This solution was actioned through an implemented plan which analysed the 3 stages of the change along with the review techniques such as feedbacks and 1-2-1s proposed to solve this problem in many organizations around the UK and minimizing the stress and dissatisfaction which employees face day by day.

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