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Introduction

McDonalds UK is a food retailer that serves a variety of fast-food items to its customers. The company is a branch of the McDonalds Corporation that was founded in the United States in 1940. In the UK, the first McDonalds restaurant was opened on the 13th of November in 1974 and the chain of restaurant has since grown to have 1,250 outlets around the country where it has employed more than 130,000 people (McDonalds UK, 2023). The most popular item at McDonalds is the French fries which have managed to consistently be the restaurant bestselling fast food on its menus across the country. Closely following the French fries in popularity is the retailer's is the big mac, which is a burger concoction loaded with sauce among other delicious ingredients (McDonalds UK, 2023). The retailer enjoys the biggest fast food market share in the UK, which is almost three times the market share of the second-ranked fast food restaurant KFC. The huge fast-food market share that the company enjoys can be seen in the traffic that the company's outlets receive every day, which averages at approximately 3 million people per day. The target market of the food retailer in terms of age comprises mostly of people below 35 years. The company also targets families by providing them with readymade fast food that can satisfy the entire family. In the fourth quarter of 2022, the company recorded revenues of 59,265,000, an operating income of 25,827,000, and a net income of 19,034,000 (McDonalds UK, 2023).

Scientific Theory of Management at McDonalds UK

Principles of Scientific Management

The scientific theory of management was popularized by Frederick Taylor from his work "The Principles of Scientific Management" that was published in 1911 (Huang *et al.* 2019). In the publication, Taylor provides the principles that a manager should follow to maximize efficiency at the production line and avoid wastages. The first principle in the theory of management says that a manager should scientific methods to determine the most efficient way of doing the tasks in the production line. The scientific methods used to determine the best processes should be evidence based (Taylor, 2004). In the second principle, the theory advises a manager to ensure a clear division of tasks where each employee, group of employees, are tasked with carrying out a specific task on behalf of the organization (Taylor, 2004). It is in this principle that the theory advocates for specialized training for employees where they are given the specific tools of carrying out the processes that have been established as the most efficient.

The third principle in the theory says that a manager should implement a reward system that rewards employees in direct proportion to their performance and contribution to productivity. The rewards, according to the theory, can be monetary or otherwise, provided they motivate employees to increase productivity (Taylor, 2004). Finally, the fourth principle says that an organization should have a clear hierarchy of authority and effective surveillance that ensures the performance of all employees is constantly monitored. The four principles are recommended by the scientific theory of management as the pillars of efficiency and productivity. According to the theory, implementing the principles will cut out all the wastages in an organization and increase profitability (Taylor, 2004).

Evidence of scientific management at McDonalds UK

The processes and activities that McDonalds UK practices contain evidence the company uses scientific theory of management to administrate its 1,250 outlets in the country. One important evidence that the food retailer applies the theory is its reward system. The company rewards its employees to reach objective goals that are design to improve its productivity (Nawaz, 2018). Rewarding workers is a principle of scientific management theory where it is believed that workers are motivated by financial rewards for their labor. According to the theory of management, employees will work more if they know they will be rewarded accordingly (Huang *et al.* 2019). McDonalds UK subscribes to this belief and practices by setting specific objectives for its employees and rewarding them according to the levels of achievement. In addition to rewards for achieving objective goals, employees at McDonalds UK are also rewarded with promotions and pay rises based on performances (Nawaz, 2018). The competitive reward system is a principle of scientific management that advocates for rewarding achievements and punishing laxity at the workplace. Other simple rewards that motivate employees at McDonalds UK include prizes such as employee of the month.

Another evidence that points to the application of the scientific theory of management at McDonalds UK is the company's training of staff. At McDonalds UK, the employees are trained uniformly on how to perform similar tasks. The training is designed based on procedures that the company believe to maximize productivity. Such a training process is based on the principles of scientific management where a manager is advised to use scientific research to find the most productive and effective process of operation, then train the employees to execute the processes (Timsal *et al.* 2016). The processes include a specific sequence and recipes that every employee is trained to master according to their areas of specialization. Training at McDonalds UK also

includes familiarizing employees with the words to say when speaking to customers at the serving lines (Timsal *et al.* 2016). Such highly specialized training of employees to master the specific processes at the organization is typical of a scientific management theory, which places efficiency at the center of management practices.

Another example of the application of the scientific theory of management at McDonalds UK is the layout of equipment and the positioning of employees at the outlets where the distances are calculated to maximize the efficiency of productivity. Each equipment is placed at the exact place where it will increase the efficiency of the worker tasked with using it. Moreover, each employee in the production is placed at a distance that will maximize their efficiency in relation to collaboration with the other employees. The ingredients that the employees who make the fast food are also placed for the workers at strategic places to reduce the time they take to prepare the foods they are tasked with preparing (Korkut And Nicosia, 2018). The positioning of equipment and employees at such calculated distances is a principle of scientific management as it is designed to maximize efficiency by reducing time wasted through unnecessary movements.

Advantages and Disadvantages of the Scientific Theory of Management

Advantages

The main advantage of the scientific theory of management is the efficiency it facilitates in an organization. The theory has efficiency at the center of its principles that encourage activities and processes that drive efficiency (Khorasani and Almasifard, 2017). Efficiency is of great importance to an organization as it eliminates waste and misuse of human and financial resources. Another advantage that the theory brings to an organization is profitability. The efficiency that an organization achieves in its production process minimizes the cost of production to as low as possible. As a result, a small part of the revenues generated is spent on production of goods, which leads to more profits. The theory also facilitates profitability by creating employees that maximize output. The training and specialization that happens in an organization that applies the scientific theory of management enables employees to perform at optimum levels and increase output, which increases the generation of profits (Khorasani and Almasifard, 2017). Thirdly, the scientific theory of management is advantageous because it reduces the chances of committing mistakes in organizational management. The use of scientific evidence-based method to

determine the decisions to be made and processes to be applied reduces the chances of making mistakes at the management level. Fourthly, the theory provides managers with the ability to control the workforce in a way that eliminates mistakes at the production level. Control in organizations that are managed using the scientific theory of management is easy to achieve because employees work on specific systems that can be closely supervised (Khorasani and Almasifard, 2017). Finally, the scientific theory of management is good for the customers because it enables the production of quality products within the shortest time possible (Khorasani and Almasifard, 2017). The efficiency that the theory achieves benefits the customers because they get products that have been efficiently produced in a short period, and at a cheap price.

Disadvantages

The main advantage of the scientific theory of management is that it demotivates employees by making their work monotonous. Since the theory advocates for strict specialization and division of labor, workers do the same task routinely, which leads to monotony. Another disadvantage of the theory is that it discourages creativity among employees. The strict procedures that employees follow in scientific management do not allow for creativity (Su, 2017). As a result, the organization misses out on brilliant ideas that employees could have implemented if they were free to be creative. Finally, implementing the theory has come with the disadvantage of bureaucracy. The clear hierarchy of authority in organizations that are managed using the theory makes employees follow rigid channels of communication in a bureaucratic fashion (Su, 2017). Consequently, it takes time for information to flow within the organization whenever communication is conducted.

A brief overview of the nature of conflicts at McDonalds UK

The use of scientific theory of management at McDonalds UK predicts the emergence of conflicts in the organization. For example, conflicts between the management and employees can emerge when employees have personal preferences that do not match the rigid process that the management has put in place. Employees deal with customers and are the implementers of the processes that the management enforces. Therefore, they can discover problems with the processes that make performing their tasks difficult. Under such circumstances, the employees will be resentful toward the management hence a conflict between the two groups. Conflicts of this nature will cause bad workplace relations between the employees and the management as the employees will feel oppressed and.

Another nature of conflict that can arise at McDonalds UK is that caused by employment contracts that employees deem to be unfair. The scientific theory of management that the retailer applies in its operations guide it to offer employment contracts that maximize efficiency from the organization's perspective. However, such contracts may not be necessarily in the employees' best interests. When employees feel like the contracts they have cater to the advantage of the organization more than their personal lives, they are likely to strike or raise their concerns through other means, hence a conflict. A conflict of this nature has, indeed, happened at the organisation in the past. In 2017, McDonalds' employees in the UK went on strike for the first time because of the zero-hours contracts that the organization was offering them (Kollewe and Slawson, 2017).

The best resolution strategy that McDonalds UK can use to resolve the possible nature of conflicts described above is that of compromising. In this strategy, the conflicting parties are both collaborative and assertive in the conflict resolution process and each party agrees to forego some of its demands. At McDonalds UK, in the event of a conflict between the employees and the management as a result of disagreements on the processes that the management enforces, the two parties can use the strategy to resolve the issue by discussing a solution where each party compromises on their positions for the benefit of the organization. Similarly, in case of a disagreement due to the nature of the contracts, the employees and the management can use the solution strategy of compromising by discussing the compromises that each party will make in order to find a solution that meets some demands from both parties.

Conclusion

The report has demonstrated that McDonalds UK is one of the biggest food retailers in the country by market share and revenue. Evidence presented in the report has demonstrated that the organization applies the scientific theory of management to run its activities. The theory has its advantages and disadvantages that the organization should be aware of in order to capitalize on the advantages and avoid the disadvantages. Finally, the theory can cause conflicts within the organization, which McDonalds UK can resolve using the conflict resolution strategy of compromising.

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