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# **Workplace Culture and its impact on Organisational Efficiency**

## Contents

|                                                                                                                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction                                                                                                                                        | 1  |
| 1. Critically assessing the workplace culture of Vodafone.                                                                                          | 2  |
| 1.1 Types of work-place culture.                                                                                                                    | 2  |
| 1.2 Hofstede Model of Organisational Culture.                                                                                                       | 3  |
| 2. Evaluation of the broader environment in which an organisation operates and its impact on its culture and performance.                           | 5  |
| 2.1 Impact of PEST factors on Culture and Organizational Culture.                                                                                   | 5  |
| 2.2 SWOT analysis of organizational culture.                                                                                                        | 7  |
| 3. Critically evaluation of the effectiveness of the organisation's and its employees' present cultural and ethical standards.                      | 9  |
| 3.1 Management theories and organisational culture.                                                                                                 | 9  |
| 3.2 Evaluation of the extent to which an organisation's cultural and ethical standards is sustainable and can help to achieve corporate objectives. | 11 |
| Conclusion                                                                                                                                          | 14 |
| References                                                                                                                                          | 15 |

## List of Figures

|                                                                                            |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 1: Competing Values Framework Model.                                                | 2  |
| Figure 2: Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory.                                           | 3  |
| Figure 3: Contemporary and seminal theories of management                                  | 9  |
| Figure 4: Vodafone's corporate objectives.                                                 | 10 |
| Figure 5: The triple bottom line                                                           | 11 |
| Figure 6: Vodafone's policies to guide ethical standards, values and beliefs of employees. | 12 |

## List of Tables

|                                               |   |
|-----------------------------------------------|---|
| Table 1: SWOT analysis of Vodafone's culture. | 7 |
|-----------------------------------------------|---|

## **Introduction**

Every organisation has its own culture and personality which is formed by values, traditions, beliefs, interactions, behaviours, and attitudes an organisation nurtures. Workplace culture plays a significant role in supporting an organisation's vision, mission, and goal as well as helping it to differentiate it from another. So a workplace culture is a system of shared meaning, values, beliefs, attitudes, and collection of perceptions and assumptions detained by members that differentiate an organization from other (Kummerow and Kirbey, 2014). Workplace culture is directly related to attracting talented work-force, improving engagement, increasing work satisfaction and more that impact an organisations' success, good-will, corporate social responsibility etc. The report will provide an analysis of work-force culture and its impact on an organisation's performance centring Vodafone group plc. Vodafone is a leading British multinational telecommunication company in technological communications via mobile, fixed, broadband and TV (Mullins and McLean, 2018). The work-force culture of the company is an important factor behind its long-retaining success and thus, being the part of this study.

## 1. Critically assessing the workplace culture of Vodafone.

### 1.1 Types of work-place culture.

Workplace culture is defined as a system of shared meaning the employees held regarding values, standards, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, tradition etc. There are four distinct types of organisational or workplace culture used to assess the culture an organisation practices.

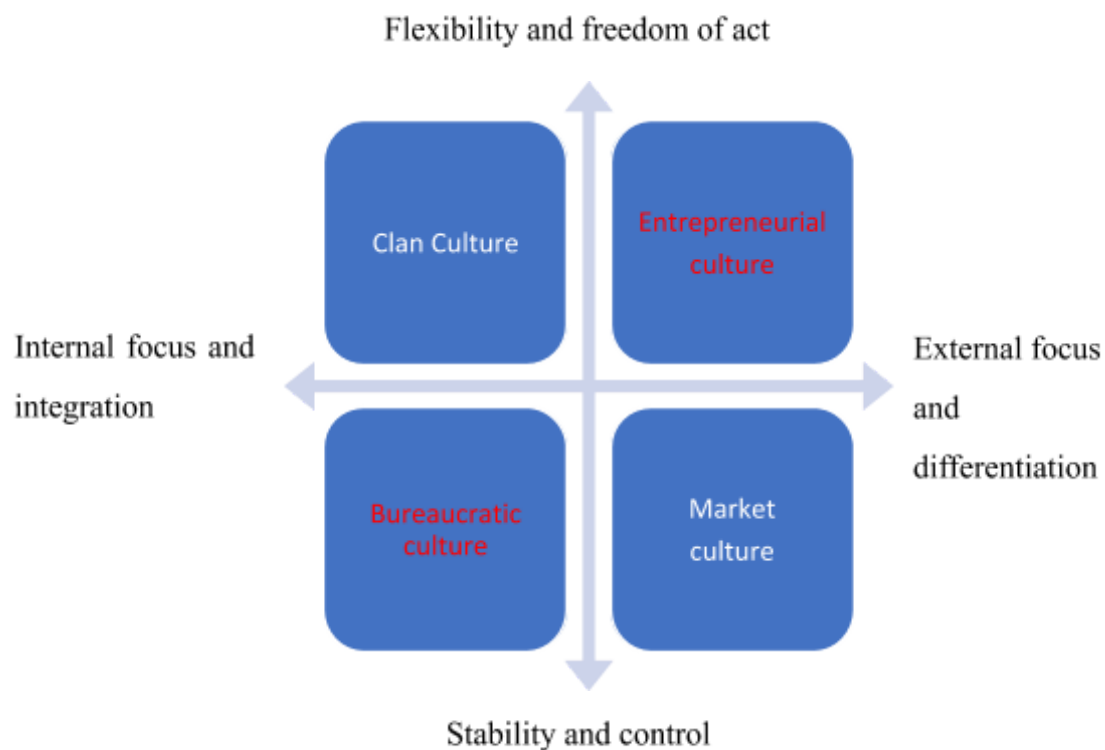


*Figure 1: Competing Values Framework Model.*

*Source (Mullins and McLean, 2018)*

The first type of work-place culture is clan culture that internally focused and collaborative culture considering the work-place as a family (Vinten, 2015). The culture allows employees the flexibility to share their opinions and free participation in decision making similar to in a family. The second type is an entrepreneurial culture where the culture is more dynamic,

innovative, employees are encouraged to take challenges as the name implies. This culture encourages to take high risk and be innovative (Pravin, 2015). The next type is the market culture where high competition is preferred not only among organisations but also among employees. The aim of practising such culture is to grab the highest market share for being the leader. And finally, the Bureaucratic culture where leaders are actively ensuring the long followed rules, regulations, policies and guidelines are being properly followed so that the factors working behind the growth and success can be nurtured strictly (Idowu, 2016). This culture is mostly used in government organisations as this doesn't directly go with the current demand for adopting change for success. However, organisations may follow one or a combination for best-fitting the culture with the goal it wants to achieve. Vodafone being a leader in technology communication is seen to follow entrepreneurial culture to support its innovative nature. In this culture, the company leaders are seen as an entrepreneur which is similar to Vodafone. Vodafone is the first company that made the first call and sent the first SMS in Great Britain 30 years ago and still being the leader has taken a lot of challenge acceptance and overcoming which has made the company's creators iconic to its employees (Huynh, 2018). Moreover, to retain the legacy of the innovation, employees of Vodafone are continuously motivated ensuring staff to get involved at all levels. The Vodafone team has seen the success of Europe's mobile contract to add 0.51 million customers, 0.4 million broadband customers, the launch of 5G service in 7 European markets and finally, Vodafone is the first UK mobile operator to offer its customers to add amazon prime in their plan etc. and Vodafone stated their success in 2019 as the result of their team-work that allowed their employees to come forward with their ideas by ensuring freedom of work (Oliver, 2015). So the culture Vodafone adopts to support its innovative work-place is an entrepreneurial culture that allows the company to differentiate, initiate and be creative.

## **1.2 Hofstede Model of Organisational Culture.**

Another way to assess the culture of Vodafone is by using Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Hofstede's cultural dimension is a framework used to identify the differences and practices of cultures among organisations (Elsmore, 2016). The dimensions are given.

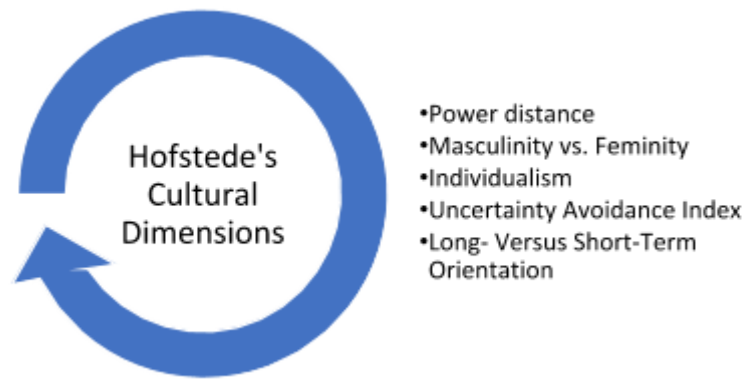


*Figure 2: Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory.*

*Source (Brown, 2017)*

Power distance index explains the extent to which people with and without power accepts the inequality among employees (Witjes et al., 2018). So high in PDI means the organisation accepts inequality and hierarchy more and low in PDI means people believe more in decentralised power. The UK scores 35 out of 100 in power distance that means the society beliefs in shared power and minimum inequality which also reflects on this UK based giant Vodafone (Brown, 2017). 88% of employees of Vodafone agreed that the company treats people justly, irrespective of their oldness, gender, family, principles etc. that are clearly showing the company's low power distance index. Masculinity Versus Femininity index explains the distribution of responsibilities, authorities and roles among men and women. Though the UK scores 66 out of 100, the companies are trying hard to change this contemporary belief (Huynh, 2018). Vodafone highly believes in diversity and inclusion and aims to be the world's best employer for females by 2025. The company already has 31% of its management and leadership roles occupied by women (Vodafone.com, 2020). The femininity index is high in their cultural practices. Individualism index explains an organisation's inter-personnel connection and scoring high means weaker ties where people believe in self-performance more than with team and low means exact opposite that believes organisation as a family. Vodafone has always believed in empowering the team and thus has also introduced a tool that they as well as other organisations can use to strengthen this culture with smartness. Supported by the evidence stated above, Vodafone is a long-term oriented company. Short-term oriented companies are reactive to changes whereas long-term

oriented companies are proactive that means they predict the change and also try to be change maker instead becoming the change adopter life short-term (Vodafone.com, 2020). Vodafone being the first network for 5G, its collaboration with Amazon etc. are some of their long-term plans supporting their vision.

## **2. Evaluation of the broader environment in which an organisation operates and its impact on its culture and performance.**

### **2.1 Impact of PEST factors on Culture and Organizational Culture.**

PESTLE analysis includes analysis of political, economic, social, and technological and their impact on shaping an organisation's culture.

#### **Political factor**

Political decisions, changes in policies and agendas, newer bills passed etc. can have a significant impact on how an organization operates in terms of culture. Similarly, the UK government has some policies with which Vodafone has to comply. Under the Criminal Justice Act 1993, dealing in securities based on inside information is a criminal offence in the UK and considering the law, Vodafone has created a culture of not buying, selling or dealing in securities of Vodafone or any other company or pass info to the third party if one has inside information (Vodafone.co.uk, 2020). Secondly, Competition law and commercial agreements toolkit under the UK practical law states the nature of competition, and agreements they can and cannot make. To comply with the law, Vodafone maintains a strict culture regarding how employees will deal with competitors such as not sharing sensitive information, fixing the price of products or services, dividing certain markets, fixing the minimum resale price with distributors etc. thirdly, the UK has Bribery Act 2010 and Vodafone turns the act as a cultural practice by ensuring the nature of gifts has to be permitted by law (Bloom, 2017). Moreover, Vodafone trains employees regarding money

laundering. So these regulations followed by Vodafone has turned the employees ethically strong which results in standard culture.

### **Economic factor**

The economic situation, trends, overseas economies and trends, taxation, market and trade cycles, distribution trends, interest and exchange rates, international trade etc. can be part of economic factors that impact organizational culture (Kummerow and Kirby, 2014). Due to Covid-19, the UK economy is predicted to face a huge economic downturn as a post-COVID-19 situation as nearly 3,000,000 jobs are at risk in the UK which is creating panic among currently employed workforce. Moreover, the orders of 4G equipment from Idea are being delayed by large companies leaving the company to worry about job-cuts. So these issues may strike employees' morality as they are concerned regarding their future. To help such a situation, Vodafone has already pre-set a culture of "Avoiding conflicts of interest" that nurture the habit of sharing the concerns with managers and share officially online so that the whole company can be protected (Huynh, 2018). So economic factors may create conflict between personal and organisational interest and concerning that, companies practices such culture.

### **Social factor**

Lifestyle, demographics, consumer attitudes, law changes, company image, major events, religious factors, ethical issues etc. are the factors under this category that may impact an organisation's culture. Anti-harassment movements, gender equality, equal opportunity for every race etc. are some of the trending factors upon which companies are trying to work and supporting these social trends, Vodafone has a well-established culture of diversity and inclusion. Vodafone targets to have 40% of its managers and leaders from women by 2025 and currently has reached 31% target (Vodafone.com, 2019). This is possible because the company has shaped the culture in a way making employees acceptable to female leadership. Moreover, Vodafone operates in 22 countries that enables the company to adopt a more diversified culture and thus it has diversity and inclusion culture and to protect employees, has anti-harassment policies (Bruce, 2018). Considering the current movement of "Black Lives Matter" the company arranged a webinar to hear from black colleagues so that they can

also improve their culture towards diversified races. So social trends force companies to adopt and improve cultures.

### **Technological factors**

Technology development, research and development, dependent technologies, information and communications, technology legislation, technology access, intellectual-property issues etc. are part of technological factors analysis. Technology has enabled businesses to boost team-work as many software are available that allow employees to virtually communicate. To empower teamwork, Vodafone has Mobile Workforce Essentials, G Suite, Collaboration and MiFi that are aimed to increase team-work (Witjes et al., 2018). These technological tools help employees to connect more and create a collaborative, integrated, supportive culture. Moreover, as employees will be communicating continuously using the tools, they'll share confidential information that needs proper protection. Vodafone teaches employees how to classify information, respect colleagues data, protect their desk and ID etc. that nurture the culture of respecting other's data and also being supportive and morally strong (Pravin, 2015). Technology and information are tied with each other and so technological factors are bringing changes to the organisation as well as allowing employers to establish a new culture for safeguarding information.

### **2.2 SWOT analysis of organizational culture.**

SWOT analysis is a technique for measuring four aspects of a business, those are strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (Vinten, 2015). The culture an organization nurtures also gives a company particular strengths and opportunities whereas lackings also create weakness and exposure to threats. Strength and weakness are assessed considering internal factors, and opportunities and threats are by external factors such as PEST.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Strength</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strong and defined code of conduct,</li> <li>2. Open to change,</li> <li>3. Ensures engagement,</li> <li>4. Reduce conflict of interest,</li> <li>5. Diversity and inclusion,</li> <li>6. Improved morality,</li> </ol> | <b>Weakness</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Role ambiguity,</li> <li>2. Reduce competitiveness,</li> <li>3. Inferiority complex.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Opportunities</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To reduce legal expenses,</li> <li>2. Intrapreneurship and innovation,</li> <li>3. Increase good-will and being the best employer.</li> </ol>                                                                      | <b>Threats</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identity theft,</li> <li>2. Recruitment challenges,</li> <li>3. Change resistance.</li> </ol>    |

*Table 1: SWOT analysis of Vodafone's culture.*

Strengths are the resources a company can use to succeed and achieve organizational goals (Elsmore, 2016). Vodafone's cultural practices are controlled by their Code of Conduct that states clearly about what will the employee policies, how they must act, what to do in morally challenging situations etc. that allows its employees to know every detail and strictly abide by those to form a strong culture. Their "compliance with law" conduct also ensures they adopt every possible change made in the country. Their diversity and inclusion policy ensures employee engagement as this makes employees more acceptable to races, religions, cultures, languages etc. and so every employee has the feelings of belongings and a perfect example can be their "Black Lives Matter" webinar (Vodafone.com, 2020). Finally their clear guidelines for how to deal with morally questioned situations such as internal information sharing, gifts taking, competitor's offers etc. help their employees to build an ethically strong culture.

Weaknesses are the drawbacks companies have for internal factors being a barrier to achieve the organizational objective (Idowu, 2016). Vodafone has a culture of empowerment

team-work and participation from every level but this culture should be monitored properly, otherwise, may create some internal conflicts. Such as while working within a team, some employees have found role ambiguity, team-work reduces competitiveness as employees are dependent on each other and also as a team include versatile talents, employees go through inferiority complex in some situations.

Opportunities are the advantages offered by external environments giving the company competitive advantages (Oliver, 2015). Firstly, Vodafone is a strict follower of laws that saves it from legal issues. Vodafone's inclusion, diversity, team-work allow free sharing of information and ideas that leads to more creativity. Moreover, Vodafone India is awarded as Great Place to work that increases the company's goodwill that will help it to get talented employees (Vodafone.com, 2019). These factors work to motivate employees to work hard for such a culturally strong organization that also helps the company to get the best from employees that will result in increased productivity.

Finally, the external environments also expose the company to some potential threats such as to strengthen the team-performance, Vodafone uses technologies to increase engagement but continuous sharing of official information may lead to data theft risk. Also to maintain such a culture, Vodafone needs to hire qualified and morally strong employees that may make their recruitment process complex. And finally, employees preferring personal interest may resist change and encourage company politics.

### **3. Critically evaluation of the effectiveness of the organisation's and its employees' present cultural and ethical standards.**

#### **3.1 Management theories and organisational culture.**

Management and culture have a close relation and thus management theories are necessary to study to have a clear idea regarding an organisation's culture.



*Figure 3: Contemporary and seminal theories of management*

*Source (Mullins and Mclean, 2018)*

First, Manage by objective (MOB) is the technique where the top to bottom employees work cooperatively to set and observe goals fixed for certain times (Booth et al., 2014). This organisation practising this theory set a mutual goal where the top-level management set the main goal and then the goals are shifted among every level so that each employee can set a personal goal that supports the main goal. The classical theory emphasises on the division of labour so that the total job specialization can happen and productivity can be increased. These practices allow the organisation to have more precise goals for each level but also restrict entrepreneurship as productivity is the main concern which goes with bureaucratic culture. Then the behavioural theory where employees are considered as part of an organisation rather than only as work-force to generate the result (Kummerow and Kirby, 2014). this theory supports the clan culture stated above. And finally, the contingency theory that states management effectiveness as a combination of management, behaviours and situation and also called situation approach.

Vodafone follows the MBO approach and the objectives of Vodafone is given below which help the organization to set more precise goals.

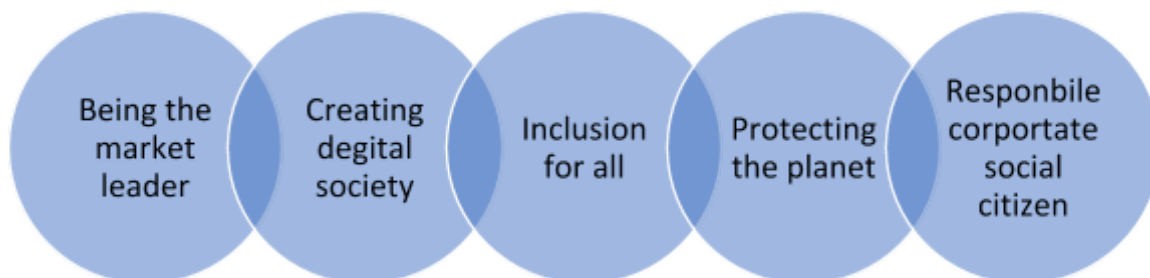


*Figure 4: Vodafone's corporate objectives.*

*Source (Vodafone.com, 2020)*

Every organization has its own corporate objective that helps them to set goals in every level so that there must be a coordination between individual and organisational objectives and that helps to build a culture of shared goals. Vodafone has the objective to be the market leader in the telecom industry by creating a digital society that improves socio-economic development, holds everyone and does not harm the planet (Brown, 2017). So if the objectives are subdivided further, 5 corporate objectives are found. The objective of Vodafone includes both organizational and social objectives that means the company wants the society to grow with them. Vodafone is now the UK's most valuable brand in the telecom industry with 63.7 dollars brand value and this supports its first objective of being the market leader and following this objective, employees are set with individual goals so that they can be entrepreneurs from their position to come up with creative ideas. Vodafone's culture of being an innovative and smart business Vodafone allows its R&D team to come up with a 5G network idea (Bruce, 2018). This innovation also supports its second aim of creating digital society by 2025. Moreover, Vodafone has a plan to create a more inclusive culture that erases gender and race discrimination. So Vodafone aims to add 40% female managers in their organisation by 2025 and supporting their goal, the HR department has the responsibility to build female leadership (Vodafone.co.uk, 2020). "Nurturing effective leadership" and "Compliance with the law" policy helps the organisation to be more open to genders, races, cultures etc. Then, Vodafone as a socially concerned organisation aims to protect the planet from their carbon footprint. So the company considers saving the planet by reducing 50% of its carbon footprint, having 100% of energy from renewable sources and 100% recycling of their equipment etc. (Booth et al., 2014). Following the target, the R&D department is relentlessly working to redesign its operation to reduce carbon foot-print. Vodafone's insider dealing and conflict of interest are such two practices where employees are suggested to share their dilemmas with seniors and co-workers in open so that their supervisors can solve and employees can learn (Bruce, 2018). So their MBO management has developed a culture of shared goals that are helping the employees to have broader ways of seeing things, increasing commitment and being more socially responsible along with being the leader. 92% of employees of the company agree that the objective helps both work and ethical standards. Vodafone's culture of empowering team-work, Forming and nurturing effective leadership,

Strong Communication, employee relationship etc. are habituating employees to work with each other and be supporters instead of competitors.

### **3.2 Evaluation of the extent to which an organisation's cultural and ethical standards is sustainable and can help to achieve corporate objectives.**

Vodafone being a top organisation in the UK follows its own code of ethics/conducts to build a strong culture that goes with the environment so that sustainable management can be ensured. To analyse the sustainability of management, the triple bottom line can be used which is a model that ensures the organisation's attention to people, planet and profit all together (Bloom, 2017). the organisational culture and policies should cover these factors so that their practices organisational culture and management approach can sustain and help to achieve their overall objectives.

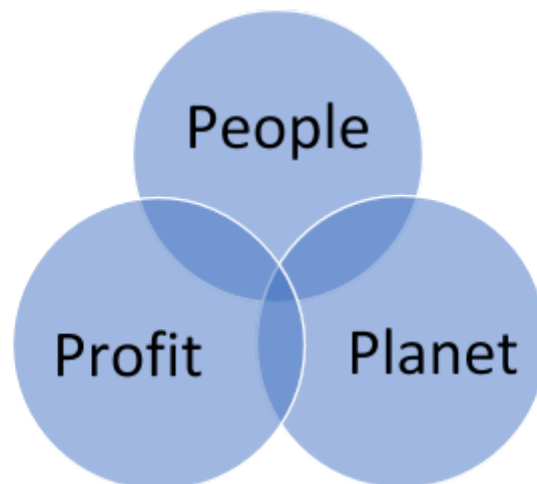


*Figure 5: The triple bottom line*

*Source (Elsmore, 2016)*

First, people in the model denote the work-force working for the organisation and the people it is serving to generate its profit. Organisation operates in a society and so the organization has many to give. Organisational culture plays a key role to shape the thinking of people regarding their acts' impact on society and this results in corporate social responsibilities (Oliver, 2015). Vodafone's inclusive culture that privileges women helps to change the outlook of society regarding gender's roles. Moreover, their saving-planet plans diversity, digitization, world-of-difference project etc. set examples to society of thinking ahead to help

the crisis people are going to face shortly. So their culture allows them to be socially responsible. Cultures mould employees' behaviour and give a sense of right and wrong and As a result, employees keep committed to working for the best interest of the organization. Vodafone wants to create an inclusive culture and their first target is to break the traditional thinking of women by 2025 by having 40% of their managers women and they have reached 31% already that can be seen as a result of employees commitment (Idowu, 2016). Moreover, they have started concern regarding black employees. So culture helps Vodafone to create a more inclusive society.

|                            |                                                                |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Vodafone's policies</b> | 1. Diversity and inclusion,                                    |
|                            | 2. empowering team-work,                                       |
|                            | 3. Innovation for smarter business,                            |
|                            | 4. Forming and nurturing effective leadership,                 |
|                            | 5. Anti bribery, anti-insider dealing , anti-money-laundering, |
|                            | 6. Strong Communication,                                       |
|                            | 7. employee relationship,                                      |
|                            | 8. Sence of CSR,                                               |
|                            | 9. Solving conflict of intertes,                               |
|                            | 10. No unfair deal with comptitors and distributors.           |
|                            | 11. Protecting the planet                                      |
|                            | 12. Responsible corporate citizenship.                         |

*Figure 6: Vodafone's policies to guide ethical standards, values and beliefs of employees.*

*Source (Vodafone.co.uk, 2020)*

Then the second element of the model is the planet. Every organisation is a small part of the total environment and its impact may affect the national environment but also the total planet. Vodafone's objective includes a long-term plan regarding the planet. Good corporate culture includes moral and ethical standards that guide employees to adopt the best. Being a top company, Vodafone considers saving the planet by reducing 50% of its carbon footprint, having 100% of energy from renewable sources and 100% recycling of their equipment etc. (Booth et al., 2014). Their strong culture enabled them to think from a moral sense about their relation to the society that helped to set such working standards for employees to work.

Finally, profit which is considered as a part of the total business plan, that means profit is not the sole priority rather it must be generated by cooperating with previous two elements. Vodafone is the first company making a phone call and SMS in the UK and was able to come up with 5G that supports its aim to connect 250 million people by 2025 (Bloom, 2017). So culture helps Vodafone to achieve its objective to be an innovative company working for a digital society which not only benefits the company but also the society. Strong workplace culture works for improving employees' code of conduct and gives them space to bring out the best from them. Moreover, it gives employees the feeling of belonging, nurtures creativity and encourages initiative for good. As a result, employees get committed to giving their best for the organisation's success. For employees' commitment, Vodafone is now the UK's most valuable brand in the telecom industry with 63.7 dollars brand value (Vinten, 2015). And their newer expansion, collaboration, 444 million customers globally etc. are their achievements of being the leader. Their long-term profitability is the result of their aim to generate profit by doing good to the people and the planet.

So it can be said that the culture, code of conduct and management approach Vodafone uses help the organisation to achieve its objective as well as behave socially responsible. As their practices, cultural policies combine the triple-bottom-line elements properly, these help the business to sustain their management in the competitive world.

## **Conclusion**

An organization must have a strong culture that goes with its mission, vision, corporate objective, social responsibilities, and helps to retain its success factor and image as well as some weak points so that it can be easily motivated while required. In terms of culture, being proactive rather than reactive is preferred more to be the change-maker not the adopter as trendsetting is considered as a success factor in this competitive world. The organisation has to find the best-fit of culture that complies with what it does. Some recommendations may have been considered to be effective for every organization. Firstly, to set the culture, it is best to be proactive that means predicting the change and being an example to employees and society that works for satisfaction and image. Then, it is better to have a combination such as adhocracy, market culture can be also nurtured so that a competitive environment can be created so brings-out the best from employees and makes them self-sufficient. And finally, every culture must emphasise on setting a moral standard so that employees can socialize with what is good for self and society.

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