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Module Title: Developing Workplace Critical Thinking BMSW 5101

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Task: How do organisational beliefs, attitudes, and value systems affect workplace behaviour? Also, how will tailoring workplace changes for the post-COVID mindset tackle the challenges we face now, and create more resilient businesses in the future?

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Selecting the Organization- Brief Introduction of My Organization

The organization that will be used to analyse the major points of discussion in this report is an organization which I had previously worked for. The organization is a transport company licenced to operate in the United Kingdom (UK). It carries out bus transportation and courier services within and outside the United Kingdom. It has a large fleet of buses that operates major routes to selected destinations by taking passengers to the airport. It also has a staff strength of approximately 150 both within the UK and outside the UK. It comprises of people from different nationality, race and religion.

The company has in place a well-coordinated and structured management system that oversees the affairs of the company and a board of directors that makes decision its behalf of the company in order to ensure it continued operation. The organization values critical thinking and applies it in every decision-making processes it engages in. As a matter of fact, when employees are taking decision in a team task, they are expected to critically analyse and weigh their option against adverse position when problem solving or coming to any decision.

As will be further discussed, critical thinking is the ability to analyse information from an objective and unbiased perspective and give the relevant solutions. The relevance of critical thinking in organizations cannot be over emphasized as it helps organizations like mine and the employees to effectively analyse issues and detect the potential risks that may not be apparent at face value.

2.0 Importance of Critical Thinking in an Organization.

As humans, the ability to objectively analyse things and evaluate issues before forming an opinion or making a judgment is very important. This act is known as critical thinking. There are several definitions given to define 'critical thinking', but it is the process engaged that is key. The process may therefore entail consciously and skilfully interpreting, questioning and analysing any assumption that underlie any given position. It is more than just applying logic to a situation. Cottrell defines critical thinking by identifying the complex process involved to include: "Identifying other people's position argument and conclusions; evaluating the evidence for alternative points of views; weighing up opposing arguments and evidence fairly; being able to read between the lines; reflecting on issues in a structured way; synthesising information; presenting a point of view in a structured, clear, and well reasoned way that convinces others" (2017, p.2).

Chatfield noted that critical thinking isn't about changing human nature or pretending we can or should act entirely rationally all the time. It is about learning to recognize our own and others limitations; and knowing when to pause, think again and research for right questions in order to work out what is really going on. (2017, 6)

People who critically think are said to be rational and curious people who constantly seek the truth whenever confronted with a situation. In other words, they seek information and alternative evidence to test or verify or discredit their beliefs which may otherwise affect their attitude. Their objective is not to confirm their own opinion, rather, they are open to revising their position or beliefs whenever they are confronted with evidence. So, one must be ready to think with an open mind within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, assumptions, implications, and the practical consequences.

It is interesting to note that critical thinking is an essential component in a workplace decision making process. It helps them to rationalize and analyse their position on any given thing before making a decision. For instance, critical thinking helps to raise important questions and issues; assist to properly formulate them clearly and precisely; helps to gather and assess relevant information using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively; assist the organization to coming to a well-reasoned and sound conclusion by testing it against relevant criteria and standard.

Critical thinking is applicable within my organization. As a matter of fact, my organization places so much value in critical thinking so much that even prospective employees are expected to have that soft skill during its recruitment process. My organization also has an internal forum which is a platform where employees and the management can brainstorm, think and objectively analyse problems. As a transport company that operates a large fleet of bus services across the United Kingdom and also within the European Union, critical thinking is applied in every decision being taken and also in problem solving. For instance, when the company wanted to expand its services to other countries, the company collated every necessary information and all the alternative view of persons within the organization who were against the expansion of the company to those selected countries because of a number of reasons. The organization analysed the alternative views and any foreseeable consequences that may arise from the issues before coming to a decision.

2.1 Critical Thinking in Workplace Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes in the mode of operations of organisations and also drastic changes in consumers behaviour and their access to markets to obtain goods and services. This uncertainty is knocking companies off balance. In fact, it has underscored the importance and need for organizations to rethinking the way they offer their services by creating resilient ways of reacting to the pandemic to manoeuvre the uncertainties that it presents.

The role that critical thinking will play in such circumstance is essential as it will mean that the organization will need to make strategic decisions and problem solving guided by purpose and driven by data among other criteria to adapt to the situation and improve their performance.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic has affected the traditional ways of operation for companies and even the normal way of life for individuals, many organizations are beginning to evaluate the situation and are constantly coming up with dynamic ways in conducting their businesses in order to thrive in the market and meet its customers expectation. This evolving process largely involves critical thinking which will basically mean the management or team members in the organization will be tasked to come up with ideas that will enable the company to easily adjust, adapt and adopt in order to stay relevant. As noted by Goetsch, critical thinking is essential to success in a competitive workplace especially when it comes to problem solving (2008)

For example, my organization has been engaging in deep critical thinking to come up with good business strategies and solutions that will enable it to deliver its services even with the government restrictions. This has affected the organization's business and influenced the corporate and personal behaviour in the organization. In terms of health and safety, the organization has come up with safe measures to conduct business to its customers and its staff. One of the ideas that was adopted was reducing the number of passengers that the bus carries from one destination to another. Another idea is resorting to strictly cashless transaction in paying for bus fares and mainly relying on technology to avoid human to human interaction. For this point, it has updated its digital media platform to ensure that customers can easily book their bus tickets themselves and make any complaint. This solution did not come up overnight. It took the critical thinking of relevant persons within the organization who analysed the Covid-19 the situation and looked at the consequences of adjusting their company operations before arriving at a decision.

Furthermore, as already established, critical thinking involves gathering and assessing relevant information using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively. With the amount of information out there about the Covid-19 in the media, many talking points of the pandemic may be subject to misinformation. Thus, updating team-members of the relevant news could ensure that information is shared effectively, and the team can have the ability to make informed decision from being swayed by biases and inaccuracies in the scale of information that comes with the pandemic.

3.0 The Difference between beliefs, attitudes and values within a workplace

Beliefs, values and attitudes are concepts that are applicable to humans and also visible in a workplace. In as much as they have their differences they are connected and are related. To appreciate the differences and to aid a proper understanding of these concepts, it is necessary that these concepts are discussed separately and are also analysed within the context of a workplace.

i) Beliefs

Beliefs can be described as the acceptance of particular thing as true, even though that belief is unproven or is not consistent with reasoning. Beliefs can be morally, spiritual, ethical or even organizational. For example, some organizations strongly believe that reducing their prices can attract more customers while others may believe that a high price for a good or service is an expression of quality, a tone of class and has the possibility to attract only the best customers. Another example is that some organizations believe that rewarding their customers for being loyal can increase their patronage. On a spiritually level also, people believe that whistling in the night attracts snakes. So, in essence, individuals or clients and organizations have their own personal belief that affects their daily lives and mode of operation. People do not always have to agree with out beliefs because they are rooted in their experiences.

Furthermore, a person's belief's is strongly influenced and in fact borne out of their experiences. If this premise is to be accepted, then it can pose a problem because they may be difficult to change one perspective about their beliefs. This is especially so when they are confronted with alternative beliefs or even views that is backed up with sound reason, evidence and is critically thought out.

It can be rightly said that beliefs can constitute bias towards making sound decision because they constitute bias towards a view. In fact, Clark & Brustette argues that beliefs and emotions

are closely related, and they work together. In organizations, the religious belief of a supervisor or manager about how they view a project can influence their decision-making skills or problem-solving skills (which can affect their ability to critically think – to reason, analyse, evaluate and consider alternatives)

ii) **Values**

Generally speaking, values is the measure or worth of importance a person attaches to something. And in most cases, it is reflected in a person's way of life or in an organisation's context, their mode of operation. Barrett offers a more expressive definition to mean "...a shorthand method of describing what is important to us individually or collectively (as an organization, community or nation) at any given moment in time" (2014,p3). The author further emphasized that values represent what is important to us at any given moment in time. Emphasis is placed on the particular time because according to him value is not fixed.

Barrett submits that the values an organization chooses must be taken into consideration when making decisions (2014). This means it must be factored in whatever goal or task the organization intends to achieve. This must also be reflected in how the organization conducts its daily operations towards achieving its mission. As a matter of fact, it is important that values must be present in the organization's policy, systems and process. It must entirely control and govern how the employees behave in the organization. It's application should not be selective. They must also be incorporated in the reward structure of the organization.

To show how value is so important in the makeup of an organization. Peters, et al in their book 'In search of excellence' expressed the relationship between a value driven company and excellence. According to them "every excellent company we studied is clear on what it stands for and takes the process of value shaping seriously. In fact, we wonder whether it is possible to be an excellent company without clarity on values and without having the right sort of values"

Values therefore has so much significance and impact in critical thinking. It shapes the way organizations make decisions. For instance, a company who delivers quality and high standard to its customer base will always factor in using more money to get high quality materials for less quantity, than more quantity for less quality.

iii) **Attitude**

Attitude is the way and manner a person expresses their beliefs and value either through their words or behaviour (Anderson & De Silva, 2009). Our attitude expresses itself through our behaviour.

Furthermore, the attitude in workplace is very important. Positive attitude in a workplace can help to increase efficiency and even productivity. Whereas a negative attitude has the possibility of stifling the ability to perform effectively (Tenny et al 2016)

4.0 Assessing My Beliefs, Attitude and Value System in My Workplace and The Impact on Workplace Behaviour During the Pandemic

Aside from the values, attitude and beliefs that organizations have, as humans we all have our own values, belief and attitude that makes us up. These concepts are developed over time through our experience, relationship with people and other factors. Our personal values, attitude and value system can influence our workplace behaviour in terms of our relationship with co-employees and the way and manner we carry out our job description in the workplace.

Sometimes, it is possible for our personal values to conflict with our workplace values. In that circumstance, this may affect our attitude and behaviour at workplace. Also, the scenario is possible where our personal values and workplace values are similar. The resulting effect of the latter is that it makes the individuals adapt and work better in such workplace environment. It is worthy of note that some organizations adhere to certain key values that define them and how their business operates. It should also be noted that organizations take into consideration the personal values of prospective employees that align with its workplace values when recruiting new employees.

This pandemic has revealed that there is a need to portray our values and have positive workplace behaviour in order to survive these trying and unprecedented times. In most organizations, employees may be working from home. So, in those situations, the employee is not under the supervision of anyone. It is in this moment that values like punctuality, dedication to work, integrity, honesty amongst other core values become very relevant.

Therefore, in relation to the foregoing, some of my personal values are honesty, integrity, being positive, meeting deadlines, respecting other people's decisions and privacy. These values are applicable in my workplace and they influence the way I carry out whatever task I am

assigned in my workplace, especially during this pandemic, as a sales customer representative.

I will discuss some of these values individually by attempting to show the impact on workplace behaviour during this pandemic.

4.1 Punctuality

Punctuality is a value and attitude that is embedded in my workplace culture. In fact, it is contained in my organization's handbook. It is so important that the organization imposes penalties on employees who fail to be punctual in their task or coming to the office. Punctuality is an attitude which I equally exhibit in my daily activities and in fact, it is a value which I cherish so much. I always ensure that as a sales customer representative I come to work on time and finish my task within the set time especially in this period of the covid-19 pandemic. On a general note, being punctual is a commendable attitude because it shows that one is truly professional and increases one credibility. The pandemic has increased the need for employees to be punctual for instance in attending online meeting and meeting deadlines for tasks.

4.2 Integrity and Honesty

Integrity and Honesty are core values that I always strive to maintain both in my relationship with people and in my workplace. Integrity may be defined as the practice of being honest and showing strong moral or ethical values. These values are so important to the effective functioning of my role because as a customer sales representative. This is because I handle most of the payments in my organization. It is my responsibility to show these values at the highest standard especially in this pandemic where I am almost always unsupervised.

4.3 Positive Attitude

One of the attitudes I like to express personally in my daily life is positive attitude. Positive attitude can be described as a state of mind that envisions and expects favourable results. Having a positive attitude in my workplace has helped me to get my task done without fear. It has a way of positively affecting my relationship with my co-employees at work. I have also tried to maintain this attitude during this pandemic as sometimes the covid-19 could bring fear and panic to people. Therefore, it is important for me to always maintain that attitude at work to ensure that it doesn't affect my ability to carry out my task.

4.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

Maintaining privacy and respecting other people matter is a personal value that I always express in any relationship I find myself. This could be either with friends in informal settings or with co-workers. The value of privacy and confidentiality also applies to workplace especially when it comes to protecting an organization's sensitive information from disclosure to the public or a third party without the requisite authority to do so.

5.0 A critical assessment of an appropriate management theory to evaluate how someone with different beliefs, attitudes and values might interpret the theory differently.

Management theories can shape the foundation of successful businesses and leaders in any kind of organisation. In designing an effective organisation, the structure, beliefs and values of the organisation must be considered.

There are different types of management theories. Management theories have evolved to acknowledge that corporate culture can be a contributor to performance. Some of the benefits of management theories of includes increased productivity, simplified decision making, increased collaboration and increased objectivity.

(a) Increased Productivity: Organizations utilize management theories to make the most of their employees to improve their performance and also increase their productivity.

(b) Simplifies Decision Making Process: Management theories assist organizations to simplify their decision-making process and helps employees to be effective in their roles.

(c) Increases collaboration: Organizations make use of management theories to encourage their employee participation and increase collaboration in the workplace

(d) Increased objectivity: management theories assist organizations to make scientifically proven changes that makes use of critical thinking process rather than relying on their judgment.

i. Bureaucratic Management theory

This management theory was developed by Max Weber. This theory focuses on two fundamental principles or essential elements. The first entails structuring an organization into a hierarchy while the second entails the organization being governed by clearly defined legal decision-making rules. It is believed that these principles are complementary, and they help an organization to achieve its goals.

The principles for creating this system includes a chain of command, clear division of labor, separation of personal and organizational assets of the owner, strict and consistent rules and

regulations, meticulous recordkeeping and documentation and the selection and promotion of employees based on their performance and qualifications. (Conlin, 2019)

ii. Contingency Theory

This management theory was developed by Fred Fiedler. The main position of this theory is that there is no best way or single way to lead or organise a corporation. This position is premised on the fact that there may be several external or internal factors or constraints that that may alter what appears to be the best method to lead an organization in a given situation. In other words, the appropriate strategy of leading an organization should be dependent on the situation the organization is confronted with and not an already prepacked theory that may not fit the situation. Thus, the theory suggests that an effective leader applies their own unique style of leadership to the right situation they are confronted with. With this method, it is believed that contingent leaders are flexible in choosing and adapting to strategies that suit the change in situation in the running of the organization. (Conlin, 2019)

iii. Human Relations Theory

The human relations management theory was developed by Elton Mayo. According to this theory, which was developed from a series of experiments, employees in an organization are likely to be more motivated by giving them personal attention and being part of a group that they are likely to be by money or even other working conditions.

The experiments which led to this theory was designed with the belief that if employees get special attention and they perceive their work as having significance and value, they will be motivated to produce more which ultimately leads to high quality work (Conlin, 2019).

iv. System Theory

This theory was proposed by Ludwig Van Bertalanffy in the 1940s and furthered by Ross Ashby in 1964.

Systems management offers an alternative approach to the planning and management of organizations. The systems management theory proposes that businesses, like the human body, consists of multiple components that work harmoniously so that the larger system can function optimally. According to the theory, the success of an organization depends on several key elements: synergy, interdependence, and interrelations between various subsystems.

This theory recognizes that employees are one of the most important components of a company. Other elements crucial to the success of a business are departments, workgroups,

and business units. In practice, managers are required to evaluate patterns and events in their companies so as to determine the best management approach. This way, they are able to collaborate on different programs so that they can work as a collective whole rather than as isolated units. (Conlin, 2019)

5.1 Assessment of Systems theory - How people with different values beliefs and attitudes may react differently.

This organizational theory is applicable in my chosen organization. Every unit is relevant in making up of the decision process of the organization. Different department who are comprised of people with different beliefs and attitude on a particular issue all collaborate in the decision-making process. Given that the system accommodates all, there is always the likelihood that people with different beliefs, values and attitude may not always want to conform with this mode of organizational theory.

However, over the years, it has worked fine. It has given the organization the opportunity to collect wide range of ideas and perspectives from smaller units in making significant decision. It makes the organization work in a team rather as an isolated unit therefore promoting teamwork and effective collaboration. It gives each unit in the organization a sense of value and recognition irrespective of whether their ideas, beliefs or values may be different.

6. Application of critical thinking model.

A workplace has been described as an extreme environment that constantly faces many problems and which demands problem solving skills through critical thinking (Tripathy, 2018). There are several critical thinking models that are used by organizations to make decisions. A couple of the recognized models are: RED Model; DE BONO's 6 Thinking Hats Methods; Alfaro Lefevre 4-Circle model and Benner's Novice to Expert theory.

One of the critical thinking models that is frequently used in my workplace is the RED model. This model follows three structured process which are

(a) **Recognizing assumptions:** This entails the ability to distinguish and separate facts from opinion. The ability to notice and question assumptions which assists to reveal information gaps or any unfounded logic. This is a very important step in the process of critical thinking in my organization which we use to sift assumption and focus on the facts. It helps our sales department to focus on the actual sales and avoid speculation in order to produce a realistic data.

(b) **Evaluating Arguments:** This entails objectively analysing information and questioning the evidence supporting the argument. One issue or common barrier that precludes us from

properly evaluating arguments objectively is our bias. It makes us to see things only from our point of view thereby shutting out logical point of view.

(c) **Drawing Conclusion:** This last stage entails arriving at a conclusion that follows a logical process from the available evidence and they do not generalize beyond the evidence.

7. Conclusion

This report has been able to show the importance of critical thinking in a workplace and how it has been applied especially in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. The report showed that my chosen organization places so much value on critical thinking and shows how it is a sought-after skill in its recruitment process. It was further observed that my organization has an internal forum where employees and the management brainstorm, think and objectively analyse problems.

The work went further to analyse the differences between values, attitudes and beliefs and its application in a workplace. This discussion gave the opportunity to discuss my personal values and its application in my organization. The work also discussed the management theories and how persons with different beliefs, values and attitude might view it. It was noted that my organization makes use of the systems management theory.

Finally, the work highlighted the different critical thinking models and discussed The RED model and its applicability in my organization in its decision-making process.

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