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Introduction

The essay entails the selection of British Telecom Group Plc for comprehending the significance and impact of the line managers in fostering positive upliftment amongst employees. The essay emphasises the importance of procedures and policies related to an inclusive workplace which is mainly used by the UK-based business organisation for establishing a positive work environment. Inclusivity as a management practice plays a crucial role in enhancing intercultural and international communication in the BT organisation. Theories have been applied for the optimum critical evaluation of cultural sensitivity while aligning organisational examples. The types of communication barrier have been discussed in detail which is mainly experienced by the diverse workforce in BT Group Plc along with relevant recommendations for organisational success.

Inclusive Concept in British Business Communications

With reference to *British Business Communication*, there are different ways by which organisations and individuals residing in the United Kingdom communicate with each other as per the business framework and setting. Business communication in the British context encompasses the *economic, cultural and social factors* which influence the way of interaction and communication among a group of people. According to *cultural factors*, it has been observed that *politeness, understatement and indirectness* are valued by the British people as per their style of communication. This generally means that usage of indirect language such as *sarcasm and euphemisms* can be used as a way for conveying their particular message in a subtle manner. The usage of humour is very common in British business communications however it is very crucial to respect cultural differences.



Figure 1: Communication pattern in the UK

(Source: Holmes and Zhou, 2020)

The *social factors* in British business communication mainly act a prominent role in the *organisational hierarchy* such that line of authority or seniority is respected by the employees of British Telecom Group Plc. This means that the employees need to be aware of using appropriate titles as well as formal language when communicating with senior authorities. The *economic factors* of the developed economy of the UK in the service sector generally refer to the fact that business communication *focuses mainly on efficiency* and is often fast-paced. Additionally, technology such as video conferencing email and *digital collaboration tools* such as Slack, TeamViewer and so on play a vital role in the medium of business communications. British Business Communication is pivotal for not only building or forging positive relationships but also for maintaining efficient communication practices in the *professional setting of British Telecom Group Plc*. Hence, it is very much valuable for employees to be aware of the economic, cultural and social factors which help in influencing the way of communication with people and adjusting the style accordingly for optimum respect.



Figure 2: Significance of Inclusive Work Culture in BT Group PLC

(Source: Hong-Zoan and Earl, 2020)

The idea of communication is to forge connections with individuals by implementing practises that support **equality and diversity**.. Communication can be *synchronous* which happens in real-time or can be *asynchronous* in the form of virtual meetings. The idea of **inclusive communication** emphasises non-discrimination, eliminating any communication obstacles, and mitigating negative effects that could have an adverse effect on one's general mental health of **the employees in BT Group Plc** (Morrison-Smith and Ruiz, 2020). The line managers follow an inclusive approach to communication in the professional setting such that each staff member feels equally *respected and valued*. Effective communication practices empower colleagues and enhance the possibility of *organisational profit by 81.3% as per the McKinsey Survey Report*. Furthermore, the BT Group Plc adheres to the *Equality Act 2010* which is a type of legal requirement for avoiding discriminatory practices by means of *gender, age, race*, and so on in the workplace and promoting inclusion (ManEa and Rabušić, 2020). Therefore, *Inclusivity Training* is conducted by the line managers of BT Group PLC for making the employees aware of the discriminatory practices and adapts their communication style as per the specific requirements of employees, thereby *mitigating stereotype reinforcements*.

Organisation Background

BT Group Plc is a *public limited company* in the telecommunication industry and its *headquarter is in London, UK*. The company was founded in the year 1846 and provides home security, telecommunication, IT and network, Broadband internet services, mobile telephony, fixed line telephone, digital television, and fibre optic connectivity (Ferreira-Lopes and Van Rompay-Bartels, 2020). Currently, there are four subsidiaries which are *BT Ireland, Openreach, BT Italia and Plusnet*. The employee strength is 98,400 and the operating income has increased by *3.172 billion Euros* as of the fiscal year of 2022. The *net revenue of BT Group Plc is 20.845 billion Euros* and the *net income is 1.274 billion Euros*.

Additionally, a royal warrant is held by BT Group Plc and is a constituent of the London Stock Exchange and FTSE 100 Index.



Figure 3: Company Logo of BT Group PLC

(Source: British Telecom, 2023)

Theory of Intercultural Communication

Hofstede Theory

This framework is one of the most ***widely used dimensions*** for competently analysing cultural differences in the workplace. Extensive research has been done for developing this model and considering the type of cultural differences between different sets of countries by ***collecting surveys from thousands of IBM employees*** in the East and the West between the timeline of 1967 and 1973. The approach has been presented by ***Geert Hofstede*** to understand the cross-cultural communication framework in a comprehensive manner as per ***the factor analysis***. An independent preference is provided for the six dimensions for distinguishing countries in terms of culture.

Power Distance Index (PDI)

This is defined as the ***designation power and extent*** which is distributed unequally and is expected to be accepted by the less powerful members. BT Group Plc has a higher degree

index which means there is a *proper establishment of hierarchy* and is followed by employees without any discrepancy.

Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI)

This is defined as the *tolerance of society for ambiguity* which is to be embraced by people in case of unexpected events as per the status quo. BT Group Plc has a higher degree index which is followed by employees as per the *corporate code of conduct* mentioned by the line managers for a *strong corporate brand image*.

Individualism vs Collectivism (IDV)

This is referred to as the index where the *people in society are decentralised* into several groups. BT Group Plc has an *individualist framework* for helping the employees feel comfortable in executing their designated responsibilities.

Power Distance Index (PDI)		PDI
High: Acceptance of a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification.	Low: People strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power.	
Individualism versus Collectivism (IDV)		IDV
Individualism: As a preference for a loosely-knit social framework	Collectivism: Tightly-knit framework in society.	
Masculinity versus Femininity (MAS)		MAS
Masculinity: Preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material rewards for success.	Femininity: Stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life.	
Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)		UAI
High: Maintains rigid codes of belief and behavior and are intolerant of unorthodox behavior and ideas.	Low: Societies maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principles.	
Long Term Orientation versus Short Term Normative Orientation (LTO)		LTO
High: Pragmatic approach, they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education as a way to prepare for the future.	Low: Societies prefer to maintain time-honored traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion.	
Indulgence versus Restraint (IND)		IND
Indulgence: Societies that allow relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun.	Restraint: Societies that suppress gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms.	

Figure 4: Cultural Dimensions by Hofstede

(Source: Men and Yue, 2019)

Long-term Orientation vs Short-Term Orientation (LTO)

This dimension defines the *interrelation between current, past and future* challenges and actions. BT Group Plc has a higher index as the *line managers follow a pragmatic approach* for encouraging employees to train as per the digitalisation trends to prepare for future job prospects.

Masculinity vs Femininity (MAS)

Masculinity is defined as a *societal preference* for assertiveness, achievement, heroism and material reward for achieving success. Femininity represents modesty and cooperation reference for better life quality. BT Group Plc follows a *neutral approach* to promote inclusivity as per the *Equality Act of 2010*.

Indulgence vs Restraint (IND)

This dimension is defined as the *freedom provided as per societal norms*. The line managers of BT Group Plc follow an indulgence approach for better *work-life balance and gratification*.

Therefore, this theory is beneficial for the *expatriate managers of BT group PLC* as it is useful for easy comprehension of the cultural differences in the professional work environment. The Hofstede Theory is used by line managers for *training and adjusting* as per the requirements of the different cultures the employees come from. For instance, the organisational structure in East zones is mainly hierarchical where the status and position of employees are significant. However, in the West zones, the line managers can negotiate cultural differences. This is the main reason why a *“glocal approach”* is necessary to be adopted by the line managers of BT Group PLC for adjusting to the local cultures (Ilie, 2019). This approach is based on the global outlook such that multicultural employees can

adapt without losing focus of the organisational objectives. In the era of globalisation, the consideration of these cultural differences plays a prominent part in establishing a proper *business framework and healthy work environment* for British Telecom Group PLC.

Critical Evaluation of Cultural Sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity is defined as the *measurement metrics* by which the knowledge, attitude and practices of employees can be conceptualised. With reference to the *Gartner Report*, the employees in BT Group Plc *face bias by line managers* due to cultural differences. These practices affect their *morale and productivity quotient by 93%* and result in a low employee retention rate by BT Company (Newman and Ford, 2021). In order to mitigate this hindrance, *respect is regarded as one of the critical aspects* for developing cultural awareness and sensitivity in the professional setting of BT Group. Factors such as *ethnicity, language, and gender* affect cultural sensitivity. As per the suggestion of the *American Psychological Association*, BT Group Plc is conducting *inclusivity training* to help the existing employees be *culturally aware and make local connections* by following proper communication practices. This agile approach has helped in *forging strong relationships* between line managers and employees of BT Group Plc, thereby promoting inclusivity and establishing a healthy work culture.

Theory of International Communication

The *Modernisation Theory of International Communication* has been formulated by **Walt Whitman Rostow in the year 1960** that reflects on the understanding of capitalist values. The theory suggests that traditional societies will get developed and try to adapt to modern changes (Yusof *et al.* 2019). The proponents of the respective theory claim that the modern state that has emerged in the present situation is *more powerful and wealthier*. It also grants citizens the *flexibility to express themselves freely and enjoy a standard lifestyle*. The model also suggests that to ensure effective international communication the organisation should emphasise on internal forces and different socio-economic aspects to be developed.

The respective theory mainly works on five stages which can be discussed as follows:

Stage 1: Traditional societies

The traditional society stage has been followed by BT Group PLC during its set-up period where it has to thrive hard through various stages to reach mass customers and encourage business growth.

Stage 2: Transitional stage

At this stage, the organisation identified its drawback in the management and implemented an effective strategy to cope with the business management (Zhou and Kwon, 2020). For instance, the organisation has focussed on strengthening resource management to attain organisational growth.

Stage 3: Take off

At this stage, BT Group PLC has implemented strategies to develop its organisational performance and ensure a risk management programme in the long term to secure its position in the marketplace.

Stage 4: Drive to maturity

At this particular stage, the organisation has utilised the advert channels and digital platforms to enhance global communication through its effective marketing strategy and encouraging E-commerce platform.

Stage 5: High Mass Consumption

This is regarded as the future perspective of BT Group PLC to ensure mass consumption of the product through the engagement of mass customers (Zhou and Kwon, 2020). The implication of an effective communication system globally can help in attaining the business objective.

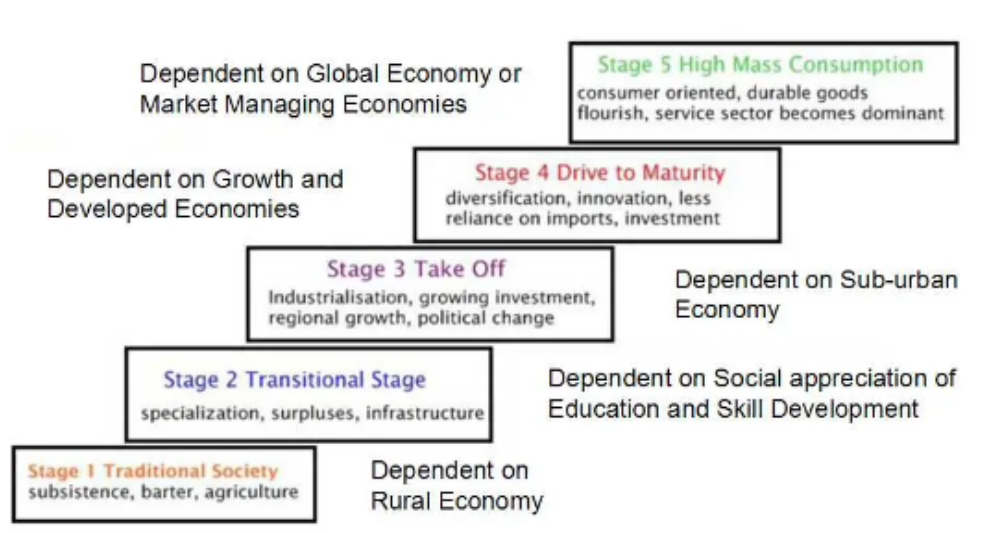


Figure: Modernisation Theory of Rostow

(Source: Revisesociology, 2023)

Types of Communication Barriers Experienced by diverse workforce

Differences in culture and language

The problem of communication in a project arises due to the presence of diversity and inclusiveness when there raises a language barrier. The **British Telecom Group PLC** has recruited workers from different aspects apart from workplace discrimination. As a result, there is a prevalence of multi-diverse cultures in the workplace with different languages. The **external stakeholders such as customers or buyers** enter the market having diverse cultures and languages. Mostly the language barrier results in the loss of loyal customers (Chen, 2019). Moreover, the clash of cultures in the workplace also violated the moral and ethical values of the organisation to a large extent resulting in a lack of communication. Therefore, the organisation should focus on creating a sustainable atmosphere with the effect of **diversity and inclusiveness** in the workplace to generate a timely execution of the task. Also the

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organisation has previously faced a lack of *cultural factors*. It has been observed that *politeness, understatement and indirectness* are valued by the organisation to implicate effective workplace behaviour.

Inability to listen to others

The ego and grudges are mostly reflected as a disadvantage of human behaviour. In most cases, it has been witnessed that the workers neglect the meeting and lack of concentration while working on the project also reduces the business performance. For instance, **BT Group PLC** has faced internal conflict among the employees arising mostly due to a *lack of active listening ability*. The workers tend to *argue and be less proactive* in the project due to office political disturbance as well as a lack of office culture (Attraran *et al.* 2019). The organisation can generate meeting sessions with the employees to take into consideration the issues arising in the workplace. The cooperation of the manager and worker in the workplace can also be developed due to the prevalence of motivational events. The employee should be appraised based on their performance which will *boost the self-esteem of the employee* to work further. Thus, the organisation can easily *approach the business objectives with timely and effective execution*.

Communication Strategies for Establishing a Positive work environment

The communication concept is based on *developing connections with people* by ensuring practices to *promote diversity and equality*. Communication can be *synchronous* which happens in real-time or can be *asynchronous* in the form of virtual meetings. The concept of *inclusive communication focuses on non-discrimination* and eradicating the potential barriers to communication and detrimental implications which may affect the overall mental well-being of the employees in BT Group Plc. The managerial technique of the organisation ensures the practice of innovation in the daily operational functioning of BT Group PLC apart from the development in productivity (Du, 2022). Moreover, the strategy of marketing followed by the organisation is very unique in the segment of marketing and promotional events. The utilisation of *effective communication techniques* can ensure a positive impact in the workplace. It will help in *loosening the language barrier and initiate collaboration* among the workers in the workplace. The *employee motivation and appraisal* can boost up

the performance of the workers to a large extent so that the team can work in a flexible manner to meet the organisational objectives (Van Laar *et al.* 2019). Further, the provision of the “*Corporation Act 2006*” in the UK ensures protection of the employee rights in the workplace and ensures positive workplace condition to develop the organisational culture.

Recommendations for Organisational Success

Culture of continuous improvement and creativity

To boost staff performance, the company can start a suitable training programme and motivational event. As a result of the organization's correct appraisal practises, employee performance will be improved. As a result, workplace appraisal and motivational activities can greatly foster the development of a creative mind. (Wang *et al.* 2020). Employee involvement in productive workplace cooperation will open the door for ongoing improvement in the organisational structure. Additionally, the strategy of an appropriate organisational culture will help the organisation become more inventive. The line managers can follow an inclusive approach to communication in the professional setting such that each staff member feels equally respected and valued.

Effective communication strategy

The management of BT Group PLC can focus to develop its By maintaining efficient performance management, the HR system. Additionally, a company's culture can be accountable for implementing methods that will support the organization's integrated performance management. (Du, 2022). The use of an integrated talent management strategy aligns the employee to retain a high level of engagement with the firm and can aid in the development of a sustainable business. Additionally, it aids in creating a fair chance for remuneration and benefits in accordance with performance evaluation. The effective communication technique will also ensure the maintenance of equal workplace behaviour irrespective of cultural differences.

Conclusion

The following assessment emphasises on the entailment of the selection process followed by British Telecom Group PLC in impacting the role of line managers in fostering a positive

environment. The assessment also emphasised the importance of procedures and policies related to an inclusive workplace which is mainly used by the UK-based business organisation for establishing a positive work environment. Diversity and inclusiveness play an important role in enhancing the business structure and developing an intercultural atmosphere in the workplace. With the use of respective theories, an evaluation of the cultural sensitivity prevailing within the organisation has been discussed. Some recommendable measures to improve organisational performance in the long term have been presented in the following context.

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