



University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

200
1822 - 2022

UNIVERSITY: UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

**MODULE: Developing Workplace Critical Thinking
(BMSW5101_LON)**

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Introduction

In this report, the importance of organisational set beliefs, values systems and attitudes for building workplace behaviour has been critically evaluated. After the pandemic hit, many organisations had to suffer from their halted operations due to lockdowns. They also had to restructure their workplace culture, structure and norms so that their operations can be

unhindered during Covid-19. After the pandemic hit, many organisations in the UK shifted their operations from the work-from-office to work-from-home for keeping up with their tasks and simultaneously maintaining their social distancing. Henceforth, this report has critically evaluated post-Covid response of the chosen tours and travel company Virgin Atlantic Holidays.

Part 1: Report

Company Overview

Virgin Atlantic Holidays is one of the UK's leading tour operators that is offering its consumers or enthusiastic travellers and tourists some exciting tour packages (Virgin Holidays, 2022). They arrange interesting tour packages from the tranquil and vintage sites in the UK to the highly energetic NYC and some other exotic and beautiful places. Virgin

Atlantic Holidays arrange some great resorts and seasonal holiday packages for their tourists at a very affordable price (Virgin Holidays, 2022). This attracts their consumers to have their offerings more and their sales thus rise higher than their competitors. The profit has slumped after the pandemic hit globally as shown in the below figure:

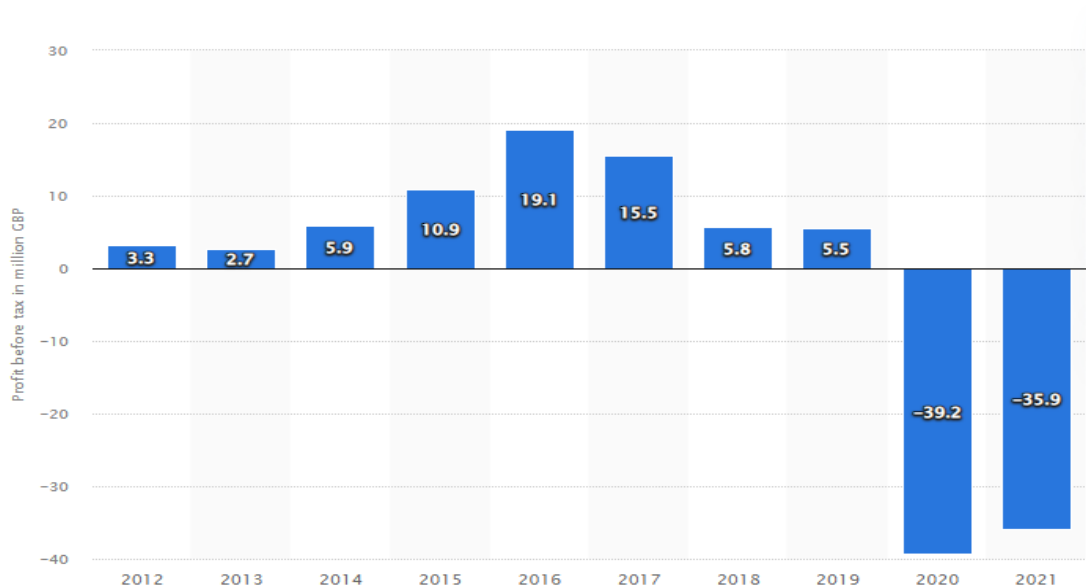


Figure 1: Virgin Atlantic Holidays' Profit (2012-2021)

(Source: Statista, 2021)

The above figure showcases that until 2019, Virgin Atlantic Holidays earned 5 to 10 million GBP of profit, and this was the highest in 2016 (Statista, 2021). After the pandemic, global tourist

movements were shunted due to flight cancellations in Virgin Atlantic Holidays' operating countries. This caused them a great loss of revenues and profit in total (Restu et al. 2020). In the post-pandemic period, Virgin Atlantic has modified its organisational culture which has made them recover its sales earning average revenue of \$277.3 million (Growjo, 2022). They also have grown their employee count last year and currently have 783 employees worldwide. Thus they have been able to make unhinged operations through and after the pandemic making a firm foothold among their competitors in the UK and globally.

Key Management theories illuminating the impact of organisational beliefs, attitudes and value systems affecting workplace behaviour of Virgin Atlantic

Organisational beliefs, attitudes and values greatly impact workplace culture and behaviour by giving them direction and establishing their purpose (Odor, 2018). The belief system can shape the minds of people working in an organisation making them committed towards their organisations and their goals. Organisational values are the principles they are following to drive their business for further growth (Jakhar et al. 2018). Those values are created for an organisation from their belief system and turning them into actions. Some of the core values of the companies such as Integrity, Honesty, Fairness, Accountability, Transparency, Diversity and Inclusion, Learning, Teamwork and Consumer-centric can create their brand persona (Devine et al. 2021). Hence, they can also set them apart from their competitors.

Employees when getting their organisational persona in their minds can internally motivate themselves to align their actions with their firms' culture.

Thereby, Value-Based Management Theory and Competing Value Framework are chosen to shed light on the roles of human values, goals or objectives to create a certain degree of controlling or flexible nature of the organisational culture.

Value-Based Management Theory

This theory is generally defined as an array of interlinked managerial functionalities ensuring the acceptance and assimilation of a firm's values inside or outside the firm (Poff, 2020). The core postulate of this theory focuses on the human values which are at the core of managing firms (Mella, 2019). Virgin Atlantic also creatively thought about setting its values Think red for fostering a positive attitude; Make friends connect with new people based on trust and respect; and Be Amazing by delivering quality services and taking pride in working with Virgin (Virgin Atlantic, 2022a). All three values of Virgin have embedded in their employees' minds in a way that their employees live them every day. They reflect those values in their daily operations and interactions with their consumers and colleagues.

Value-based management theory concerns sustainable value creation through the firms' operations and productivity satisfying stakeholders' needs and wants (Corazza, 2019). Virgin Atlantic Holidays also has been able to enhance its operational productivity through its impeccable service provision (Virgin Atlantic, 2022b). The value-based management approach also tells about the human values driving their firms' goals, missions and objectives towards a more ethical and sustainable approach. Virgin Atlantic Holidays is no different also as at the core of their organisational culture remains- touching people's hearts with a positive notion (Virgin Atlantic, 2022b). This provides their employees with enough warmth and support to reflect on their services and be loyal to their firm.

Competing Value Framework

This framework has been developed by Kim Cameron and Robert Quinn who has classified four different types of corporate cultures: Hierarchical culture, Market culture, Clan culture and Adhocracy culture (Cameron et al. 2022). This framework was initially invented for elaborating on organisational productivity and effectiveness, but later on developed for describing organisational forms, leadership roles and a firm's lifecycle. Competing values framework is named so because it contrasts and compares an organisation's priorities.

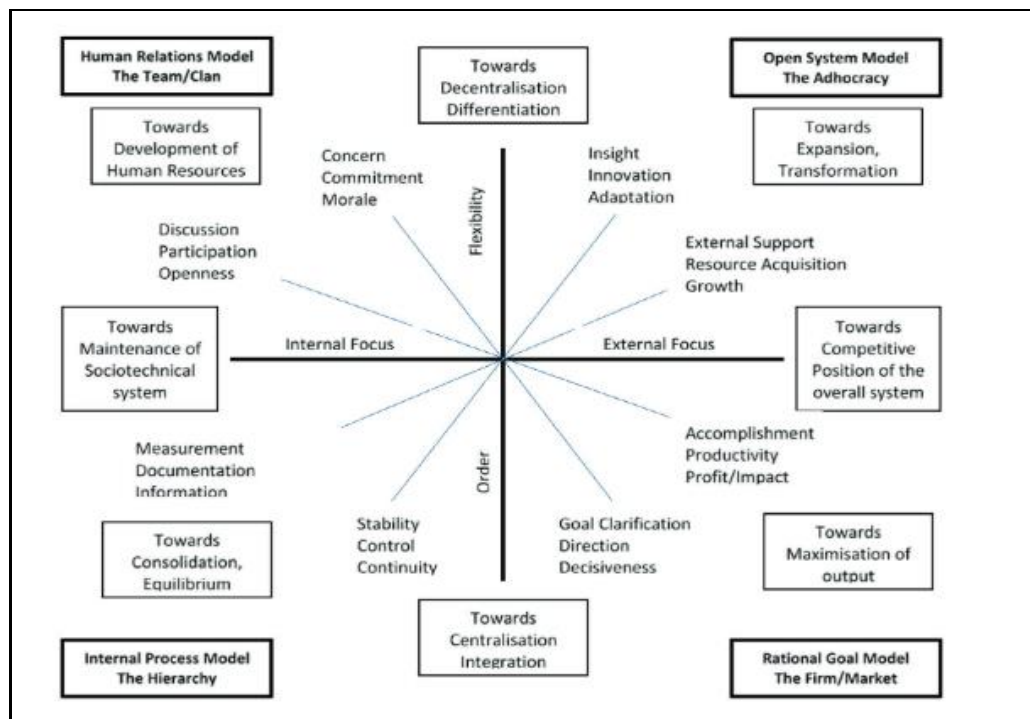


Figure 2: Competing value framework

(Source: Cameron et al. 2022)

As per this theory, the four dimensions shown in the above figure determine the ways a company integrates its operations with employee collaboration for better efficiency. Clan culture creates flexibility for employees through team collaboration and commitment towards the firm (Cameron et al. 2022). In Virgin Atlantic Holidays also this can be observed as they collaborate with their staff with harmonious teamwork and exude positive vibes and happiness inside the firm (Virgin Atlantic, 2022b). This makes the employees more committed and loyal to their work and workplace. Hierarchical culture represents the sense of security order and rules for increasing internal efficiencies of the firm (Quinn et al. 2020). This is also followed by Virgin through trust creation (Virgin Atlantic, 2022b). Market culture states getting a competitive advantage through a firm's performance by reaching the set goals that Virgin does efficiently with their regular operations. Development culture is more commonly known as Adhocracy culture states about moving from the industrial age to the information age and fostering creativity through firms' operations (Cameron et al. 2022). Virgin fosters creativity through its service provision and tour creation.

Critical Evaluation of the theories for assessing different beliefs, values and attitudes of people regarding workplace behaviour in Virgin Atlantic Holiday's context

The above-mentioned value-based management theory and competing value framework have helped depict a lot about the importance of setting values into an organisation to instil them into employees' minds and expect their reflections through their tasks. Virgin Atlantic and its subsidiaries such as Virgin Holidays also have gotten immense benefits out of this. The happy and positive vibes of Virgin Atlantic Holidays' employees come from their motto of being the most beloved travel company delivering great services (Virgin Atlantic, 2022b). Value-based management theory posits the idea of creating and nurturing human values at the core of a firm's culture (Zhuravka et al. 2020). According to the authors, three main elements of this theory are creating, managing and measuring values in an organisation which must be aligned with their main objectives to build an accepted organisational culture.

However, Bhaduri (2019) argued that organisational culture is susceptible to change due to unprecedented changes. Those changes can be external such as political or environmental and internal such as a change in the board of directors which can greatly impact organisational culture altering the values. Virgin Holidays which has now become Virgin Atlantic Holidays, the organisational culture changed for the better getting supported by its directors as well (Virgin Atlantic, 2020c). They all have thought about investing strategically to create more global business links and providing their services through their positivity and creating an employee-friendly atmosphere. Even though, the recent pandemic has turned their organisational approaches upside down due to the halted operations out of lockdowns and they faced a massive operational loss.

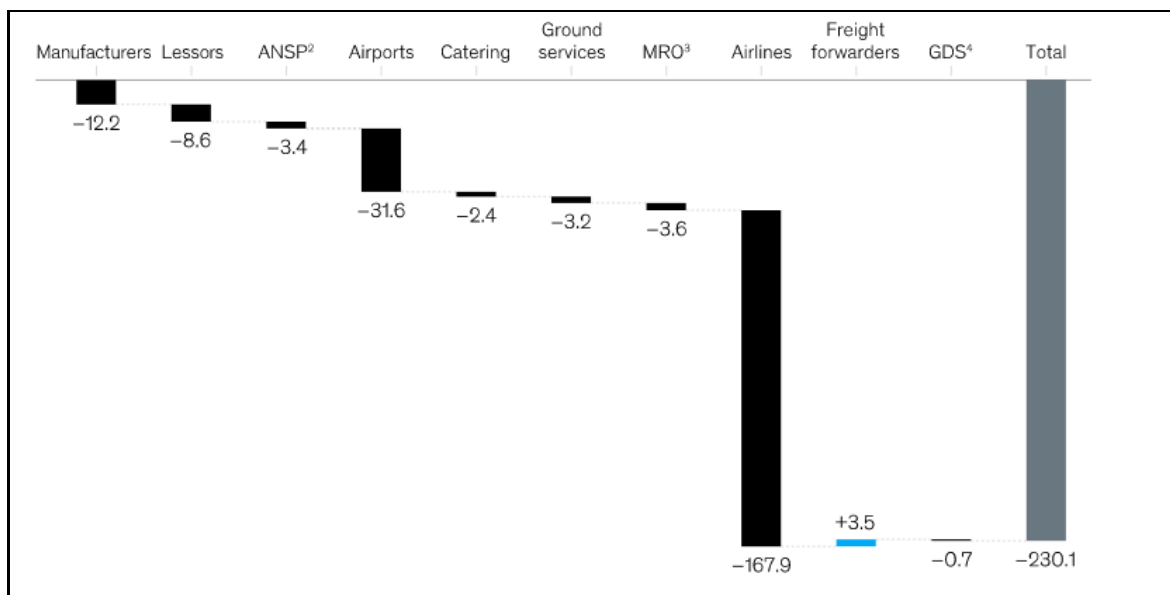


Figure 3: Global economic losses faced by the Airlines sector

(Source: McKinsey, 2022)

The above figure shows that nearly \$168 billion of economic losses were faced by the global airline sector during the pandemic (McKinsey, 2022). This occurred due to the decline in the passenger count and their interest in tourism. De Haas et al. (2020) stated that due to the covid lockdowns, many tourists have lost interest and continued their travelling activities. Moreover, the current inflation and decreased wage amounts have also deducted their urge to plan for tours. Thus they are being the reasons for the declining sales in the post-pandemic era for the airlines such as Virgin. As per Budd et al. (2020), in response to the unprecedented situation brought about by the recent pandemic, the airlines had to restructure their whole operations.

They had to restructure their operations with a £1.2 billion recapitalisation and allowed their employees working in their managerial teams to work from home (Virgin Atlantic, 2021). Their integrated management has also introduced FlyLady, a digital tool for monitoring and tracking their employees' health conditions and vaccination process. In their workplaces, they have conducted regular employee testing, restricted occupancies and also placed hand-sanitisation stations here and there. As per Lu (2018), the operational costs for global airlines have also increased due to the limited supply of fuel during a pandemic and rising prices of fuel and energy.

Thus, Virgin Atlantic Holidays also faced immense operating losses due to the increased price and its revenue slumped by 7% (Virgin Atlantic, 2021). They also had to cut off nearly 3150 jobs across the country. During the pandemic, Virgin had to cut its employees' payments by 20% to reduce its increased operational costs (Saigol, 2020). In the post-pandemic era, Virgin is trying to recruit more and offering discounts on their tour packages to elevate their demands.

Their employees also attract their customers with a cordial and warm invitation to their tourists which shows how much synergy prevails in their work culture. As per Demissie and Egziabher (2022), the competing value framework suggests four core principles or values remaining in the enterprises collaboration, creation, competition and control. This suggests there must be a sense of collaborative spirit or togetherness and security within an organisation which can create synergic operations. Thus, this harmony can produce better service results for a firm. This also prevails among the employees of Virgin Atlantic Holidays which make them deliver a quicker and better quality service to their tourists.

Although, Quinn et al. (2020) argued that the main drawback of this theory is this needs a lot of people, funding and time to make its theoretical principles work in a firm. This theory is also a bit inflexible as this allows less understanding towards people's personal lives which can lead to a massive employee turnover. However, Nanayakkara and Wilkinson (2021) suggested that the Theory of Four Core Dimensions of Organisational Culture by Harrison and Stokes can be a feasible organisational cultural framework to follow by fostering mutual trust within a firm. This theory states about creating roles, power, achievement and support-oriented culture for improving a firm's operational efficiency and profitability.

Although, Mwangi and Waithaka (2018) argued that there can arise some ethical dilemmas while creating an organisational culture based on this theory. The ethical dilemmas come mainly from the as the leaders mostly impose their values or culture forcefully on their employees. As per this theory, roles and power play great roles in creating such dilemmas in the organisational culture. Thus, the achievement and support-oriented organisational culture can create a little bit of flexibility within the organisation. As per Groysberg et al. (2018), a strong organisational culture can be a bit disadvantageous as it creates stiffness and boredom with less innovation. On the contrary, weak cultures are more flexible as the firms might be benefited from their

employing innovative and independent thoughts. At Virgin Atlantic Holidays, all their employees also benefitted from their flexible and innovative work culture leading to their operational excellence.

Recommendation for Virgin Atlantic to tackle the post-Covid challenges and create a sustainable business in future by tailoring workplace culture

Employing as per demands

Even though Virgin had to lay off employees during and after the pandemic era, it can now hire new employees to recover from the loss of skilled workers. According to Rezaei et al. (2018), airlines can hire their employees as per their acute demands, not more than that. This can help them to reduce operations costs. As they already have faced immense operating losses due to the inflation and rising price of fuel, they do not have to recruit more than they need. Hence, the HRs of Virgin Atlantic hire employees only according to their demands.

Adopting a better pricing strategy

Making discounts is a good strategy for attracting new and existing customers for better sales, but firms can think about restructuring their pricing strategy also (Bock et al. 2020). As far as Virgin's organisational structure is concerned, they think about their people first and their conveniences. It can be great if they adopt the cost-price strategy for their tour packages. As per Sexton (2019), the cost-plus pricing strategy suggests that marketers add on a fixed profit margin for their services or products. Thus, applying this Virgin can also earn better profitability.

Meeting the employees' wage demands

In the UK, the government has increased the national minimum wage for the people after the pandemic, which the companies are finding difficult to pay (Williams and Kayaoglu, 2020). This is creating immense job dissatisfaction and employee turnover. Hence, Virgin needs to manage its employees' satisfaction by setting a lucrative payroll for them so that they can be financially happy with their jobs. As stated by Gao et al. (2021), this can be done by managing a firm's operations and the overhead costs involved. Virgin's operational and financial managers can also cut their overheads to increase their workers' payroll.

Training employees for quality culture

Creating a quality culture is very important for firms to increase their productivity and also their overall output (Ungermaier et al. 2018). This can be done by the firms if they provide enough training to their employees. Virgin's HRM thus needs to look after their employees' current performances and upskill them regularly. This can help them to be resilient during unprecedented situations like Covid. This can help them to be prepared to face any organisational changes regarding their cultures as well.

Attractive Marketing

Virgin Atlantic Holidays has already experienced a large slump in their sales which shows the reluctance of people for tourism or travel activities. Thus, Virgin Atlantic Holiday's marketers needed to assess the current mental and economic conditions of their target consumers and make their marketing proposals accordingly. In this post-pandemic era, consumers need to be nudged through promotions in a way they feel morally and emotionally connected to them (Wang et al. 2022). Thus, Virgin Atlantic holidays must put its promotional efforts forward by relating to consumers and creating irresistible attractions by creating innovative advertisements.

Part 2: Reflective Journal

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle

Description

During week 1-3, I learned about the distinctive beliefs and values of an organisation which is fostered by its leadership. In terms of the pandemic, the changes in leadership behaviour were also taught which allowed me to understand the situational changes which may affect the leadership behaviour of an individual. In this prospect, during weeks 4-5, I learned the overarching impact of leadership on workplace policies. The different values associated with leadership in the workplace and the utilisations of principles were also learnt. Concerning this prospect, the impact of core values in an organisation is also complemented based on individualistic leadership styles within the workplace.

In this context, I also learned the concepts regarding fairness, integrity and teamwork in a workplace which are essential to driving productivity within an organisation effectively. During Weeks 6-7, we learned different theories and frameworks centred on depicting human values, goals as well as objectives to create a certain degree of control like organisational culture. It is evident as my report utilised the value-based management theory and competing value framework. Concerning this prospect, these frameworks provided me with insights regarding contextualising the importance of effective leadership in a workplace and the importance of maintaining workplace bonds. According to Klein et al.(2021), workplace bonds can provide greater productivity to an organisation and increase its long-term profitability aspects. Therefore, in context to weeks 8-9, I learned about the overarching impact of a leader in the attainment of organisational goals and different styles of leadership along with their effectiveness considering different situations.

On the other hand, I also understood the concepts surrounding cultural aspects of an organisation fostered by its leaders such as hierarchical culture, market culture, clan culture and adhocracy culture. In this prospect, through understanding these concepts, I was able to further enhance my depth of knowledge in tackling leadership situations and improve overall work efficiency as a whole. Considering team collaboration, I understood the importance of leaders fostering inclusivity and diversity for helping their employees to gain a competitive edge as a result. Hence, I understood that the efforts of leaders are to always achieve organisational goals fruitfully.

Feelings

During the first three weeks of my module, I experienced a feeling of curiosity when my interest was piqued during the introduction of any new concepts surrounding leadership. These first three weeks enabled me to understand the real value of leadership in the workplace and how it can improve the overall effectiveness of the workforce. As per Ali and Anwar (2021), a leader needs to focus on consistently motivating employees and gaining additional support in terms of operations. During Weeks 5-7, I felt quite confident in my understanding of different leadership skills, abilities and concepts. This prompted me to engage in mock leadership scenarios to practise the management of employees. I quickly understood that it takes a lot of improvisation for a leader to keep their employees satisfied.

On the other hand, I also understood that leaders must focus on improving the overall effectiveness of employees in the work environment to measure their effectiveness in tackling

scenarios without leadership. This can contribute towards the growth of an organisation's overall effectiveness which makes it gain greater market momentum. As per Chernysheva et al.(2022), consistent innovation in the workplace is a major attribute of a leader which allows for increased collaboration and the opening of enhanced employee communication channels. In this instance, I was fascinated by the ability of leaders to manage crises while keeping employees safe and secure as they are the most important assets of an organisation.

I felt anxious during the last two weeks, as I could not wait to engage in real-time leadership scenarios and utilise the abilities and skills which I learned during my module into practice. Therefore, I realised that leaders must be calculating rather than impulsive as they not only shoulder the motivation and productivity of employees but also the vision of their associated organisation. In this context, the effective utilisation of leadership skills in the workplace can help me in my future aspirations as a leader to effectively handle situations and increase the profitability of my concerned organisation. Therefore, I believe that I will gain valuable insights into the applicability of leadership skills in different scenarios by doing internships for smaller startups. Hence, in this context, I focused on understanding the complex infrastructure of employee and leader relationships in the workplace which would provide me with an additional advantage in my future endeavours as a whole.

Evaluation

During the course of learning, I have come across the importance of belief; attitude and skill have assessed me to understand the role of leadership and management in the workplace. During my learning experience, the value of attitude, skill and belief of the leader in contributing towards the success of the companies such as Virgin Atlantic Holidays has aided me to understand the role of the leadership in managing the organisation during uncertain crises. The leadership behaviour which I was taught during my learning also ensured that we can understand the way the leaders control the management during situational is directly connected with the behaviour towards the perspective. It has thus helped me in understanding the core aspect and competency of leaders in managing uncertain situations (Petry, 2018). It thus inspires me to understand the importance of having positive control over the organisation can aid the company even in uncertain situations.

On the other hand, fairness, integrity and leadership morale were not explained as it could have been for the leader to enable the goals behind valuing the leadership in the organisation. It could have been well engaged and well narrated as it reflected the morale of leaders not only for the management but also towards the contribution to the environment and other stakeholders involved. Therefore, a fair degree of understanding of the role of integrity and fairness of the leader for the employee can enable the leaders to manage the workforce and provide positive growth towards the company's success.

Analysis

The entire learning narrated the role of the leadership within the initial division of the students and was thoroughly integrated towards the learning and taking active participation during the lectures provided to use in the course of studies. Henceforth, with such applications, we were able to get significant knowledge and the practical approach through learning different case studies enables the student to get empirical knowledge related to different leaders related to different companies. The approach that we chose to continue during the course of studies was also connected with rush due to the limited amount of time given to different lectures. Therefore,

limited knowledge in some aspects related to leaders' behaviour and integrity and behaviour was mentioned. I think that during the course of the study if the leadership module has focused on the integrated and core values of the leader in valuing different stakeholders could have assisted us in understanding the morale and the duty of the leader during uncertain situations. The balance between the leader and the management could thus have been helpful for a better scope of learning on the way to manage the operations and rebuild the organisation which the Virgin Atlantic Holiday has been emphasising upon. Therefore, it can be highlighted that these were the drawbacks that needed to be measured and fulfilled. In the words of Pounder (2021), going through different literature and understanding the situation and perspective of the leader who faced challenges during Covid-19 depicts that the role of the integrity and behaviour of the leader plays a major role in handling any situation. On the other hand, integrity, fairness, accountability, and learning of the leader's needs also need to be measured and focused to focus on the leadership approach which can benefit the organisation.

Conclusion

The leadership module has taught me not only the way to manage the business but also aided me to understand the duties and responsibilities for maintaining and contributing the same towards the different stakeholders that are associated with the company. It has also provided me with an opportunity to learn the importance of fairness, integrity and leadership behaviour with the company during critical situations. In the words of Afsar et al. (2021), keeping fair treatment among employees can motivate employees to perform better in every situation. Therefore, I think that managing such a situation can help me in having a better perspective towards the rights and duties of different stakeholders involved with the organisation. Contribution towards learning can only be determined with the practical approach and therefore, efficient knowledge of understanding through students on their perspective about being a leader can help in having better knowledge about different leadership perspectives. Therefore, there are different skills and practices which I need to gain to be an efficient leader. These are better managing skills, better communication skills and so on. Moreover, I will continue to have individuals self-identify their potency and potential even suggesting using the 'Belbin team roles' framework with better projects. Finally, I learned that we occasionally have to challenge the decisions we seem to agree on in the group for the contribution and not decide just because of groupthink. Therefore, I think that focusing on the leadership aspect can help the students to be more career-oriented in their future outcomes.

Action plan

After assessing the strengths and weaknesses of this study, I have understood that creating and maintaining organisational culture is a vast process that involves not only values but also leadership prospects involved in it. Due to time constraints and the unavailability of specific information, those prospects have not been mentioned about Virgin Atlantic Holidays. Leadership management processes and their value creation change according to situational changes. That aspect of organisational value creation has also been untouched. Thus, I think, I need to learn different case studies on the companies so that I can have a great dearth of knowledge on the leadership models and styles which apply to organisational value creation and culture. Hence, I need to take action for improving them by reading more books, journal articles and case studies based on real situations. As an aspiring manager in future, I need to build my competencies in leadership and management activities also for handling any unprecedented situations like Covid. I also need to learn about government and organisational

policies and their impacts on organisational cultures. Restructuring an organisation is not an easy task, thus I also need to understand the entire process from a vantage point.

Conclusion

This report has illuminated that organisational culture plays a vital role in firms' success and supported the findings with two theories Value-based management and Competing for value framework. It was identified that Covid tremendously affected the organisational culture globally as the whole operations regarding business in the different industries were halted for a prolonged time. During the pandemic, Virgin Atlantic Airways' sales also have steeply dropped due to the lockdown saga that was going on for more than two years hampering their business activities and forcing the global tourists to stay at home which affected the global airlines' sales. Thus, Virgin also needed to reorganise its organisational culture by setting values and increasing its productivity. Assessing their challenges recommendations have been provided for restoring their operations.

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