

Student Name:	Cara Morris
Student Number:	2533217
Module No:	BMSK4016
Module Title:	Developing Professional Practice

Statement of Confirmation of Authenticity

By the act of making this submission, the student declares that this is the work of the student named above. The work has not, in whole or in part, been knowingly presented elsewhere for assessment, or where assessment has been built on a previous assessment, this has been identified. Where materials have been used from other sources it has been properly acknowledged. If this statement is untrue, the student acknowledges that an assessment offence has been committed.

Attention is drawn to the plagiarism and unfair practice policies of both the University and of ILM.

Contents

Introduction 3

Self-Management..... 4

Cognitive Bias 5

Unconscious Bias 6

Accountability..... 7

Authentic Behaviour..... 8

Interpersonal Relationships 9

Professional Integrity 10

Conclusion 11

PDP.....12

References.....12

Appendix A: Reflective Model.....14

Introduction

This assignment explores a range of behaviours and their influence on organisations. Using the case study involving Dr Alice Parker, an engineer working at a firm located in the UK. The discussion will examine self-management, cognitive bias, unconscious bias, accountability, authentic behaviour, interpersonal relationships and professional integrity. Each construct will be defined and its importance within the workplace considered before analysing the relevant examples from the case study and identifying how situations could have been managed more effectively. Personal experiences from employment will also be considered to reflect on how these concepts have influenced professional practice and personal development. The assignment will conclude by exploring how the learning gained can be applied to future professional situations with the use of a Personal Development Plan (PDP).

Self-Management

Self-management is the ability to regulate and direct one's emotions, thoughts, attitudes, behaviour and communication while managing time and responsibilities effectively. It is particularly important in the workplace because it supports professional conduct and effective co-operation leading to the achievement of organisational goals. Research by (Wehrt et al. 2022) indicates that effective self-control is associated with positive task completion and workplace performance. In contrast, poor self-management can negatively impact working relationships, team dynamics and organisational output. For example, procrastination is likely to reduce productivity and contribute to missed deadlines, where and inability to regulate emotions such as anger may damage interpersonal relationships and hinder effective communication. Therefore, self-management is an important aspect of professional practice as it influences both individual performance and the wider effectiveness of a team.

An example of poor self-management presents itself in the case study when Alice states that she is not comfortable sharing details of her work as she is fearful of others taking the credit. This is an issue in that, by not sharing her work, it disrupts the possibility of effective collaboration and may prevent colleagues from having access to information that could contribute to the overall success of the project.

A more effective approach would have been for Alice to acknowledge her concerns while managing her response to them. Rather than withholding information, she could have communicated her concerns appropriately and maintained professional boundaries whilst continuing to contribute to the team. This would have allowed her to remain engaged with colleagues without disregarding her own feelings or concerns. By managing her emotional response and choosing a constructive course of action, Alice may have been better able to maintain effective collaboration and protect her professional interests.

An example from previous employment involved witnessing a colleague fail to regulate her frustration with a family member whilst providing care in her home. The family member had tampered with specialised equipment, making it unfit for use and affecting both the quality of care and time available for subsequent calls. The colleague responded by shouting at the family member, which escalated into a heated argument.

The consequences included disciplinary action and a significant decline in the family's trust whilst negatively impacting on the service user emotional state and perception of care. Had

the colleague remained calm and escalated her concerns to management, the situation could have been addressed professionally and potentially resolved without confrontation.

Having this experience led me to develop strategies for managing frustrations by discussing them, once removed from the situation, with someone objective and outside of a professional capacity. I also recognised the importance of reporting concerns to the relevant agencies as soon as they arise, rather than allowing frustration to influence my professional response.

Cognitive Bias

Cognitive bias refers to patterns in thinking that can influence how individuals interpret people, situations and events. These biases can cause individuals to rely on existing beliefs, experiences or attitudes when making judgements, rather than evaluating information objectively. Cognitive biases can develop through learned behaviour during individual upbringing and the environment in which they are raised. For example, a person may experience a sense of familiarity when meeting someone from their home country whilst abroad, or they may feel a sense of camaraderie when meeting someone who supports the same football team. However, having these assumptions can often leave us vulnerable to making poor, uninformed choices that are not based on evidence, such as assuming someone with a similar background is more trustworthy or competent. Consequently, cognitive bias has the potential to result in inaccurate judgements or unintended outcomes. This is supported by research conducted by (Korteling et al., 2023).

An example of cognitive bias within the case study involves Alice having a same-sex spouse who is also employed at the organisation. Alice states that it has caused 'discomfort within the team'. She reaches this conclusion after noticing a change in the atmosphere when her and her wife enter a room together. This behaviour may be influenced by preconceived views and beliefs held by some colleagues, which would affect the way they interpret and respond to Alice and her partner. An implication of this is that these perceptions are likely to affect the way in which the colleagues perceive the pair and their ability within a professional capacity. Experiencing resistance or discomfort from colleagues could consequently affect working relationships and create tension for all parties.

If Alice had reported her concerns to senior management, they could have assigned compulsory training around equality and diversity. This could benefit Alice, her partner, the wider workforce and the organisation by encouraging employees to reflect on their assumptions and challenge potentially outdated beliefs, whilst reinforcing the company's commitment to an inclusive working environment. Addressing the issue through formal training may also be more constructive than directly confronting individual colleagues, as direct confrontation could result

in defensiveness or resentment rather than encouraging meaningful reflection and behavioural change.

An example of cognitive bias can be identified through an experience in my previous employment, when I unfairly judged someone based on their appearance. The individual was physically attractive as well as well-presented, this led to the assumption that they had experienced an easy life with little hardship. Consequently, their ability to understand the children housed within the residential setting was questioned and resulted in a reluctance to place them in settings where they had prolonged contact with the children. It was later discovered that both of their parents had struggled with drug addiction during their childhood and that they had worked very hard to overcome significant challenges with very little support. This experience taught me to get to know people before judging their capabilities as it can directly impact upon all parties and result in missed opportunities for development.

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias is closely related to cognitive bias; however, it refers specifically to attitudes or associations that influence judgement and behaviour without the individual being consciously aware of them.

This type of bias within the workplace can be more challenging to identify and address, as it may require a third party to challenge the individual and enable them to recognise biases, they may not be consciously aware of. Research by (Rimnac, 2020) indicates that unconscious biases can be systematic, automatic and, similarly to cognitive bias, can lead to rash and often baseless judgements. However, this kind of thinking is inherently human behaviour, as individuals naturally form perceptions based on their previous experiences and beliefs.

There are a couple of examples relating to unconscious bias within the case study. Alice notices what could be described as 'affinity bias', around coworkers treating her differently because she has a different background of industry. This unconscious gravitation towards those with similar backgrounds may have resulted in Alice feeling ostracised, negatively affecting her sense of inclusion and potentially damaging team dynamics. Alice also states that female staff are often overlooked during team meetings. This could stem from an unconscious belief that men are

more capable of managing and contributing to project management. Such assumptions fail to consider the individual's actual competency and capability and may therefore limit opportunities for female colleagues to contribute.

To combat this mentality, management could introduce compulsory unconscious-bias and equality training. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against employees within the workplace based on protected characteristics, including sex (Equality Act 2010, s.4). A structured approach to team meetings could also be implemented, allowing each person an equal opportunity to speak and contribute. Allocating time specifically for each individual would encourage balanced participation.

A similar example was experienced in previous employment, where older staff were allocated fewer hours than younger members of the team. This appeared to be based on the assumption that older staff would be less capable of working longer hours. However, their experience and knowledge as well as their willingness to work, outweighed that of some of their younger counterparts. This experience emphasised the importance of challenging assumptions where possible and relying on evidence such as individual feedback and continuing development with means such as training to address beliefs that may not be consciously recognised.

Accountability

Accountability means taking ownership of one's actions, commitments and communication. It involves doing what you say you will do and acknowledging when this has not been achieved. (Goncharenko 2022) argues the importance of holding people to their word and taking responsibility for their actions.

Accountability is imperative in the workplace as it promotes reliability and trust that instil a sense of responsibility. Having an environment where individuals are accountable is likely to result in people following through on commitments and contributing positively to shared goals. When applied fairly and constructively, accountability can also create a positive ethos where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for growth rather than blame, helping to motivate employees and strengthen teamwork.

An example of a lack of accountability is seen when senior management make promises that do not come to fruition. This suggests that management made commitments, failed to deliver them and did not take responsibility for doing so. This directly contributes to projects falling behind schedule while simultaneously eroding trust and confidence in their authority. Had management communicated their doubts about completion in a timely manner. Alice would have been better equipped to realistically plan her workload.

Another example of a lack of accountability is present when Alice's male colleagues fail to challenge discrimination within the workplace. She accounts that they are aware of the bias but do not speak up. This allows the behaviour to continue unchecked, as individuals avoid personal responsibility for challenging inappropriate behaviour. This negatively impacts trust and working relationships whilst contributing to a poor working environment. Had the individuals challenged the behaviour, they may have helped to prevent its continuation and demonstrated collective responsibility.

A manager within my organisation has also showed a lack of accountability. More recently, she made promises to staff regarding shift allocation during the interview process that she did not intend to honour. Rather than addressing this directly, she imposed restrictions that contradicted these promises and instructed her team leader to implement the rotas and manage the subsequent complaints. Staff consequently felt misled and undervalued, whilst developing a negative perception of the team leader despite the decisions being outside of their control.

Rather than transferring responsibility to the team leader, management could have made expectations around shift patterns clear from the outset and addressed staff directly to explain the reasons for the change. This experience has taught me that taking responsibility for decisions and communicating openly is vital in creating a working environment where individuals feel secure and heard.

Authentic Behaviour

Authentic behaviour is the concept of being true to oneself. To act according to individual morals and ethics. Research by (Hewlin et al., 2020) emphasises the importance of aligning actions with an internal sense of self.

In a professional capacity, authenticity allows others to observe congruence between what someone communicates and how they behave. This can contribute to psychological safety, which is important in creating an environment where individuals feel able to express ideas, concerns or differing opinions. Research by (Song et al. 2020) supports the relationship between authentic leadership and positive workplace outcomes.

In the case study, a lack of authentic behaviour is displayed when Alice's colleagues' gossip about her behind her back regarding the upcoming dealing and their lack of confidence in meeting it. Rather than communicating their concerns directly, they discuss them in Alice's absence. This prevents open dialogue and limits the opportunity for Alice to understand and respond to their concerns. Although their concerns may be genuine, failing to communicate them openly is inconsistent with transparent and authentic workplace behaviour. Direct

communication could have allowed concerns to be addressed collectively and potentially created shared understanding.

Alice could also exhibit authentic behaviour by addressing the situation assertively but professionally. Rather than allowing the behaviour to influence her response, she could openly acknowledge the concerns and invite honest discussion. This would allow her to remain consistent with her own professional values whilst creating an opportunity for constructive dialogue. The colleagues may also have had valid ideas that could contribute to honouring the deadline.

Within a previous workplace, gossip was prevalent and I personally made the mistake of participating in this behaviour. At the time, I believed my observations to be valid and therefore I justified voicing them. However, this resulted in an individual being discussed without having the opportunity to explain or defend her actions. In hindsight, I learned that her actions were justified and were a response to treatment she had experienced in my absence.

Reflecting on this experience taught me not to make poorly informed judgements and, more importantly, not to share those judgements within a professional capacity. It reinforced the importance of ensuring that my behaviour reflects my professional values, particularly respect and fairness.

Interpersonal Relationships

Interpersonal relationships refer to the relationships between people. These can exist in any capacity; however, in this context, the focus is on working relationships.

Having positive working relationships is vital to performance says Di Fabio and Saklofske (2019) . Leading a team that can effectively communicate and share tasks is essential to organisational success, as the workloads can be distributed and managed more effectively. Conversely, a negative atmosphere following a breakdown in relationships is likely to affect individuals psychologically, which can reduce motivation and negatively impact performance.

An example of where interpersonal relationships interfering with progress occurs in the case study when Alice states that team conflict became the norm. In another instance, she comments on the division within the team. This identifies a clear breakdown in relationships, which directly contributed to missed deadlines, a loss of trust and the interference of

information sharing. These issues slowed progress and negatively affected individual job satisfaction. The combination of these factors ultimately resulted in the organisation failing to meet deadlines.

Had the company recognised these difficulties sooner and acted upon them, it may have helped create a healthier team dynamic. Mediation or team bonding exercises could have been introduced to address conflict and strengthen communication. This could have encouraged greater collaboration and enabled the workload to be managed more effectively, potentially improving overall productivity.

Having worked within many teams, I have witnessed numerous occasions where relationship breakdowns have negatively affected work performance. Such issues can have particularly serious consequences within the care profession. Through these experiences, I have learnt and re-learnt the importance of maintaining professional boundaries remaining friendly and respectful regardless of personal feelings. I have seen how tension between staff members can be transferred onto clients when disagreements are made apparent. The inability to remain professional and impartial can result in interpersonal tensions being transferred to the service user and potentially result in a decline of the quality of care being provided.

Professional Integrity

Professional integrity can be defined as the act of doing the 'right' thing regardless of the audience. Research by (Fuerst & Luetge, 2021) suggests that it involves aligning one's actions with personal and professional morals and ethics, even when there's no authority present to enforce them, or when an individual could benefit from acting otherwise.

The importance of professional integrity within the workplace is emphasised by the need to trust and rely on employees to act responsibly, even when management is not present. This can be encouraged in several ways, with leading by example being a good starting point. By demonstrating integrity, recognising it in others and promoting an honest working environment, management can establish clear expectations for professional conduct. Being accountable, remaining open to discussion and encouraging collaboration can further promote these behaviours and establish a culture of mutual trust and respect.

An instance within the case study where professional integrity is questionable occurs when senior management speaks directly to Alice's team without her knowledge. Failing to address Alice directly undermined her professional standing. It may suggest that management does

not trust her to communicate information accurately or manage the situation appropriately. This could influence how her team perceives her leadership ability. If senior management appears to lack confidence in Alice, team members may begin to question whether they should trust her themselves. This could damage working relationships and negatively weaken team cohesion.

Had senior management communicated directly with Alice before approaching her team, it would have demonstrated greater professional respect. Giving Alice the opportunity to discuss the situation and provide her perspective would have encouraged open communication and helped maintain trust.

This resonates personally after witnessing how acting without integrity can erode working relationships and how even seemingly minor acts of dishonesty can significantly affect trust. A colleague of mine would regularly leave shifts early, justifying this by stating that they were only leaving a few minutes early and often stayed later than their scheduled hours. However, they would claim additional time when their shifts ran overtime but failed to account for leaving early. This occurred on several occasions and was eventually noticed by a family member of the client. They felt shocked and cheated by the dishonesty and caused them to raise concerns that if they were willing to be dishonest about something seemingly minor, they might also be dishonest about more significant matters. In a profession where trust is fundamental, this behaviour caused significant decline in the family's confidence.

Had the employee recorded their departure times accurately or remained for the full duration of their shifts, they would not have had their honesty questioned. This experience reinforced my understanding that an attitude of cutting corners can undermine professional integrity and damage relationships with those receiving care and their families. Consequently, it strengthened my commitment to professional respect by promoting honesty and transparency.

Conclusion

In conclusion, analysing the challenges experienced by Alice has revealed how individual behaviours and workplace relationships can collectively influence organisational performance. The constructs explored, including self-management, cognitive and unconscious bias, accountability, authentic behaviour, interpersonal relationships and professional integrity, are interconnected and can affect communication, trust, collaboration, motivation and overall team effectiveness. The case study has also provided an opportunity to reflect on experiences within my own employment and consider how similar situations have influenced my own professional development. This reflection has proved the

importance of managing emotions, challenging assumptions, taking responsibility, communicating openly and maintaining professional integrity. By recognising these factors, it has provided a foundation for greater self-awareness, and a clearer understanding of how these behaviours can be applied too future professional situations. The analysis has not only identified how organisations can respond more effectively to workplace challenges but also how I can apply this learning to my own professional practice and continued development.

PDP

In view of the information gathered throughout this assignment and for the purpose of continuous personal development, a PDP will now be utilised. Research by Körkkö et al. (2020) suggests that a PAP can help establish a starting point, identify the gap between current abilities and desired skills and provide a structured approach for working towards these objectives. Using the learning points revealed throughout this assignment, a Kolb reflective model was used before establishing clear actions and measurable outcomes, a PDP allows individuals to remain accountable for their development and realistically assess whether they are progressing towards their desired goals. The PDP proves an opportunity to transfer learning gained throughout this assignment into practical actions that can support future professional development (see Appendix A)

References

- Di Fabio, A., & Saklofske, D. (2019). Positive relational management for sustainable development: Beyond personality traits—The contribution of emotional intelligence. *Sustainability*, 11(2), 330.
<https://doi.org/10.3390/su11020330>
- Fuerst, M. J., & Luetge, C. (2021). The conception of organizational integrity: A derivation from the individual level using a virtue-based approach. *Business Ethics, the Environment & Responsibility*, 32(1), 25–33.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/beer.12401>
- Goncharenko, G. (2022). The role of accountability in workplace Democracy. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 33(2), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1017/beq.2022.3>

Government Equalities Office. (2010). *Equality act 2010: What do I need to know? A summary guide for public sector organisations*.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85021/public-sector.pdf

Hewlin, P. F., Karelaia, N., Kouchaki, M., & Constantine, S. (2020). Authenticity at work: Its shapes, triggers, and consequences. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 158, 80–82.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2020.01.010>

Körkkö, M., Kotilainen, M.-R., Toljamo, S., & Turunen, T. (2020). Developing teacher in-service education through a professional development plan: Modelling the process. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 45(3), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1827393>

Korteling, Johan. E. H., Paradies, G. L., & Sassen-van Meer, J. P. (2023). Cognitive bias and how to improve sustainable decision making. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14(1129835).

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1129835>

Rimnac, C. M. (2020). Editorial: Minimizing workplace bias—What surgeons, scientists, and their organizations can do. *Clinical Orthopaedics & Related Research*, 478(4), 691–693.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/corr.0000000000001160>

Song, L., Wang, Y., & Zhao, Y. (2020). How employee authenticity shapes work attitudes and behaviors: The mediating role of psychological capital and the moderating role of leader authenticity. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 36(6), 1125–1136. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-020-09725-0>

Wehrt, W., Casper, A., & Sonnentag, S. (2022). More than a muscle: How self-control motivation, depletion, and self-regulation strategies impact task performance. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 43(8).

<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2644>

Appendix A: Reflective Model

Development Area	Relevance	SMART action	Resources	Target date	Progress measurement
Recognising and challenging cognitive and unconscious bias	My experience of judging an individual based on their appearance reinforced the importance of making evidence-based decisions rather than relying on preconceived beliefs.	By 31 st of October 2026, I will complete equality and diversity training and review my organisation's policies. By 30 th November 2026, I will reflect on three workplace situations to identify and challenge any assumptions that I have made	Equality and diversity training, organisational policies, relevant legislation, reflective journal, feedback from my line manager	30 th November 2026	Evidence of completed learning activity. Document three reflective examples. Assess feedback.

Accountability	My workplace experience illustrated the importance of managers communicating honestly, honouring commitments and accepting responsibility for their decisions.	For 8 weeks, I will maintain a weekly action log of work commitments and deadlines, reviewing it at the beginning and end of each week. Communicate any anticipated delays or difficulties to the relevant person as soon as possible.	Weekly planner, action log, work calendar, organisational procedures and line manager feedback	30 th November 2026	I will review my action log weekly to monitor completed tasks, missed deadlines and outstanding commitments. At the end of the either weeks I will evaluate my consistency in meeting deadlines and communication progress or difficulties promptly.
Developing positive interpersonal relationships	My experience within care settings has showed how tension between colleagues can affect service users and the quality of care they receive.	Over the next 10 weeks I will actively encourage open communication and balanced participation during team discussions and handovers. I will reinforce a consistent approach to sharing relevant information. I will seek feedback from at least three colleagues.	Handovers, daily care records, team meetings, supervisions, appraisals, feedback from colleagues and my line manager	13 th December 2026	I will review the quality of daily care records and review whether key information is shared consistently as well as obtaining feedback from at least three colleagues. I will use this evidence to identify strengths and areas requiring further development