
Student name: Valentina Obreja

Student number: 1808708

Lecturer name: Yajesh Kumar

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Critical Thinking**

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Introduction

Positive attitudes towards the internal staffs need to be maintained to motivate them for performing their work successfully. The organisations have to treat all of their staffs equally to motivate them so that the business objectives can be met.

This study will highlight the attitude, values and beliefs maintained within the working environment of Tesco. The management theories including JIT, Taylor Scientific Theory and Elton Mayo will be discussed here in context of the recent issue regarding gender inequality in Tesco. It is found that three-quarters of women employees of Tesco have registered complaints against the company because they are not getting their expected wages ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com), 2018). RED model as well as DE BONO'S 6 THINKING HATS of critical thinking will be applied in the current study.

Tesco plc is a general merchandise and groceries retailer having headquartered in UK. This company is the third-largest groceries of UK in terms of gross revenues. The revenue of this company in 2019 is 6,391.1 crores GBP (2019) ([Tesco.com](https://www.tesco.com), 2019). The CEO of Tesco is Dave Lewis having the responsibility to maintain an effective work culture for the 450,000 Colleagues. There are more than 6800 shops of Tesco in the world so that their customers do not have to face any issue to receive products and services.

Company Overview

Tesco Plc is a leading retail chain based at Welwyn Garden City, UK. The company was in the year 1919 by Jack Cohen. It presently consists of 4,50,000 employees and is serving millions of consumers through their online and offline stores (Tesco PLC., 2019). The retail section of the company offers an assortment of product, which include clothing, house ware, food and beverage, and so forth. Other than this, the company also offers several other services gasoline, finance and so on. It adheres to the legal structure of PLC (Public Limited Company); thereby, has the opportunity of selling its shares of to the public (Beta.companieshouse.gov.uk., 2019). This further combines their annual income to certain extends. The current CEO and Chairman of the company are Dave Lewis and John Allan respectively. As of 2019, the annual revenue of the company was calculated to be £ 63.9bn; thus, showing a considerable growth, as in the previous year it was estimated to be £ 57.5bn (Tesco plc.com., 2019).

The company is committed towards creating value for its shareholders with the help of a number of consumer-focused strategies. It operates with the principle of “Value for Money”; thereby, providing first class service in return of high consumer loyalty. The company, at all times, have made efforts in improving its services and therefore, makes efforts in developing new and flexible formats of outlets in order to provide its consumers with the most excellent shopping experience. Owing to its consumer loyalty, the company has further been able to exceed its market share by 15 percent (Referenceforbusiness.com., 2019).

What Is Critical Thinking

In every organisational context, the professionals are expected to make use of critical thinking in every aspect of business operations to avoid financial or other losses. From sales and marketing to recruitment, every unit of the business must put emphasis on exercising critical thinking. As per Jen Lawrence, critical thinking is defined as, the capability of solving issues in an effective manner by systematically congregating information concerning a problem, creating further ideas along with an assortment of perspectives, analysing the information by implementing logic, and ensuring that every board member is involved in the decision (Bloch and Spataro, 2014). Critical thinking is considered significant for every business organisation for the reason that, it makes sure that, the issue catered with the best possible solution. It is further necessary for communicating with the clients as well as making better decisions, streamlining business models, and so forth.

In simpler terms, critical thinking can be referred to the ability of investigating a conception objectively, taking into consideration the facts as well as the contradictory perspectives in order to reach a logical and sound conclusion. It is also known as a skill instead of a mechanical thought process. This is because most of the people generally think uncritically; thereby, making decision based on self-interest, personal biases, irrational emotions, and so on. In context to the business, with effective critical thinking ability, managers can develop several other critical skills that are needed to manage the employees and the other business processes, such as, problem solving, communication, negotiation, and so on (Glen *et al.*, 2014). It further teaches a number of skills; thus, providing individuals with the ability to reflect on the concerned problem, analyse it and finally come up with an effective plan.

Difference between Beliefs, Attitudes and Values within a Workplace Context

As per the discussions of Tata and Prasad (2015), beliefs generally come from genuine experiences; however, humans at times forget the actual experience is not similar to the present one. However, these beliefs and values tend to affect the work of an individual in several ways. An individual's moral, cultural and religion plays a vital role in determining their beliefs. It further reflects how the individual is. Beliefs can be segregated into two broad aspects, namely, rational and irrational. In context to a business scenario, the beliefs of the employees working in an organisation can have a strong impact upon the decision-making process of the business. In case of Tesco Plc, owing to the immense cultural diversity in the workplace, differences in beliefs are

quite common. Therefore, the possibility of conflicts is high in this situation. It has been also witnessed that, the company has in a number of cases experienced clashes in terms of beliefs and values; thus, being a major issue of concern for the company.

In addition to this, Attwell and Freeman (2015) stated that, attitude is defined as a mental temperament of an individual towards a certain situation or people. The underlying beliefs and values of an individual tend to shape their attitude. In context an organisation, workplace attitude is witnessed to have a strong impact on every individual working in the organisation. Positive attitude helps in building a positive working environment, which is extremely necessary for better productivity and performance of the employees. On contrary, negative attitude may result in demotivating the employees; thus, affecting their performance, which can further have a strong effect on the overall productivity of the company. In case of Tesco Plc, the issue of equal pay was raised in the company, where the female employees complained of experiencing biased attitude from the management in terms of wages (Butler, 2018). This can be considered as a negative attitude of the management towards its employees, which affected its business to great extent.

Personal values of an individual also have a generous amount of impact upon his or her professional field. Values can be referred to a long lasting and stable belief concerning what are necessary for an individual. They tend to become standards for the individuals based on which they make their choices. When making business decision, the attitude, belief and values of the concerned individual plays a vital role (Breuer *et al.*, 2017). This is for the reason that, the background and personal values sub consciously drive decisions of an individual. Therefore, it is necessary for culturally diversified organisation like Tesco Plc to come up with strategies for managing and directing the diverse workforce to work effectively in coordination towards the key objective of the business. This will help the business in making most of the diverse work culture and includes the employees with different beliefs, values and attitudes in the right direction for the benefit of the business.

Critical assessment their own beliefs, attitudes and value systems and their impact on workplace behaviour

The higher authority of any organisation has to take the responsibility of managing well-being of their staffs. They need to show their positive **attitude** towards every employee so that they do not lose their interest from their work (Thompson, 2016). In context of Tesco it can be seen that the management of the company has taken initiative to maintain equality and diversity in their working environment to that a positive atmosphere can be created. The company is committed to provide equal opportunity to every employee regardless their gender (tescoplc.com, 2019). Tesco has introduced inclusion strategy by following the introduced methodology of UK Government regarding equality at workplace. The management **beliefs** on building inclusive culture in the workplace instead of behaving unequally. They **value** the skills and knowledge of women employees; they are trying to make improvement in the female representation across their business (tescoplc.com, 2019).

For example, Family network of Tesco has been built to support the staffs coming from maternity leaves. In addition to this, “**Women at Tesco Network**” programme inspires the female staffs to grow their career and feel confident (Tesco-careers.com, 2019). Sometimes women get demotivated because they do not have any role model. This programme is advantageous for those women who are losing their self-confidence and unable to make growth of their career. The women of Tesco take part in this programme and give motivational speech to inspire the other women to achieve success.

As a result, the staffs would be encouraged to give their full participation (Özbilgin and Slutskey, 2017). After that both productivity and profitability of the company can be maximised that can help them to reach their target position in retail industry and expand their business on the international platform.

In recent times, it has been noticed that the women staffs of Tesco are not happy with the wages they are getting for their work. The company has to pay £4bn equal pay bill as many of their workers have taken legal action against the **unequal treatment** they have received from the management (theguardian.com, 2018). However, the lawyers of Tesco have stated that the company is highly committed to give equal skills, promotion and wages to each employee regardless of their religion and gender.

This type of behaviour of the management towards their women workers is de-motivating them towards their responsibilities that can hamper the productivity and innovation of the company. In future, it can become difficult for the organisation to meet customers demand and maintain their brand position in the market.

As commented by Moore and Tailby (2015), positive attitude among the managerial staffs would encourage the workers to promote diversity in their work culture otherwise conflicts can be raised among them. In context of the current issue of Tesco, it can be said that unequal treatment towards female employees can hamper their teamwork. They would not offer their full participation in the group tasks that can lead to business failure. Thinking about the betterment of staffs would help the company to bring back their reputation and have a good impression in the market.

Management Theory

Taylor Scientific Theory

According to Waring (2016), ***Taylor Scientific Theory*** elaborates that rather than giving punishment to the staffs for their every minor mistake the management can encourage them for betterment by giving performance-based rewards. Managers of Tesco need to have close control over their staffs by ensuring that the management fulfills individual needs of all of them. Taylor's methods can be adopted by Tesco to perform the business activities by cutting costs and increasing the level of productivity. On the other hand, sometimes the staffs can feel themselves as a part of any assembly line instead of getting chances to display their creativity in the tasks. Female employees of the organisation can be offered with fair chances to utilise their knowledge and creativity in the workplace.

Elton Mayo

Elton Mayo theory of management states that the organisational leaders have to focus on meeting the social needs of their workers to increase their motivation level. From the viewpoints of Muldoon *et al.* (2019), giving preferable working condition to all the staffs including female employees can encourage them to give excellent performance. In case if the women staffs of Tesco are, not getting their desired position or wages then it can directly affect their performance. Moreover, the company can lose their brand image due to this type of legal cases. It is required for Tesco to focus on managing equality within the work environment and support female employees to grow their career. Making effective plan to perform the business activities can be essential for the staffs to obtain success. The authority can make this plan for their workers.

Max Weber's bureaucracy

The management theory of Max Weber's bureaucracy indicates that rules regarding the work should be in written format to ensure that every internal people understand their individual rules and responsibilities. In case of Tesco, the managers have to give fair chance to every employee while performing the tasks. As influenced by Kornberger *et al.* (2017), allocation of the work needs to be done based on the skills of the staffs instead of favouritism. Both male and female staffs need to be provided with equal opportunity for their career growth.

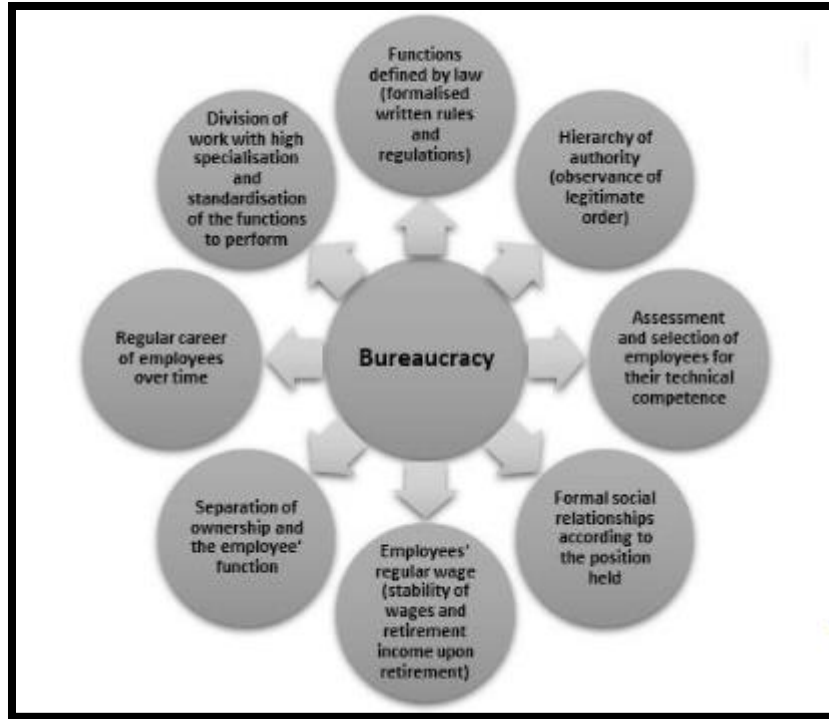


Figure 1: Max Weber's bureaucracy theory of Management

(Source: Byrkjeflot, 2018)

According to Byrkjeflot (2018), employers should ensure that their employees are getting expected wages. Tesco can make retirement plan for their staffs so that they do not have to take stress for their future. No female staff of the company should be treated unequally or provided with fewer wage than any male staff working at the same position. On the other hand, women workers of the organisation need to perform well by enhancing their skills otherwise they would be unable to get their desired wages or working position. Managerial staffs can help the workers to understand the goal of their organisation and as a result, their quality of work can be enhanced. Proper guidance to do the individual tasks needs to be provided to all the internal people to meet organisational objectives.

Contingency Theory

The contingency theory of management asserts that, the management of a business organisation is situational in terms of its nature. The approach of the management towards a situation is highly dependent on the complexity of it. In simpler terms, this theory believes in “if” and “they” advancement to management (Alexander, 2017). Here, “if” refers to the variable that is

independent and “then” refers to the dependent variables or the approaches that needs to the adopted for the concerned situation. The contingency theory has been proved to be highly effective in a number of cases and is considered an amalgamation of thoughts along with behavioural, systematic and classical approach (Mikes and Kaplan, 2014). It amalgamates the principles of different thoughts and relates them to the demand of the situation. For instance, if the employees working in a company demand psychological needs, then motivation in terms of financial support should be considered. Similarly, in case of Tesco Plc, when the female employees complained of inequality in the workplace in terms of wages, the management should have acted according to the situation and ensured equal payment of wages. This would help the company in regaining the trust of its female employees as well as retain them.

JIT (Just in Time)

Just in time is a managerial strategy, which makes the orders of raw materials from the suppliers directly parallel to the schedules of production. The business organisations apply this strategy in order to increase the efficiency of the business by decreasing the amount of waste. This is done by receiving the goods or raw materials only when they are required for the process of production (Wild, 2017). This further reduces the cost of inventory. However, in order to ensure the effective use of this inventory management, the company needs to forecast the demand of products accurately. This strategy is extremely contrasting from that of just in case, where the company keep hold of ample amount of inventories or raw materials so as to produce maximum goods for absorbing greatest market demand.

However, in this case, the possibility of waste of goods is high as the demand for the particular product may fluctuate; thus, affecting the sales of the business. In order to adopt this strategy and ensure its success, Tesco Plc needs to ensure high-quality workmanship, steady production, reliable suppliers, no breakdown of machinery, and so on. By adopting this strategy, Tesco Plc, could have reduced its cost of inventory; thus, being able to provide better wages to its employees; thus, ensuring employee satisfaction as well as revenue growth.

Scanlon Human Relation Approach

The Scanlon plan or human relation approach is referred to an enhanced effectiveness of an organisation with the help of formal program of participation and financial bonus. This strategy

has been successfully applied by a series of private and public organisations. This strategy or plan includes education of total workforce, leadership along with extensive employee participation. This plan is further with reward systems associated with organisational performance (Scott and Davis, 2015). According to this theory, the management of the business involves its employees in the decision-making process and demands their co-operation in solving organisational crisis. Once the problem is solved the involved employees are provided with appealing reward systems; thus, boosting their will to work more dedicatedly towards the organisational objective. By adoption this management strategy, Tesco Plc could have included its employees from different background, attitudes and believes. This would further aid in coming up with better decisions and plans to solve the organisational issues; thus, improving its productivity. In addition to this, the company could have provided interesting reward systems to its employees, which would result in gaining their trust and loyalty; thus, providing the opportunity of avoiding cultural conflicts in the workplace.

Critical Thinking Model

Red model of critical thinking

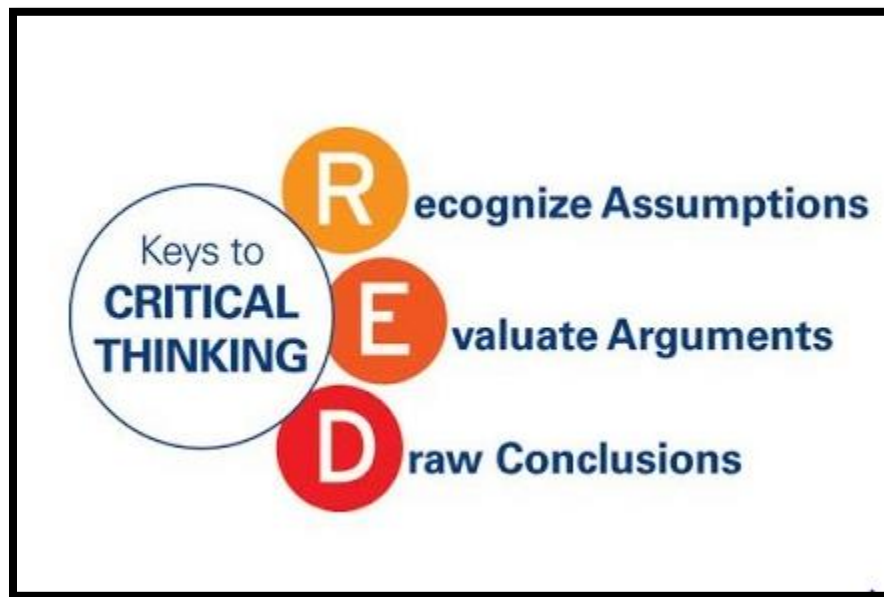


Figure 2: Red model of critical thinking

(Source: gainweightjournal.com, 2015)

The **Red model of critical thinking** can be helpful in resolving any particular organisational issue by thinking about the problem critically. At the first stage that is recognizing assumptions stage, the organisations need to find out the issue. This stage is crucial for Tesco as at this time the company has to identify the facts and information related to the major issue “gender inequality”. According to Mumby and Kuhn (2018), from identifying the key stakeholders to understand their point of views are the responsibility of management in order to mitigate the issue. For instance, the female staffs along with managerial staffs are the stakeholders in this scenario where viewpoints of the both parties should be considered.

Moreover, it is also important for any company to make sure that they have valid evidence to deal with the issue. Tesco has to gather relevant evidences to prove their points. For example, the lawyers of Tesco have told to media that they are maintaining equality here and all the staffs are paid with their desired wages. However, this statement can only be believed if they have proper evidences. After analysing the issue, the company has to make decision regarding the solution of

this particular problem. Tesco has to introduce changes in the current rules and regulations so that they can be able to offer equal payment to the women workers and resolve the current conflicts.

After that, the second phase is known as evaluate arguments stage where benefits and challenges of the solutions need to be evaluated. The different opinions of people can be considered at this stage so that effective solution can be adopted. As stated by Buchanan and Huczynski (2019), the impact of the taken decision need to analyse by the organisation before the implementation process. Management of Tesco has to think in a critical way whether the new strategy would be beneficial for female workers or they would face the same challenges in future. Additionally, financial impact of the decision has to be considered by the management. In case if any of the employee shows his or her disagreement towards the decision of equal payment then that point of view also needs to be considered by the management.

At the conclusion stage, the management has to reach to the best conclusion after doing evaluation of all the facts. New evidences regarding the same issue can also be measured here to arrive at a conclusion. The higher-level staffs of Tesco need to initiative to collect viewpoints of other employees regarding maintaining equality in the workplace. By evaluating the arguments, management can draw any conclusion and execute the plan to mitigate inequality.

De Bono's 6 Thinking Hat

Green Hat: This has is considered to be suitable for the creative thinking. This may further signify to new solutions, ideas, inventions or alternatives. It could further refer to making certain thing happen. The most significant use of this has is that it explores the circumstances in relation to suggestions, concepts, possibilities and ideas. Furthermore, it presents suggestions and proposals of different types such as, possible decisions, action suggestions, and so on. In order to consider additional alternatives or options, this hat looks for broadening the option range prior to practising a single one amongst the details (Litak, 2015). Unlike the black and yellow hat, which focuses on thinking and accessing the alternatives, the green hat focuses on the existing information.

Blue Hat: This hat provides an overview of an individual's thinking. It addresses a number of factors such as, the current place of the individual's thinking, what must be done next, and so forth. It further facilitates in building a sequence or agenda for their thinking along with summarising the outcomes of the thinking process.

White Hat: This hat favours neutral information. It focuses on the information that is available. This hat additionally emphasises on three main questions, that is, what information the individual or organisation has, what is missing and how the missing information can be availed.

Red Hat: The red hat emphasises on a number of factors such as, intuitions, hunches and feelings. Unlike the white hat, this hat is not apprehensive of the facts; however, only focuses on the feelings of people. The purpose of this hat is to provide the opportunity of putting forward one's feeling; thereby, taking active participation in the thinking process. This further provides a clear mark for these feelings (Aithal *et al.*, 2016). For instance, intuition is time and again based on the experience concerning the matter; however, the exact reason behind such intuition is unexplained. This hat additionally permits the thinker to suggest or present an intuition or hunch devoid of any support or justification.

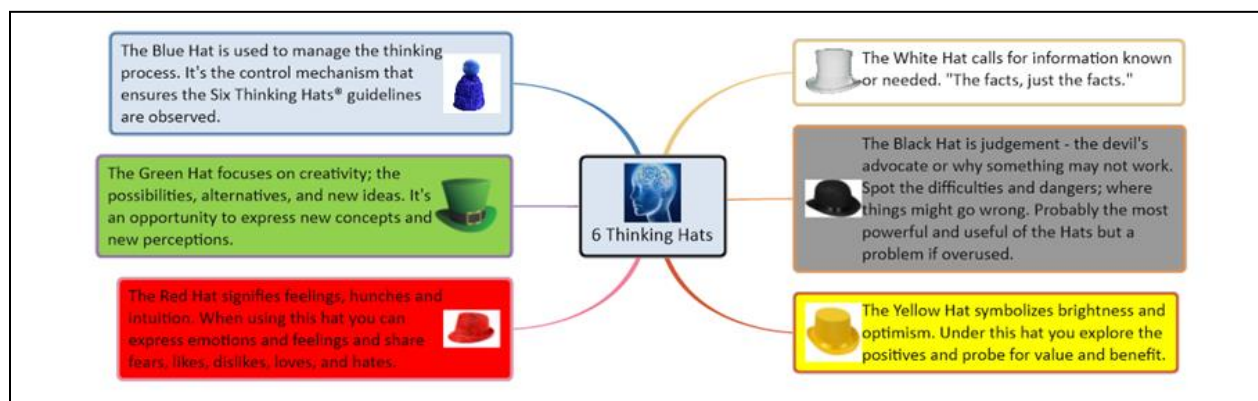


Figure 3: 6 Thinking Hat

(Source: Aithal *et al.*, 2016)

Black Hat: This hat is one of the most employed hats. This hat puts a stop to on the thinkers from making blunders or errors. This hat is significantly apprehensive of the reality, truth and critical thinking. It also emphasises on three key notions, that is, *"is it true, does it fit, will it work and what are the issues or dangers"*.

Yellow Hat: In general, this hat is positive and looks forward towards the future. This hat is generally used to have another look at the past; however, from the viewpoint of what can be learnt from the experiences (Kivunja, 2015). This means that it emphasises on being optimistic and considering the brighter side. Here, the key benefits and reasons for it to work are considered.

In this context, Tesco Plc is suggested to adhere to the **green hat** strategy. This will help the company to come up with creative ideas and better alternatives for overcoming the crisis that it has experienced owing to the issue of equal wages in the company. The company will be able to look at new perspectives of ensuring employee satisfaction and fair treatment of workforce; thereby, being able to gain better employee loyalty and productivity.

Conclusion

It can be concluded from this study that maintaining effective working culture is the top most priority of the management. Based on the current news it is found that female employees of Tesco are not receiving fair treatment and all the rights. Although the company is following Governmental rules regarding workplace equality, their women staffs are taking legal actions against the company due to inequality in payment. Tesco should give more attention on their current strategy of equality and inclusion so that no issues related to inequality can be raised further in near future.

The application of Max Weber's bureaucracy theory along with Taylor Scientific Theory is highly beneficial for Tesco to retain the employees by maintaining their satisfaction. Expected working hours can be offered to the female employees. They should be given with wages based on their skills and experience. Management plays an essential role in managing diversity within the workplace. They have to make sure that all the female employees are getting necessary guidance related to the work. The management should prioritise safety and security as well as high level of job-satisfaction among the staffs. They need to think critically at the time of making any strategy for equality and diversity.

Recommendation

Improving the current strategies

The management of Tesco is suggested to make changes in their current strategies. Although Tesco has commitment to manage equality in the organisation, the company is facing legal issues because of the complaints of their female staffs regarding the inequality. For this reason, internal inspection is necessary in this scenario. For example, Tesco can build strategy to promote equality within the workplace by using posters. Campaigns can be organised by this organisation to promote the equal rights of all women. Participation of all the staffs in this program is very important, as it would help them to change their mentality regarding gender diversity. After that it would become easier for Tesco to manage the equality in their working culture and it can also be a good initiative in maintain brand reputation in the market.

Following Government legislations

The organisation is suggested to obey all the regulations implemented by the UK Government so that no cases of equality issues can be occurred again within the workplace. ***Equality act 2010 of UK*** states that employees should be treated equally regardless of their background, gender, and age (Legislation.gov.uk, 2019). No biased behaviour should be there within the working environment so that no female employees lose their motivation or interest from the work. Equality has to be maintained while making payment to the staffs that can encourage them to perform their tasks in an efficient way.

Considering feedback from the staffs

The higher management of Tesco can be recommended to take feedback from their employees regarding the present rules and regulations of the company. Online feedback form can be distributed among the staffs of Tesco where they can tell about their workplace related issue and give suggestions to the management for improvement. However, sometimes it can be seen that employees do not agree to give feedback because of their fear of losing job if they put their point of views against the management. Due to that reason, while taking feedback the employees needs to be ensured that none of their personal details would be disclosed in front of any one. After receiving the feedbacks, Tesco can implement those suggestions for employees' betterment.

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