

“DEVELOPING WORKPLACE CRITICAL THINKING”

(BMSW5101_LON)

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

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1.Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has dramatically affected people's life. We can see how this situation has change individuals' beliefs, attitudes, and value. Some people do not even believe the covid at all and some are extremely concerned and overprotected. In the beginning it was difficult for everybody to wear the mask and to maintain the social distancing, but by the time, people were already getting used to it, that in fact sometimes when we forget our mask at home, you already will feel that something is missing from your body, like it is already part of your clothes.

How has this change affected the workplaces? Essential businesses are blessed to have their businesses opened during lockdown but in other sides, it was challenging to keep its operations running (*Hadavi, 2020*).It has been a very tough situation for most businesses, everyone must adapt all the new regulations following the government guidelines.

The chosen organisation is Uniqlo company limited, is a Japanese clothing brand, a company subsidiary from Fast Retailing. One of the most affected industry is retail, in fact some of the retail brands in UK has been forced to shut due to bankruptcy caused by the Covid-19. Changes have been implemented since the store opened this April of the year and this has affected every individual's attitude, beliefs, and values. From staffs to customers all the changes must be adapted, especially staffs must be trained properly to deliver better customer experience and to satisfy customers. In this report, it will be discussed how this Covid-19 has affected Uniqlo and how the company will overcome the challenges and tackle mindsets to improve businesses in the future.

2. Organisation and Uniqlo History

Organisations is where management takes place to manage the organisation, it could be a public or private firm. There is no exact definition of an organisation but most definition are groups of individuals acting together or a group of people that have a common goal (*Anon., 2021*). Organisations is everywhere that's surround you, for example if you are studying ,the organisation is the school or university where you go to, if you are working , the organisation is the company that you are working for, religiously, organisations is the church the you attend to, a bank lending you a money or the one you are saving from, the company of the bus or a train that you use, the WIFI that you use and shopping. All of those are part of an organisation that you are part of contact to everyday. We might not realize it, but we seem to be participating in those organisations every day (*Hatch, 2018*).

Uniqlo is a Japanese clothing apparel business, it was founded originally in Yamaguchi, Japan in 1949. Currently Uniqlo has over 1000 stores around the world. The first store was launched in June 1984, it is known for the success of SPA manufacturer retailer model controlling the whole process from product marketing, planning, and distributions. Uniqlo is known by providing high quality of casual wear that at the same time affordable for both men, women, and kids (*LTD, 2021*).

3. Critical thinking and its importance

Critical thinking is a way where carefully evaluating concepts and facts to assess decisions about what to believe and do. Critical has a different kind of definitions, in this case critical means to use it carefully in evaluation or judgement. (*Debbink, 2020*).

Critical thinking is a complicated process consideration which a series of skills and attitudes are involved. It includes identifying other people opinion, conclusions and arguments, it evaluates other alternatives solutions or opinions, its judges opposite arguments and evidence reasonably, it is capable of reading between the lines seeing behind surface and determining bad or unreasonable assumptions, it recognizes methods used to make specific opinions more engaging than others such as false logic and persuasive device, reflecting on issues in structured way, drawing conclusions regarding arguments if valid or acceptable based on positive evidence and practical assumptions, integrating information such as drawing together your judgements of the evidence, and presenting your own opinion in a good structured with the goal of convincing the others (*Cottrell, 2017*).

As it was mentioned in the beginning of the previous paragraph , there is no exact definition of critical thinking, as a matter of fact if you think about our daily activities, we are actually thinking critically without noticing it, like for example when you have to cook a lunch or dinner at home and you do not have one ingredients available, therefore you decide an alternative solution for the recipe or totally change the menu that you are about to cook, you try to think for another option, that is thinking critically. Critical thinking is common in workplaces, especially with the chosen organisation Uniqlo, critical thinking is essential in every single task, for example, as part of the job of a customer advisor, one of the daily rotations that must follow is to be on tills, this task has the most part of using critical thinking. On tills being attentive is very important, as part of it are cash handling and exchange and refund (cash and refund process are required to know how to think critically as staffs are needed to manage customers complaints). Therefore, Creative thinking in resolving conflicts, decision making and problem solving is vital for the workplace.

The usefulness of critical thinking for management staffs depends on how they manage in decision making, in this case critical thinking is using the argumentative skills to fix and create solutions with the aim of making the best decisions on how to enforce plans to deal with the problems. These skills can be problem framing, interpretation, analysis of information, evaluating of arguments, inductive reasoning, and deductive reasoning (Albanese & Pasturas, 2018). In light with Covid19 pandemic, the chosen organisation Uniqlo have managed to follow the government guidelines. After the first lockdown in the UK, face covering and social distancing are the main concern to avoid catching the virus, as these rules are important to follow. Uniqlo have managed to follow these rules and implement it, the company have started to implement new tills which is the self-checkout, these have really helped the social distancing as it does not require a contact to a staff to be able to purchase an item, though this self-checkout machine was already launched in Japan back in 2017, the impact of Covid-19 made have brought its launch forward. Shoppers can opt for cash or card payments, once the receipt is out you can put the items in the bag and leave, it will only take 5 minutes to buy clothes (Soo-ah, 2017). This decision-making process by management of Uniqlo was successful as results was good for both parties (staffs and customers). This kind of situation made the management professional to think critically about the strategic moves to comply with the government rules.

4. Workplace context (beliefs, attitudes, and values)

Belief is one of the human skills, it means that believing is a concept of a mental activity caused by the neural circuits in the brain. Hence, a belief is considered as presumed brain product of a believing for an individual and generally is interpreted as human belief. Psychologically in religion, belief is considered as a religious phenomenon, though belief concept it should not be an equal of religious belief as people can believe all manner of things, therefore belief must be known generically not only by religion. As the word belief is known as a noun, it is generally treated as a "state" or as an attitude towards to something or somebody, such as liking or having a favouritism to an individual or disliking and only considering the negative side of an issue. The process of a character of believing is a mental process (Seitz et al, 2016).

Attitudes connects each headline, is defined as evaluations that controls individuals' action and in some cases inaction. Psychologically, attitude is considered as social/ personality psychology attitudes. Attitudes are generally learned from others, makes people have similarities to members of their groups, and affected by pressure. It also known as

product of situational experience heading to people differences and stemming from general, stable personal dispositions. Furthermore, experiences, interactions between each other's, persuasive communications and formal education makes attitude better throughout the lifetime. Attitudes has relationship to beliefs, intentions, goals, and behaviours. Beliefs are subjective probabilities that an object, event or person are associated to an attribute, these are usually serve as the basis of attitudes which are represented as evaluations. Attitudes may give way to intent to act in special way and ultimate behaviour (*Albarracin et al, 2018*).

The value is often considered as a belief where a thing is right or wrong, some people think what it important and what is not important, is mental capacity based on individuals' principles, standards or qualities that contributes to behaviours (university, 2020). Values is also defined as a guiding principle that establish what individuals believe to be important when making decisions in all aspect privately o publicly in life. They regulate what individuals will prioritise in judging and what they will aim for in looking for improvements (*OECD, 2019*).

Beliefs, attitudes, and values are related together, as it has been explained individually the meaning of each word, when we relate within the workplace context, beliefs are like the basic knowledge or skills that individuals have or the feelings, every individual might have different feelings or the way of thinking, as for example in Uniqlo all staff members are from different countries which has different beliefs, though they have different knowledges, with the tasks that needs to be done, Uniqlo provides training ,therefore everybody will learn the same knowledge and same beliefs. Then attitude is individual's personality, staff members sometimes can be rude or very kind to colleagues or customers and value has a deeper meaning which is the principles of a person, for example some staff are really dedicated to the company, and some are not.

The perception of competency implies more than just the obtention of knowledge and abilities: it associates the organization of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to meet complicated requirements. Obtaining these competencies drives to good development of individuals and wellbeing's. Critical thinking is an intellectual process which individuals analyse and choose among alternative solutions with ethical principles. The awareness of knowing what is wrong and bad in a certain situation ethical. It implies asking what must be done, what must not be done and what are the limits. All of these supports the understanding of a competency, acknowledging attitudes and values are connected as an intellectual process (*OECD, 2019*).

5. Uniqlo beliefs, attitudes and value systems, their impact on workplace behaviours during pandemic.

Organizational culture is defined as shared social knowledge within the firm in respect with the regulations, norms and values that form the attitudes and behaviours of its staffs. There are three segments of the organizational culture that can be divided: observable artefacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions. Uniqlo is a company that has a solid culture that is visible and followed by its staffs, it says their basic principles are the well-disciplined human resources, personal development, diversity promoted and safe workplace which represents which shows advocated values of its company. Uniqlo has committed in achieving the world where discrimination is not allowed, the company promotes diversity in the workplace and where it concludes the growth of the company. Ensuring the growth of the company, training programs for new staff member are provided, staffs are required to greet the customer politely and always assists with customer inquiries. Lastly, the company has a team talk before starting the shift to be able to discuss problems, suggestions, and boost morale of employees (*Mirza et al,2020*).

In light with the Covid-19 pandemic, everyone has been dramatically affected with unexpected situation. Managers had to critically think strategies to comply with the rules and regulations, this relates to individuals' beliefs, let's say even though not everyone thinks the same about the virus, because some people don't believe it, still Uniqlo must respects individual beliefs and comply with the regulations. Upon opening the stores after the first lockdown in 2020, Uniqlo management have managed to quickly adapt with the government guidelines, as social distancing is vital to avoid catching the virus, the company have boosted the installations of the self-checkout of its stores in the United Kingdom along the installations of screen barriers between each till. As a result of this innovation some customers are happy and amaze to use this kind of machine, but some are not as preferred to be served by a member of staff due to lack of technology knowledge, however staff member, next to the self-checkout is always available to help. Every single day, you might encounter customers that does not want to wear a mask as they do not believe in the virus, but the company must follow guidelines and staff members must advise the customer to wear a mask or follow the social distancing when in a queue, this is where attitudes will impact the workplaces, staff members must always bring a very long patience every day to manage the angry customers, that has been always part of customer service.

Uniqlo values are: Resolving issues from customers perspective(the clients have been always the utmost importance, everything what company does is to please its clients, whenever there is a problem, it is evaluated from its customers perspectives and the company are always conscious in every decision that might affect customers), embracing innovation and challenge(innovation and challenge are the foundation of Fast retailing that sustained its growth), respect and support to individual to enrich both corporate and personal growth (without people and organisation will not work, therefore Fast retailing share their spirit and support the style of business operation as it creates environment to support its staffs developments, boost s confidence and sustain its strengths), and committing to ethical standards and correctness (*Retailing, 2021*).

One of the Uniqlo values that have affected the Covid-19 pandemic is with the new exchange policies that have implemented last December 2020, Uniqlo have changes its policies for exchange and refund, refunds can no longer do in any other store but the original store but still can exchange within any UK stores, this is the highest complain ta the moment as customers that might have visited Manchester for example, but live in London, will no longer have the choice to refund in London, it is a frustration for customers, and this affects Uniqlo values. Regarding innovation, has been innovative from its products to its stores machinery and still striving for highest standards. Employees rewards, appraisals and promotion are still on going after opening the stores, though it might have affected some employees that were about to get a promotion before the lockdown.

6. Critical assessment on Scientific management theory and administrative theory with the Covid-19 impact in Uniqlo

Back in the early of 20th century, the scientific management theory was one of the classic management systems and theories in western industrialized countries. In the production practice, Taylor have developed his scientific management theory through a non-stop scientific experiments and calculations. This theory concentrates on improving labour productivity, puts forward regarding theory of management and organization, generally including work rules, differencing piecework system, and making management special (Su, 2017).

Frederick Winslow Taylor was born into an affluent family in Philadelphia, the man that has been associated with the field of Scientific management. Taylors quickly felt his calling and learned his craft back when he was employed at Midvale Steel company, as an outcome of seeing work effort often wasted and worked it inefficiently, he realized that he should proceed on his idea that the key to productivity was organization, knowledge, and

leadership. Year after, he applied it in some places like Bethlehem Steel Company and Cramps Shipbuilding Company where he became famous for improving the company from bottom to top. Taylor has learned from his father that a motivator of men is the power of money, as his impatient father often offers money to staffs to finish the task quickly. During his career, Taylor was continuously facing challenges to his true view of labour in regards of he is not understood, respected, or served the best interest of individuals. Taylor has started a work world based on iron, rope, wood, and steam power that have improved the velocity, strength, and capability of an individual muscle. In his time the scientific management was extremely a period of progressivism, because of the overwhelming movement in American society, Taylorism and Scientific Management made businesses and industries what it was already becoming anyway but bringing it forward in a quicker way. Thus, it might be saying that Taylor's theories took the industry to the next stage and helped to establish a new management discipline. Taylor's works have settled the foundation for the processes of integrating productively the machines and mechanism together with the work of humans to build a new scientific field inquiry and application. At the time, most workers of Taylor did not fully understand their skills and their capabilities to work with the new machines, as a product of scientific management worker will be especially trained and will work with specific instructions. While all these innovative ideas, Taylor got a credit and at the same time a blamed for dehumanizing work (*Savino, 2016*)

Taylor said that developing specialization and division of employees shorten the time which employees expend to make a unit of production. Therefore, the speed of production process will be much better. Taylor's principles: Employee's performance study, collection of job knowledge, develop way of improving job; Standardizing procedures of task methods performance; Staff allocation based on their knowledge and skills, providing training to perform better; Defining a level of acceptance for each job to do, and set reward system for a good performance (*Khorasani & Almasifard, 2017*).

Employees and unions started to disagree Taylor's approach because they are concerned that working harder or faster would result overfatigue whatever work was needed to be done causing layoffs (*Khorasani & Almasifard, 2017*).

Administrative management theory consists of organizational structured and emphasising effective management (*Khorasani & Almasifard, 2017*). Weber's bureaucratic theory was another major work of administrative theory and related to origin of power and conflicts within the organizations. The notion of domination is a key element in Weber's ideas, he indicated that dominion in organizations is expressed through institutionalized

authority systems and spotted three kinds of authority: charismatic(based on personal characteristics of leaders), rational legal(based on rational principles) and traditional (based on purity of customs, beliefs, and traditions) (*Dash & Padhi, 2020*).

As charismatic authority is centralized in person specific, it was difficult to institutionalized, therefore Weber focused on transiting from traditional authority to bureaucratic authority to learn the meaning of social and economic action. To difference the characteristic of bureaucracy, it consists of division in labour, authority hierarchy extensive rules, administration is separated from ownership and selections are based on technical skills. Division of labour means, avoiding complicated things and making it simple, routine, and well-defined tasks and designating one routine to one role. Hierarchy of authority consists of specifying the supervisors of each role. Extensive rules regulate the staff's behaviour in their performance as well as in their interactions with their leaders. The separation of administration from the owners of the organization is vital as organization become bigger, firm needs a professional talent to manage it (*Dash & Padhi, 2020*).

Uniqlo might have adapted Taylors scientific management theory, as being part of the team, innovation and creativity is common in Uniqlo, their creation of using RFID (radio frequency identification; a tag reader that works wirelessly) is a big help especially for employees as it works to help finding an item to the stockroom, it scans all the products of the shop floor, it helps with the inventories, and many more. This helped a lot the company to increase the productivity and efficiency. The latest implementation of Self-checkouts tills has also benefitted the productivity and efficiency, it also helped reduce cost for staffs as instead of having five persons on tills, it can only require one staff to look after the self-checkout and one for exchange and refunds, this innovative creation have helped to reduce contact between individuals as Covid-19 can catch it through droplets. Some customers criticize this innovation as some believes it is a dehumanization and machines are taking over the works of humans. Some are amaze as it is convenience for people in a hurry and does not want any contact at all to staffs, avoiding catching the virus.

Uniqlo has also learned from administrative management, its organisation structure is divided; it has human resources in charge of recruitment, payrolls, company policies, training and many more, in every store, it has an area manager in charge of a store in designated area, a general manager of charge of the whole store, store manager, managers, supervisors and staff members. All the works are divided, and it specify the hierarchy of authority. Selection and evaluation systems were rewards staffs equally. Covid-19 pandemic

might have affected most of the business, Uniqlo revenue were down 12.3 % after the global impact of the virus last year 2020, it was predicted to bounce back by the next year (Szajna, 2020). Despite of the revenue sale down, Uniqlo reward system was brought forward in the UK, as before Covid-19 this was not exist in the UK, though it was tough for all the businesses the impact of the pandemic, the company have never failed its employees regarding payments. Uniqlo did not stop rewarding and promoting its staff's despite of the pandemic.

7. De Bono's 6 Critical thinking hats methods and red model applying in Uniqlo

The six thinking hats characterizes six different intellectual modes that guide students in groups or individually to consistently unpack the size of a knotty or messy problems, deal with solutions and control the individual thinking moves along the way. Learners, regularly get confused on how to start analysing a problem, therefore Hats helps beginners and mentors a way to creatively evaluating problems. Bono thinking hats represents different logical and philosophical approach to thinking regarding a problem and the intention of solving it, it became the framework of a training of thinking. The white hat is the information hat, where thinkers identify the general information. The yellow hat consists in positivity, possibility, and optimism. The black hat is about judging and offers scepticisms. The red hat is about the feelings. The green hat is about perspectivity, creativity, and suggesting new ideas. The blue hat is a meta cognitive perspective that supports us to control the entire six hats (*Barnes & Payette, 2017*).

De Bono hats can be applied in Uniqlo, as for example a blue hat is given to a supervisor that would meet and control the team ,white hat have been given to a customer advisor by the start of the shift, he will focus on data available which can be the rota available to see in the staff room which is the first thing that staffs do in the beginning of the shifts. A green hat should be worn next once you are in the shop floor and must create new ideas, for example the fixture of shirts is low and there is no availability in the stock room, therefore the staff should think any creative idea such as changing the facing of the products, as it was folded it could be change into hanging to make it looks full. A yellow hat wearing by a customer advisor would have a positive thinking as for example when tidying the shopfloor positivity vibes to finish tasks on time can be shared to colleagues. A red hat worn; staff can say he/she dislikes the managers or does not want the job at all. A black hat: a staff can say that task would not finish on time as everyone is feeling tired

Pearson has done research regarding critical thinking skills and measurement. In his last work Pearson TalentLens has created the RED models of critical thinking skills which is about: recognizing assumptions (assumptions is about believing something truly without any evidence), evaluate arguments (the talent of evaluating arguments is vital, by evaluating arguments an objective analysis of data and opinion is required and analysing evidence is also needed to make arguments clear and strong), drawing conclusion (after identifying the solution and evaluating the arguments, the goal is to end with a conclusion supported by an evidence (*Wulandari et al, 2021*)).

Applying the RED model in a situation in Uniqlo, for example a customer came to exchange a shirt bought a while ago, customer wanted to exchange it for different pattern, as a customer advisor we are required to see the receipt before processing the exchange, the shirt was not showing on the receipt and a customer advisor have just realized it after have finalizing it in the system, therefore the renewed receipt was already printed out (recognized assumptions). Therefore, customer must wait for long to resolve the problem, as he was in a hurry, he left saying that he would come back for his. Evaluating the situation, managers have investigated and saw the CCTV, the results was, that the customer was trying to exchange an item taken from the shopfloor assuming that he bought it. If he would have comeback, we would have the evidence to explain him why his item was not showing in the receipt and therefore could not proceed with the exchange.

8. Recommendation

Uniqlo hires staffs with or without experience in the customer service, that is the good point of the company as it gives equal opportunity to everyone regardless of education, experience, knowledge, skills, and ethnicity. Uniqlo provides training from day 1 and from the bottom, but sometimes when it comes to busy period, completed training is missing. It would be highly recommended to have a completed training as it is vital and it has big impact especially in part of using critical thinking.

9. Conclusion

Critical thinking is crucial in workplaces, when we say the verb criticizing it is often misinterpreted as saying the negative aspects, but in workplace thinking critically means you evaluate and analyse situation or problems. In Uniqlo critical thinking skills are often required to proceed on daily tasks and to reach company goals. It is vital to have a good system of beliefs, attitudes, and values in the workplaces to control people's behaviour, after all without its staffs and organisation would not be called an organisation, therefore motivating employee has always been one of the keys to be a successful organisation.

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