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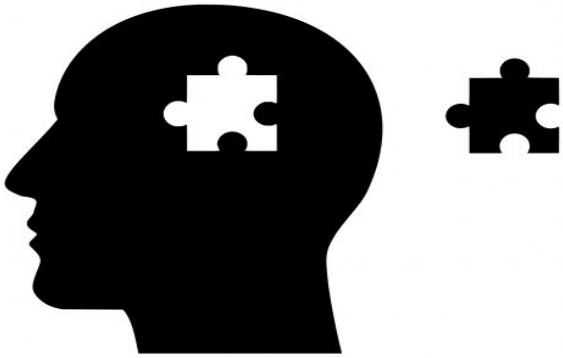
**Developing Workplace Critical Thinking**



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## Introduction

The management of workplace behaviour is a complex issue facing many businesses and organizations. To understand what effects workplace behaviour, it is necessary to understand the impact of beliefs, attitudes and values of individuals. This report will highlight such impacts and analyse how different values may affect workplace behaviour. Giving organizational examples, this report will examine the core values of organizations and how it affects workplace behaviour. Also included in this report is an evaluation of the scientific management theory which is still prominent in some organizations. Highlighting such management theories and its modern day relevance, this report will also include an assessment on how such theories play a role in workplace behaviour. To understand more about how and what affects workplace behaviour, the report will firstly start with definitions of the important aspects involved which are beliefs, values, and attitudes.

### Beliefs

As stated by Anderson & De Silva (2009) "a belief is an internal feeling that something is true". The reasons behind the belief might come from a many number of factors such as religion, superstition or cultural. Scientific reasoning or proof is not needed for an individual to hold his or her belief to be true. Some examples of such individual beliefs are; there is life after death, the number 13 is unlucky or it is bad luck to walk under a ladder. Personal beliefs can immensely affect a person's personality and behaviour. There are a number of different sources an individual's beliefs come from which include :

- Culture and societal norms eg religion
- Education or mentoring
- A personal experience or life experiments

### Values

Values are often a reflection on the way we live our lives. It is a measure of something that a person holds important. According to Haralambos (2000), “a value is a belief that something is good and desirable”. Values can define are persons action and behaviour. It defines what is

important, worthwhile and striving for. It gives a person a purpose and a source of motivation. Values can be binding and can legitimise what a person interprets as right or wrong, or moral. Values can differ from culture to culture, because of different sources of values. Reasons for this could be that of environments and backgrounds. Types of source of values include :

- Family
- Religion
- Workplace
- Historical events
- Social influence (peers)

Values of an individual can be described as a person's morals, or interests towards something. Values of a person develop when the beliefs of that person grows in importance. These can become standards of people on how lives are lived, and their choices made throughout their lives.

## Attitudes

According to Armstrong (2009) a broad definition of attitude can be that of a settled mode of thinking. Attitudes can also be described as a person's mental disposition towards others or in certain situations, meaning how they react or behave. People's values and beliefs is what forms their behavioural aspects. A person's reactions or their response in situations is dependent on attitude. As commented by Mullins (2010) attitude is something that is learned through life and is embodied within our socialisation process. The attitudes are person holds no limits, but some attitudes can be subject to change over a person's lifespan. Some attitudes such as religious beliefs may be central to a person's core construct, and can be highly resistant to change. Other I attitudes can be subject to change from personal life experiences or new information. Specific events, particularly traumatic events such as job losses, redundancy or loss of family members may have an instrumental effect on attitudes.

The illustration below (figure 1.1) shows the potential sources that can lead to a person's beliefs and the relationship between beliefs, values and attitudes leading to behavioural traits.

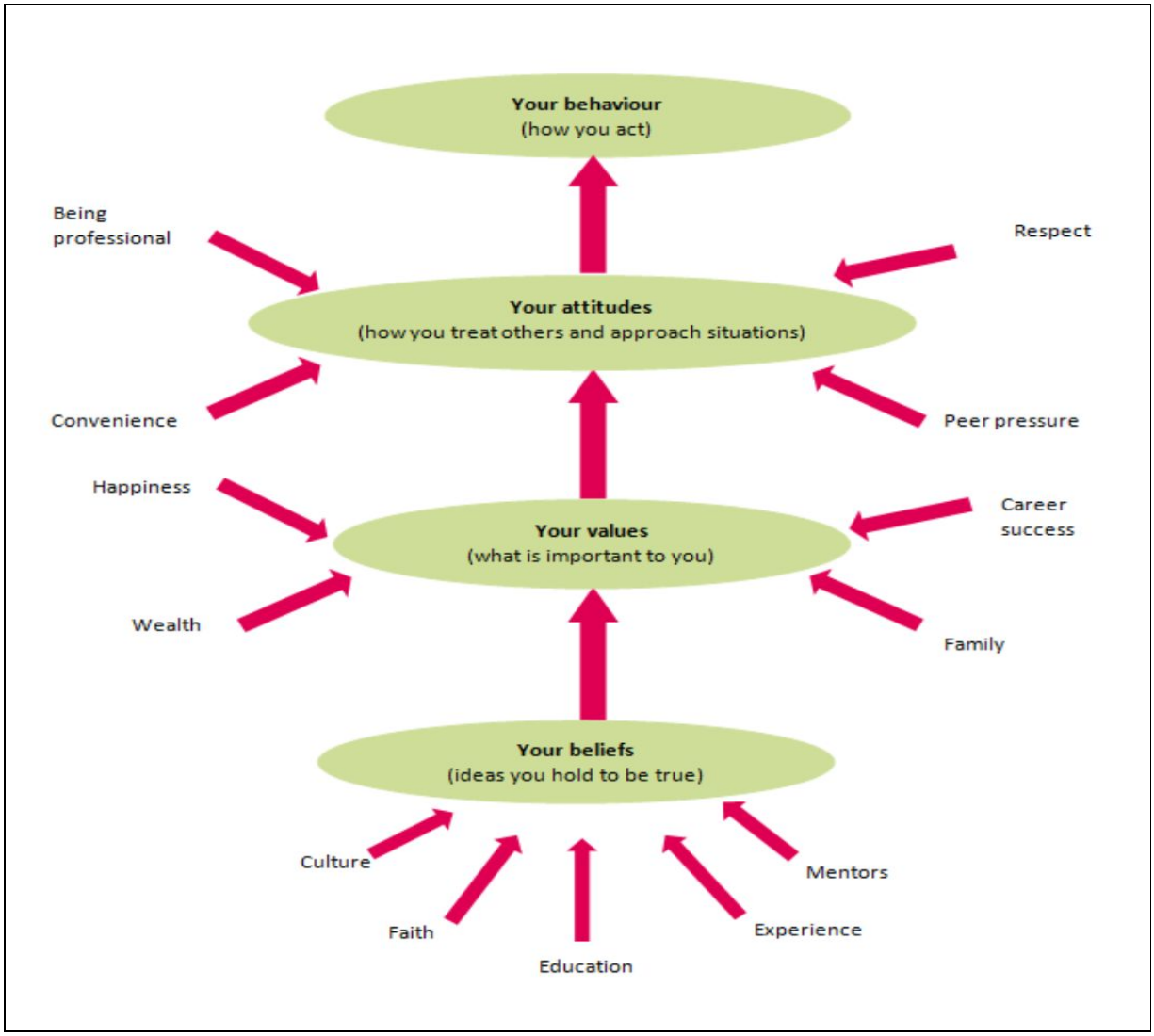



*Figure 1.1: Factors in behaviour*

## Values and Workplace Behavior

Organizational behaviour is how people within an organization act, individually or in groups. It can also be defined as how organizations function, in terms of structure, process and culture. But the underlying fact is that people are the main resource of any organization. An organization is only as good as the people who work within its workplace (Mullins 2010).

Workplace behaviour is something that affects an organization's behaviour and success. There are many factors for this including individual beliefs, values, attitudes,and behaviour. An organization's core values can also affect workplace behaviour and its work ethics.

This is not based on assumptions as there has been numerous research carried out on this subject, some of which are referenced below.

According Dietrich (2019) values are instrumental in a positive and cohesive workplace environment. Sharing a common set of core values helps employees work together towards the same goals. Values that foster teamwork, motivate employees, encourage innovation and decrease workplace politics improve the cohesiveness of the workplace. People that value teamwork will almost certainly embrace teamwork in the workplace. According to Rokeach (1968) values have an integral role in guiding organizational behaviour. This is because personal values can determine how employees interact with each other and how hard they work. Values can have a multitude of levels, defining what is considered worthy and desirable for employees and organizations. Research carried out by Schwarts (1992) concluded that personal values are broad desirable goals, and these serve as guiding principles on how they behave in the workplace. The research by Schwarts (1992) emphasised that values serve as a powerful drive for action. Thus individuals act in ways that allow them to promote their important values and attain the goals underlying them. Values a person holds important will dictate the occupation that person chooses and how that person performs in that occupation. An example of this is a person who values achievement as an important motivational factor. That person will likely be guided by their values in choosing an occupation in a prestigious profession where achievement is also valued. That person would prepare for this choice by investing time and effort in training. The person's behaviour at work would be to work overtime where possible and to apply for promotion when it arises. A person emphasising achievement values would likely translate into favourably viewing others on how hard they work and how ambitious they are. A person with these values is likely to judge others according to how persistent they are in their efforts to be successful and how ambitious their choices are. According to Schwarts (1996) this is because people can use their values to set standards of criteria to justify and evaluate their actions of themselves and others.

According to De Clercq, Fontaine, & Anseel (2008) personal values dictate work orientations and vocational choices. As well as personal values and beliefs, there are other factors that affect organizations behaviour, which are managers values and organizational values. An illustration of this can be seen in figure 2.1.

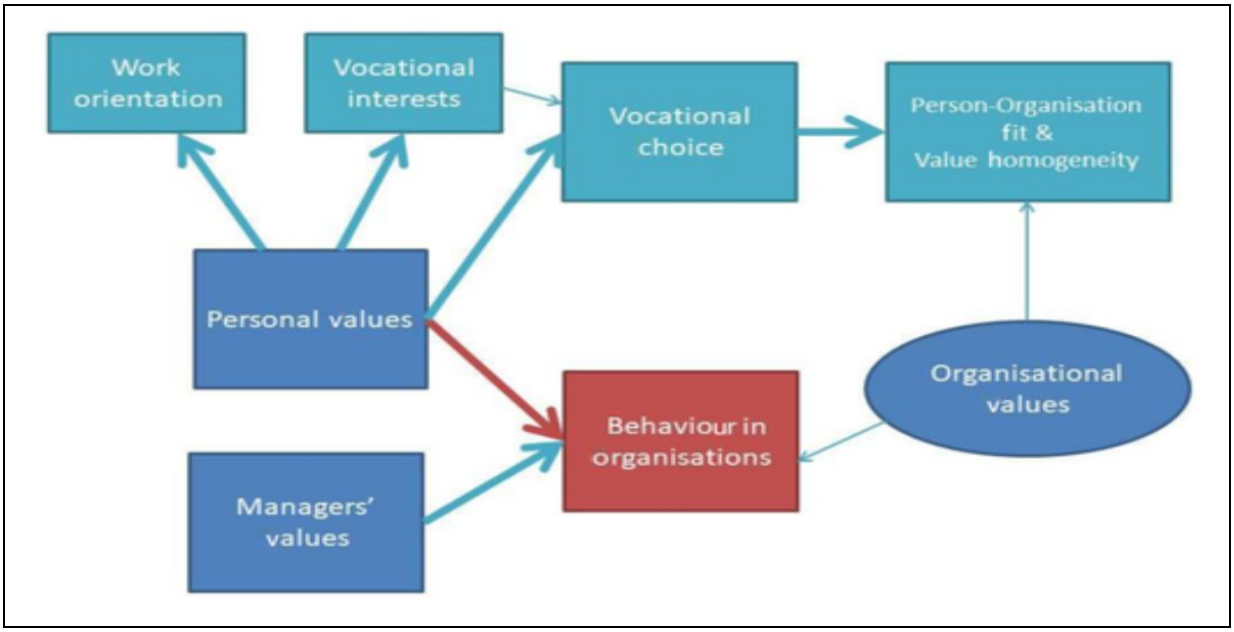



*Figure 2.1 Values and Behaviour.*

## Management Values

Styles of management, along with managers own values can directly affect workplace behaviour and attitudes of their subordinates. An example would be of a manager who values integrity. Because the manager values integrity, their behavioural traits would be honesty, openness and consistency. This would likely inspire behaviours of trust, loyalty and commitment from subordinates. Another example would be that of a manager who values culture and diversity. They would show behaviours of respect and tolerance. This would lead to a more diverse tolerant culture in the workplace with more shared values. Managers who value status and power would portray a more authoritarian behaviour of management in the workplace.

## Organizational Values

An organization's values are beliefs in what is best or good for the organization. The value set of an organization may be shared throughout the business thus the organization could be described as value driven. According to Armstrong (2009) the stronger the values, the more likely they are to influence workplace behaviour and workplace culture. Values that are deeply embedded in the culture of an organization can be highly influential on workplace behaviour between employees. Lucas (1999) stated that deeply embedded values in an organization can

attract the right people who share similar values, underpin the business in times of crisis, and provide direction for the future. Shared values are the basis of good workplace relations. Organizations can inherit value-based relationships and consensus on shared values by recognising and encouraging behaviours that uphold their values. Doing this will mean an organization can accomplish its goals without imposing their values on others. This can also suppress conflicts because when values are not shared conflicts can arise. Research by Cloke and Goldsmith (2002) concluded that organisations can increase their integrity, coherence, integration, and improve their performance by reaching consensus on shared values. As well as attracting people who have the same values, and keeping people feeling fully committed, other advantages of being a value driven organization include:

- Value led organizations outperform others
- Growth in revenue
- Rate of job creation is higher
- Growth in stocks is higher
- Profit performance is higher
- Turnover is lower (Dearlove, Coomber 1999).

There may be some common organizational values, but in some respects these will vary and differ between different work environments. Areas in which organizational values may be expressed include:

- Caring for others
- Consideration and diversity
- Competence
- Competitiveness
- Excellent customer service
- Initiative
- Performance
- Quality
- Teamwork

The next part of this report will look at an example of an organization's core values and its influences.

## Core Values of McDonalds

McDonald's is a large and established organization which is the world's best known fast food chain with thousands of restaurants around the world, serving millions of customers each day. It is famous for its quality of food and service. McDonald's uses its core values to attract it's employees as well as customers. The principles of their core values are listed below. These can help guide the company's workplace culture.

1. We place the customer experience at the core of all we do.
2. We are committed to our people.
3. We believe in the McDonald's system.
4. We operate our business ethically.
5. We give back to our communities.
6. We grow our business profitably.
7. We strive continually to improve.

The statement of core values at Mcdonalds emphasises that it is customer-oriented, which means that the company is highly focused on satisfying customer needs. McDonald's uses this value to attract customers and employees with the right qualities. People with values of empathy and helping others would be attracted by this value. This value creates a work culture at Mcdonalds where customer satisfaction is paramount.

The second value, we are committed to our people value, will harbour a culture of trust and stability where individuals with personal values of hard work and achievement would work hard to gain career development opportunities. This value portrays that McDonald's appreciates hard work and talent. It shows that they offer opportunities in career development for the right individuals.

The third core value ( we believe in the McDonald's system ) , means that they value teamwork and treat everyone with the same importance. The McDonald's system is that of the owner/operator, supplier, and company employees being the foundation of the organization.

The balance of interest among the three groups is key to the McDonald's system. This value instils importance to an individual's work, no matter how big or small the job. (Maccas core values 2019).

The fourth value shows that McDonald's places value of work ethics of high importance. They do this by establishing an equal opportunity and fairness for all work culture. The impact of this value is it will establish a workplace culture of honesty and integrity where every individual feels valued and respected.

Another important core value at Mcdonalds is the fifth core value. This shows that they look after and value the local community. They support local communities through the Ronald Mcdonald House Charity (RMHC) where they provide spaces and support funds to families with sick children. They are also committed to sustainable business practices. This will mean that individuals who have personal values and beliefs in charity or helping the environment would feel pride and have good satisfaction working for Mcdonalds.

The seventh core values of Mcdonalds is that it strives continuously to improve. This leads to a workplace culture where individuals work hard in improving work performance and productivity. This evokes hard work and initiative at the workplace.

An organization's culture and core values influences the behaviour of all individuals and groups within the organization. Having core values that are shared by members and individuals across the board in an organization is important for positive workplace behaviour shaping and many other benefits to an organization's success. According to Rousseau (1990) there should be at least two different value sources that demonstrate shardness or agreement that can be called organization core values. The importance of shared values in an organization has been researched and articulated by many. An example is that of Peters and Waterman (1982) who stated, "Every excellent company we studied is clear on what it stands for, and takes the process of value shaping seriously".

What shared values in an organization does is that it makes employees feel appreciated and special. It makes an individual create a sense of identity in the workplace. Another research carried out by Deal and Kennedy (1982) mentioned that values are the essence of the philosophy and ideology for an organization in achieving success. They also stated that what shared values do is that it provides a common direction for all employees of an organization and it provides guidance for the day-to-day behaviour of its employees. Research also suggests that having shared values can also lead to; job satisfaction, commitment, job proficiency, improved performance, and long term tenure for employees.

Research suggests that these can be inherited with shared values even where people are from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities. (O'Reilly, Chatman and Caldwell 1991)

McDonald's organizational culture and core values supports operational efficiency to maximize productivity. Service quality is also enhanced through the effects of McDonald's corporate culture and shared values.

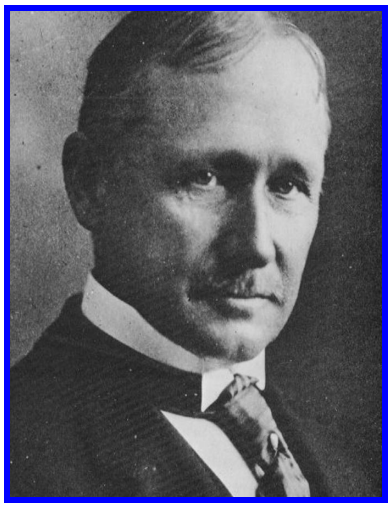
The next part of this report will examine management theories and its relevance in the modern day. Also reporting how these theories have been adapted and incorporated into work ethics by organizations such as McDonald's, and what the criticisms are of the management theory.

## Management Theories

Management theories are ideas and general rules, developed by theorists , addressing how to manage and run organizations. These theories detained how management relate to their subordinates, how to implement effective means to get the goals accomplished and how to motivate employees to perform to the highest standard ( Business directory2019 ). The management theory to be discussed in this report is the Scientific Management theory, sometimes called the Classical Management theory, and referred to as Taylorism. It was developed by the theorist Fredrick Winslow Taylor.

## Pioneer of the Scientific Management Theory

Fredrick Winslow Taylor (March 20, 1856 – March 21, 1915), was an American mechanical engineer (pictured left). His aim was to improve industrial efficiency. He was one of the first known management consultants. He is known as the "Father" of the Scientific management & Efficiency Movement, and developing a scientific approach to management. Taylor summed up his efficiency techniques in his book The Principles of Scientific Management which was voted one of the most influential books of the 21st century. He is most remembered for developing the stopwatch time study, which, combined with Frank Gilbreth's motion study methods, later became the field of time and motion study. He is also known for his piece rate system which improved productivity among factory workers. Although Taylor made his name for his work in scientific management, he made his fortune from patenting in procedures of steel-process improvements.



## The Scientific Management theory

Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management theory consists of four primary principles. According to Taylor (2008) these four principles are;

1. To replace the rule-of-thumb with a more scientific approach and study on how to carry out tasks.
2. Scientifically select, train, and develop the worker, and not to allow the individual to choose his job or train himself to carry out tasks. .
3. To heartily engage and provide feedback to workers to ensure work being done is in accordance with the principles of the scientific methods developed.
4. Dividing responsibilities between management and workers. Management taking over jobs in which they are better suited and vice versa.

Predominantly, the scientific management theory was developed for the manufacturing industry and factory industry. It's aim was to optimise productivity and lower labour costs by finding the most efficient way of carrying out work. The theory articulates that as there is the most effective machine for completing a job, in the same way there is a most effective method for people to complete a job. The theory dictates that each job process should be scientifically analysed to find the most efficient way of doing each task. Using the time and motion study, each task was to be timed by a stopwatch method to find the most efficient method and reducing unnecessary movements of the worker. Critics of the theory have often referred to this part of the theory as turning man into machine.

Pay incentives is another important part of the scientific management theory. Taylor believed that the employees that worked the hardest should be bad the most and best rate, which is the piece rate aspect of the theory (Bell & Martin 2012). Taylor's theory is based on the belief that people are lazy and unmotivated, to combat this incentives of performance related pay be used. The theory is in the belief that people will be motivated if rewards and punishments are directly related to workers performance.

Some of the many possible advantages and disadvantages of the scientific management theory are listed below:

| Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|
| It can increase productivity by reducing wastage and labour costs<br><br>It can standardise machinery, tools, equipment and work processes<br><br>It can oversee the specialisation and division of labour<br>It replaces old work procedures with new scientific reasoning<br><br>Give workers opportunities to earn more through the piece rate system | Dehumanises workers by undermining the human factor<br>Works only in certain environments<br>eg factory or industrial settings<br>Hard to implement in small companies<br>Can be very expensive to initiate ( eg time & motion study is lengthy and expensive )<br>Loss of an individual's initiative because of the strict guides to perform tasks<br><br>New or untrained workers can be underpaid because of piece rate aspects<br>Can cause monotony because of specialisation and repeated process of doing tasks<br>The absence of non-financial incentives to motivate workers. |

## Criticism of The Scientific Management Theory

Despite its many positive contributions to organisations, Taylor's theory has been roundly criticised by other theorists and attacked for a number of its aspects. One of these most well known criticisms is that for its mechanistic approach, or de-humanisation which has been mentioned by Rose (1975). It overlooks the human factor and considers them on par with machines in the production line. It takes away an individual's ability to act with their own initiative, with reasoning, and act autonomously, because of the time and motion elements. The goal of the theory it to increase productivity by increasing physical efficiency, in the same essence as you would increase the speed of a machine to increase its production of whatever was being produced. Caldari (2007) mentioned that a workers role was set, in accordance to production targets, and their role was reduced to standardised and simplified repetitive tasks.

All planning and initiative tasks were designated to management roles only. Taylor's theory assumes that money alone will motivate workers, and it overlooks the need for individual motivation and motivation derived from job satisfaction.

Another criticism of the Taylor theory is the imbalance it can create with an organization because of delegation of responsibilities between workers and management. The workers are labeled as the doers and management are labelled as thinkers (Stoney 2001). This can lead to an uneven and toxic relationships which privileges intellectual work over manual skills, which can lead to negative industrial relations and sometimes strike action. Because of certain aspects of the theory, people with certain personal values such as initiative and fairness, tend to view the theory with criticism.

## Modern Day Workplace Relevance and Usefulness

Although the scientific management theory of Taylor was developed and administered in the early nineteenth century, it's role and usefulness can still be observed to this day. This is because many large and successful organizations have adopted the theory for efficiency and motivation. Examples of such organizations is the Mcdonalds fast food chain. Even with its many criticisms, researchers such as Locke (1982) argued that the scientific management theory approaches can still be relevant and effective in modern day organizations with industrial scale high value volume production. He argued that for larger organizations, aspects of the scientific theory such as the rationalisation and standardisation can lead to an improvement in efficiency, optimise productivity leading to higher profits. Examples of the standardising, one best way, and time motion aspect of the theory can be seen at Mcdonalds workplaces. For example at Mcdonalds, the layout of equipment and machines are precisely measured, calculated, and placed to best maximise efficiency. This is followed in similarity in all Mcdonalds workplaces. They have also developed a sequence of thorough and precise working procedures in the cooking of food to ensure a standard of high quality. Ingredients are strategically placed so that workers reduce time and excess motion. The positive of this is optimised productivity, but the negative is that it creates boredom and monotony because of the repetitive nature and the lack of initiative needed. Employees who have personal values of self initiative would become bored with such work environments, and may cease employment. Another example of Taylor's Scientific theory at Mcdonalds is that of rewarding higher performance, or piece rate aspect. McDonald’s uses a competitive wage and promotion programs where hard work is recognized and rewarded. 'Employee of the month' is one such reward.

A positive of this is workers put in more effort to receive incentives, promotions or a reward. A negative could be new or untrained employees not feeling part of the team or feeling unappreciated.

## Opinion and Conclusion

The opinion of the author of this report, in consideration of the Scientific Management Theory developed by F. W. Taylor, is that it does have many aspects of improving an organization, but it also contains many flaws and weaknesses. One such flaw is that Taylor's theory is based on a set of assumptions. The theory rests on the assumption that all workers are unwilling to carry out work to their full capacity and that all workers need is higher pay incentives for motivation. It assumes that high pay is the main and maybe the only thing people look to gain from work (Rollinson, 2005).This is inductive reasoning derived from observations and generalisation. The theory did not take into consideration that individual beliefs and values are aspects that affect a person's motivation to work. Not all people are motivated by pay, some are motivated by the work itself. Herzberg et al (1957) argued this point and claimed that while the lack of pay incentives can cause dissatisfaction, it's provision does not result in lasting satisfaction because it is an extrinsic type of motivation. He argued that other aspects such a working conditions can be more of a motivator because of the different personal values individuals have.

The theory is also only effective in certain environments, and would be harder to implement in small organization because of aspects such as high costs to implement.

To conclude, organizations should think carefully when considering the possible utilisation of the scientific management approach, because there may be more suitable theories that they can use. Because of certain aspects of the theory, it's suitability is more for larger organizations, high volume production environments, and manufacturing environments. Taylor's theory is still relevant in modern times and has been adopted by organizations such as McDonald’s. Parts of the theory have been embraced, alongside organization culture and positive core values to influence workplace behaviour.

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