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**HOW DO ORGANISATIONAL BELIEFS, ATTITUDES
AND VALUE SYSTEM AFFECTS WORKPLACE
BEHAVIOUR ?**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organizational culture refers to the beliefs and values that have existed in the organisation for a long time. The culture of the organisation plays a vital role in keeping the work environment happy and healthy. By communicating organization beliefs and values to employees, their work behaviors and attitudes will be influenced. Southeastern railway uses their own beliefs and value system to steer support to their employees, meet their customers expectations and meet their own objectives. Critical thinking is identified as an important skill that can lead to success in the workplace. Critical thinking teaches a number of skills that can be applied in any situation. The management theories help organizations to emphasize on the efficiency of how people work and how to interact and motivate individuals. Businesses use critical thinking methods to develop new ideas and search through them to identify the most viable ones. In times of crisis, critical thinking is necessary as the methods can allow better decision making in uncertain situations. Organizations benefit from exposing authentic and necessary information to their employees personally or through an intranet system. It was also advised that by conducting healthy brainstorming among the team, their critical thinking abilities can be developed. There is no quick way for critical thinking to be learned but through exercises and practices it can be improved and developed.

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Introduction

This report aims to analyse an organisation's beliefs, attitudes and value system and to identify how it affects the behaviour of the workplace taking into account the current pandemic covid19 that we are experiencing at the moment. The organisation I have chosen for this analysis is Southeastern Railway. They are one of the busiest train operators in the UK, running from London to Kent and parts of East Sussex. With over 4000 employees, Southeastern runs over 2000 train services accommodating more than 600,000 passengers every weekday (Southeastern.co.uk, nd). I chose this organisation because I got employed by them during the pandemic, working as a gateline assistant. Due to the changes caused by the epidemic, my training was done remotely and I was not able to do any job shadowing within the role. My job description requires me to deal with customers on a face to face basis which made it very difficult to do once the pandemic hit. One of Southeastern's top priorities is to improve safety and security for employees and customers, with this in mind when covid 19 submerged, they had to make a number of changes in the workplace to ensure the safety of all their employees and customers. These changes affected the way we signed in and out from work, how we had our breaks, how customers travelled on the services and the way we delivered customer services. Transport is an essential service throughout the pandemic therefore the employees were required to work. The government introduced the use of face masks and social distance to be mandatory. Taking into account the new laws, Southeastern provided glass screens at the gates for employees to work behind, only one person at a time was allowed in the room to sign on or off, face mask had to be worn at all times at work unless you are eating your lunch where only two people are allowed in the lunchroom at a time to maintain social distances. Team members found it very difficult to adapt to these new changes which in turn caused major chaos in the workplace. People were signing on late to their shifts, others finishing their shift later than they should, team members having their lunch breaks very late and some found it quite difficult to wear a mask for so many hours.

In uncertain times, people will be in fear which accumulates stress. Persons who are in charge in the workplace are the ones who are required to make the big decisions and provide reassurance to both the employees and customers. Dealing with a crisis such as the covid 19 pandemic will require critical thinking. Critical thinking is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts and events before accepting or formulating an opinion or conclusion (Nardi, P 2017). To think critically, one needs to dig deep and pay careful attention to facts and credible sources. Critical thinking allows individuals to make logical

and informed decisions to the best of their abilities. These vital skills are essential to organisations as it allows them to solve problems, develop solutions and create new ideas which in turn makes business run smoothly. Through critical thinking many areas of a company can improve, this is why employers seek and value persons who possess these vital skills (Adventis, 2020).

An assessment of Southeastern's own beliefs, attitudes and value system will be assessed along with its impact on the organisation. I will use three management theories to evaluate different beliefs, attitudes and values and their interpretations. These management theories include Taylor scientific theory, human relation theory, system theory and contingency theory. At the end of this report all my findings will be outlined along with any recommendations I may have.

Beliefs, Attitudes and Values within a Workplace

The culture of a company can determine its success. If employees are unhappy in their workplace they will become unproductive. When they are happy and excited in their role they become motivated and will go above and beyond to carry out their duties to the best of their abilities. The culture of a company is a set of ideas, beliefs and values that they hold and follow and in many ways is controlled by the CEO's beliefs (Timothy S, 2021). Belief is a feeling of certainty that something exists, is true or is good (Collins Dictionary, 2021). A number of elements are included in the culture of a company, they are the company's mission, the work environment, leadership style, values, ethics, expectations and goals. A company's culture can cultivate expressly and deliberately as well as results accumulated from decisions made over time. An effective company culture allows employees to get a better understanding of the expected outcome and behaviours and act accordingly (Doyle A, 2020).

Employees' behaviour at work often depends on how they feel within their working environment, it is therefore necessary for companies to understand their employees' work attitudes by making sense of their behaviour.

An attitude refers to a set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviours towards a particular object, person, thing or event. A person's life experience and upbringing often contributes to their attitude, which can strongly influence their behaviour (Cherry K, 2021). Attitude is a very essential factor in the workplace as it is beneficial to both the employees and the organizations. Positive workplace attitudes among employees can improve efficiency of communication,

achieve better teamwork and collaboration in the course of the work. This allows employees to be stress free, highly productive and gain a morale boost. When workers are stress free they become motivated and innovative to carry out their roles. Higher productivity allows organizations to establish their desired performance goals which enable them to be profitable. For these reasons, organizations should always strive to encourage positive workplace attitudes among employees (Fallah JK, 2017). Attitude can be explicit or implicit. The attitudes where persons are not consciously aware of are known as implicit while explicit attitudes are the ones persons are consciously aware of. Even though these attitudes differ in meaning they both can have an impact on beliefs and behaviours (Cherry K, 2021). Attitude is a very important characteristic of an employee. There are five key attitudes that are sought out by employers to ensure they have a harmonious professional environment and productive staff . These attitudes include respecting others, enthusiastic, committed to the job, being innovative and helpful (Belcher LM, 2019).

A company values are the beliefs, philosophy and principles that drive the business. They impact the development of relationships with customers, partners and shareholders as well as the delivery of employees' experience. Having clear company value allows an organization to ensure that all their employees are working towards the same objective. The core values of a company supports its vision, shapes its culture and impacts the business strategy. It assists in creating a purpose, improving team cohesion and creating a sense of commitment within the workplace. When attracting new talent, company values play a vital role. To hire the most suited talent the business needs to define the values that they stand by and ensure that the same values are shared by the candidate. Employees have a sense of responsibility when making decisions in the workplace, this is because every decision they make should be aligned with the company's values as those values reflect what both the organization and employee stands for. Through a company's values an employee motivation, morale and employee advocacy is improved along with guidance and security being provided in the workplace. Employees are more likely to make the right decisions in order to achieve the companies' objective when they understand what the business stands for. A well established company values provides a morale direction to guide employees in difficult times. Communication with employees is crucial to the building of company culture, improving employee satisfaction and increasing employee engagement. When employees are unclear with their company values, it often leads to confusion within the work environment. This is due to the inconsistency and unclear communication of what the company stands for. Engaged employees will have clearer guidance for achieving the goals of the company as well as their own personal objectives (Heinlia R,

2021). Workplace values are the guiding principles that are essential to an employee about the way they carry out their job role. These principles are used to determine the right and wrong way of working. Some examples of company value include Being accountable, making a difference, delivering quality, being reliable, respecting company policy and rules and meeting deadlines (Mindtools, 2021).

Southeastern Railway Beliefs, Attitudes and Value System

Southeastern railway vision is to deliver the best ever customer experience. Their mission is to deliver at least 85% customer satisfaction, 85% overall satisfaction in national rail passenger survey and 85% satisfaction in employee survey. Their company value dictates that they aim to be the best, they care passionately about their people and passengers and they make the difference together. They aim to best by moving with the pace, being agile, learning from everything, being relentless and being professionals. They show their customers and employees that they care by putting themselves in their passengers shoes in order to do what is right for them. They support their colleagues to be, feel and do their best. They also play a role within the communities they serve and the environment. Working to make a difference together allows Southeastern to be answerable to both their employees and customers as well as building trust among each other and always delivering what they promise. They believe that they are stronger together than as individuals. There are seven vital goals that Southeastern aims to achieve. These include getting everyone home safe everyday, understanding, focusing on and exceeding passengers expectation, continuously improving performance for passengers, making a difference to their customers by living their values and delivering their goals. They also aim to build a positive reputation, invest in growth and deliver their commitments and be an effective partner to deliver industry change programmes. These business objectives are wholly aligned with their vision of delivering their best ever passenger experience. By achieving all their objectives above in addition to delivering the key franchise obligations they expect to establish their mission of 85% customer satisfaction. In their approach to meet and exceed customers expectations a comprehensive review of the end to end experience is conducted. This gives the company a better understanding of where they started and most importantly to establish concepts to improve the experience. They then work on prioritising these concepts and implement them as part of an improvement programme (Southeastern.co.uk, 2019).

Throughout the pandemic, the covid 19 restrictions have significantly reduced the use of public transport. The transport industry had to work very hard to reassure people that the trains are safe. During the third lockdown passenger numbers were at 15 percent of the pre- pandemic level. Currently, southeastern main operational focus is to ensure that persons who need to make their journeys get where they need to be. At the same time the fact still remains that they have an obligation to abide by the principles that rail travel remains truly accessible for everyone. With these factors in mind, southeastern is committed to provide a safe and comfortable journey for all. The pandemic has pushed a lot of people into anxiety , especially those who still had to travel. This made it more crucial for passengers to get the correct information they needed to plan their journey. This was even more important for disable customers as they needed more assistance. In response to the changing needs of their customers, Southeastern launched their new capacity tool called the 'SeatFinder'. With the introduction of social distancing, customers needed information on train capacity to make decisions on the best times to travel. Throughout The pandemic, southeastern frontline workers assisted disable passengers daily. A shared goal of the company is to ensure rail travel is accessible for all. This is why they introduced the disability awareness programme for all of their staff. In addition, a new pilot 'Rover' scheme was introduced as part of their Accessible Travel Policy. In this scheme, colleagues are specially trained and deployed across unstaffed stations to assist disabled customers. Southeastern saw the need for this type of role due to the fact they were running fewer trains because of covid 19. They realised the value of having specialised trained assistance widely across the network. Southeastern supports people on their journey while social distancing and the hope is that the 'Rover' scheme will still be needed even after things return to normal (Ryan J, 2021).

The employees of southeastern railway experienced a lot of anxiety, stress and isolation due to the covid19 pandemic. In 2020 the number of staff seeking mental health support from first aiders rose by 146%. The main causes of this intervention were anxiety, bereavement, loneliness, relationships and a reduction in household finances. Seeing their employees' high demand for mental health support in these uncertain times, Southeastern launched the railways first ever mental health charter. This outlines eight actions that the organisation can take to identify health hazards, address the problems and train supportive managers. Southeastern aims to create the best practice for mental health with wide-range initiatives to create a supportive working environment (Prentice P, 2021).

Taylor Scientific Management Theory

The Taylor scientific management theory was established by Frederick Winslow Taylor. He and his associates studied the work process scientifically. They studied the performance of work and the impact it has on workers productivity. Taylors' philosophy emphasized that making people work as hard as they can is not as efficient as optimizing the way the work is completed. The principles of scientific management was published by Taylor in 1909. In this, he suggested that there can be growth in productivity if jobs are optimized and simplified. He also noted that managers and workers needed to work together. The idea of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work was advanced by Taylor as well, believing that all workers are motivated by money. His main focus was on efficiency so he conducted a number of workplace experiments in order to establish optimal performance levels. He discovered that by calculating the time needed for various task elements he could identify the most appropriate way to complete them. There are four principles involved in the Taylor scientific management theory These include:

- Studying work scientifically in order to identify the most appropriate way to perform specific tasks efficiently.
- Use capability, motivation and training to match workers to their jobs.
- Ensure workers are being efficient in their work by monitoring their performance and giving the instructions and supervision.
- Divide the work among managers and workers. This allows the managers to focus on planning and training and the workers completing their work efficiently.

In this approach, workers are given much more autonomy as practically possible in order for them to use the most appropriate approach for situations that may arise. Front line workers such as the employees of Southeastern Railway would benefit from this approach during the pandemic as they need this sort of flexibility in a rapidly changing environment (Mindtool, 2021).

Human Relation Theory

The focal point of human relation theory is the individual's need and the resultant behaviours of individuals and groups. To manage human beings an interpersonal approach is necessary. The theory identifies the organisation as being made up of formal and informal elements. The formal elements are the companies' structure and the informal elements include interactions between

individuals. The management of this system creates individual satisfaction and the resultant motivation of the individual. The main focus is placed on the interaction with individuals in the group long with the result group behaviour and performance. The human relations theory outlines six basic elements. These include:

- Focusing on people, not machines or economics.
- The environment of the company is not an organized social context.
- Human relations are vital in motivating people.
- Human relations within teams must fulfill both individual and organizational goals simultaneously.
- Individuals and organizations desire efficiency by achieving maximum results with minimum inputs.
- Motivation depends upon teamwork, requiring coordination and cooperation of individuals involved.

Elton Mayo and Mary Parker Follet are the primary contributors to human relations theory. Mayo contributed to human relationships management through the Hawthorne experiments which suggests that individuals perform better when given special attention . Follet used psychology to understand how to use people efficiently. She promoted the integration of decision making through communication channels (Gordon J, 2021).

Contingency Theory

The contingency theory of leadership focuses on how certain situations affect the effectiveness of a leadership style and the recognition that the most important tool in the workplace is a leaders' ability to adapt. According to the contingency theory of leadership, the effectiveness of a leader relies on the suitability of a particular situation and their leadership style. One situation can show a leader to be effective while another situation can show ineffectiveness. It is important to examine each situation and choose the most appropriate leadership style in order to become a productive leader. A number of factors can affect a leaders' effectiveness in the workplace. These include the team size, the scope of the project and result deadlines. Every leader will have their own individual leadership styles and will respond to these variables in different ways. The contingency theory would imply that the successfulness of a leader is irrelevant as there will always be a particular situation that is challenging. Leaders should therefore take into account that their success relies partially on their circumstances along with their personal skills. This theory is impacted by a number of elements within the workplace.

These include:

- Employees' level of maturity.
- Team members' relationships.
- The pace of the work.
- Management style.
- Typical work schedule.
- Goals and objectives.
- Standards for behavior.
- The policies of the company.
- The work styles of employees.
- The morale of employees.

In order for managers and supervisors to lead their teams successfully, They may need to adapt their leadership style to the current situation or assign some of their leadership duties to members of the team (Indeed.com, 2020).

De Bono Six Thinking Hats Method

Edward De Bono developed the six thinking hats method which is based on the principles of parallel thinking. This method allows an evaluation of potential changes from a variety of perspectives, offering a more balanced view. This way allows the team to move the best, most viable ideas forward. In order to improve services, the way things are done has to change, which means thinking up, considering and testing new ideas. When people cannot reach an agreement about how to move forward, time and energy is wasted. The six thinking hats are usually relevant during or after ideas are gathered. This helps to establish whether or not the ideas should be put forward. De Bono's six hats help people to adopt different ways of thinking. It is designed so that people can think in parallel using one hat at a time. This allows the group to see things from another person's point of view by trying on other hats. The white hat dictates what data is needed, the black hat focuses on the negative outcomes, the yellow hats list all the benefits, the green hat identifies if there is a different way to view things and how the idea can be developed. The red hats determine the emotions while the blue hats summarise the findings and what will happen next (NHS, 2021).

Red Model

The red model was introduced in Pearson's Watson-Glaser II critical thinking appraisal. There are three elements involved in this model. These include recognizing assumptions, evaluating arguments and drawing conclusions.

Recognizing assumptions

Assumptions are statements that are implied to be true without any evidence to back them up. By recognizing assumptions, facts can be distinguished from opinions and the relevant information can be identified. It also helps to establish gaps in information and give a clearer insight of the issue. Recognized assumptions should always be examined from a different perspective.

Evaluating arguments

An assertion intended to persuade someone to believe or act in a specific way is considered to be an argument. A very important element of critical thinking is evaluating arguments. To be able to evaluate arguments, one must analyze assertions objectively and accurately. The red model teaches a person to identify the patterns of bad arguments and agree with information that confirms belief. Recognizing and separating out emotion is a very important role in evaluating arguments.

Drawing conclusions

This deals with using available evidence to arrive at a logical conclusion. Having these skills allows people to appropriately generalize within the evidence scope. If evidence changes then a person's position will change. Arriving at a quality decision is characterized as having good judgement (Davis S, 2013).

During the pandemic Southeastern Railway had to determine if travelling on their trains was safe for customers. The rail safety experts were concerned that people may assume that public transport is a hot spot to contract the virus due to the large number of people in close proximity. To analyse the risks, I believe Southeastern used both the six thinking hats method and the red model. The rail safety standards board (RSSB) used a model to experience a typical passenger journey where they focussed on the time spent waiting on the platforms, boarding and alighting and the time spent on the train itself. In order for them to get an informed estimate of the

risk they went on to work with crowd simulation software, combining data from train operator LNER and infection risk data from the office of national statistics. The results indicated that there were some risks identified and they are obviously higher than if there were no virus at all, but the rail safety standards board believes that if passengers follow the government guidelines, the risks are small enough for people to be able to travel on the trains for both work and leisure (RSSB, 2020).

Critical thinking skills play a very important role to the health of government organization as it gives leaders the ability to deal with changes smoothly and avoid reactive decisions. This allows them to meet their mission more effectively and efficiently regardless of their budget. In the world we live in today there are struggles with budget and increased pressure. These vital skills assist leaders to challenge old assumptions and rethink conventional approaches in the context of today's reality (Davis S, 2013).

Recommendation

Exposure to authentic and necessary information will help employees to improve their critical thinking skills within the workplace. With the vast amount of media scrutiny, the public are subjected to being misinformed. Therefore it would be beneficial to update the members of the team regarding relevant news personally or through an intranet. This will allow the effective sharing of information and informed decision making by the team. Brainstorming with the team through healthy debates will establish a clearer understanding of the subject at hand. Before distributing responsibilities to the team, conduct a mock assignment by giving them a task to come up with solutions, then evaluate all the ideas. This will teach the team on what to do if a situation arises and gives the opportunity to teach and assess.

Conclusion

Critical thinking is a crucial tool in decision making within the workplace. It helps groups and individuals analyse issues rapidly and identify potential risks that cannot be seen at face value. This unique skill is even more vital during covid 19 pandemic as it ensures that a number of ideas are put forth and sifted through in order to identify the most viable ones. With the uncertainties that the coronavirus epidemic has brought to the world, businesses require reasoning and analytical skills. When critical reasoning is developed in the workplace effectively it can support people and groups, beat difficulties and meet their goals through problem solving. Critical thinking cannot be learned overnight, it can be improved and cultivated through exercises and practices. The relationship between organizational culture, leadership behaviour

and job satisfaction is vital. Administrators will usually adjust their leadership style to achieve the company's goals, which in turn could influence employees' satisfaction. In crisis situations, it is through critical thinking at work during COVID-19 that organizations such as Southeastern Railway establish efficient working methods as a team to be adequately ready after the crisis is over.

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