

# “Workplace Culture and its impact on Organisational Efficiency”

(BMSW5105\_LON)

***“How do broader external environmental factors along with COVID-19 and ethical dilemmas affect organisational culture and its performance?”***

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## Executive summary

What is organisational culture? According to Kassem & Ajmal, (2019) organisational culture has been considered as a factor that separates between organizations base on staff's mindsets or the mind collection program which analyses the members of one organization or another. This paper analyses the company Uniqlo, a Japanese clothing retail brand, which was founded in the city of Yamaguchi in 1949 as a textile's producer, it is a company subsidiary of Fast Retailing (*Retailing, 2021*). It evaluates its external factors by using the Pestel analysis which is according to Wang & Chen, (2020) a technique to investigate the external facts of the businesses Pestel stands for; political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors. It also uses Porter five forces tool which is according Maverick, (2018) it analyses the corresponding power of five primary forces that control competition within any industry virtually and a cultural web. A cultural web which helps to describes culture of a firm and creating a strategic progress as its seven elements are key areas of culture change (*Morris, 2020*).which is will also be used to assess Uniqlo organisational culture. Some ethical dilemmas will be discussed in this paper with the chosen organisation.

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## **1.Introduction**

Our lives have been dramatically affected with the novel coronavirus, people had to quickly adapt all these change in a daily basis, especially in workplaces. All these changes that needed to be adapt in a short period of time The new regulations that people need to follow has impacts on many organisations, it poses major challenges for corporate culture and conduct but at the same time more opportunities.

This pandemic brought many challenges for many organisations, some of them may fail due wrong run of the business, low staff morale and weak performance. This is the reason why it is vital for many organisations to manage behaviours in a good direction with the aim to build a good image of the business and have a strong culture.

The chosen organisation is Uniqlo Ltd. is a Japanese clothing brand and a company subsidiary from Fast Retailing. In this report, Uniqlo will be analyse its organisation, its environment, its structure, its culture, and its sustainability. It will also analyse its successful in the future, the barriers of the organisational functions and its global implications. The organisation will be evaluated its environment using the tools Pestel analysis and Porter's Five Forces Model. It will also identify the key drivers for the changes in the business related to environmental impacts such as the covid-19.

Uniqlo will be critically assess the workplace culture using the Cultural web by developing a checklist and evaluate the relationship between Uniqlo and its efficiency in achieving financial and non-financial performance, by explaining the Ethical Dilemma.

## **2. Uniqlo background**

Uniqlo is a Japanese clothing retail brand, which was founded in the city of Yamaguchi in 1949 as a textile's producer, it is a firm subsidiary of Fast Retailing. Now the business is a global brand with around thousands of shops around the world. Redefining clothing with focusing on quality and textiles which has been firmed since the organisation's origin in 1949. Uniqlo can provide great number of unique merchandises as organisations models merges the whole process of making clothes from the planning and designing through manufacture, distribution, and retail. Uniqlo LifeWear is high quality and innovative apparel which is designed universally and comfort. Uniqlo take advantages as technology world is increasing and that makes easier to communicate with consumers directly and transform their needs into actual products quicker (*Retailing, 2021*).

### 3. Business environmental analysis tools

#### 3.1 Porters five forces

Michael Porter has developed the five forces model, is an organisation analysis tool that analyse the corresponding strength of five primary forces that control competition within any industry virtually. Porter's five forces evaluation investigates the rivalry grade amid the outstanding organisation in an industry, and then reviews four other element that influence the sector and the triumph of businesses within it: the bargaining power of distributors, the bargaining power of customers or clients, the threat of new entrants into the industry and the threat posed by substitute products (*Maverick, 2018*). According to Boudreaux, (2020), Porters five force theory shows that some companys are more succesful than other as their postion are higher in the industry, therefore businesses will be more succesful than the other due to several factors related with that industry. In all aspects, competetion is the key since a company could be more successful and experience greater prospects for survival if it competes less and improves its bagaining strength.

#### 3.2 Pestel Analysis

**Pestel** analysis model can also be named as macro-environmental analysis, is a helpful tool investigating macro environment. it functions is not only analysing the external environment but also it identifies all forces that affects and organization. It is technique to investigate the external facts of the businesses. Pestel stands for; political, economic, social, technological, environmental, and legal factors (*Wang & Chen, 2020*).

**Political** factors are associated with the government decisions that affects the economy or industry. Legislation, fiscal policies, trade tariffs and trade conflicts are also related. Specifically, the political environment means the government are involve with the economy such as tax increases on goods imported from other countries to promote domestic products consumption (*Hanh, 2020*).

**Economic** elements are crucial to business triumph, and it has the most impact. Some of the factors are age-related factors, age structure, income levels, the poverty considerations, the tax rates, gender distributions, Inflation rates, *etc.* (*Perera, 2017*).

**Social** factors are the cultural, traditions, norms myths, religions, and beliefs. Ethical values, perceptions and attitudes against the business and the industry within operating market must be considered here (*Perera, 2017*).

Technological is a highly relevant for a technology -based industry. Factors like technical upgrades, infrastructure, and competency (*Perera, 2017*).

**Legal** factors are related to laws and regulations, rules guidelines, principles, acts must be considered under legal considerations (*Perera, 2017*).

**Environmental** factors are related to the importance of the environment ecologically or natural concerns in businesses as it is crucial with the concerns of global warming, negative environmental impacts, and sustainability.

### 3.3 The cultural Web Model

The cultural web tool was presented as an incremental strategic management and a model with the vision of the cultural paradigm of a business. The paradigm is characterized as the group of feelings and hypothesis, held frequently within the firm, acknowledged, and appreciable in the description and statements of the managements. Some researchers have argued that this paradigm is effective in investigating of an organisation's culture. Another researcher also has agreed that it is helpful for both describing culture of a firm and creating a strategic progress as its seven elements are key areas of culture change (*Morris, 2020*).

According to Mullins, (2016), to understand and help to describe the culture of an organisation, a cultural web tool helps to bring together different factors for the evaluation of organisational culture:

- **Routine behaviours:** The method of that staffs of a company acts between each other and towards with people out of the firm and that leads up how tasks should be done or how must it happen.
- **Rituals:** The specific action or memorable happenings through which the company indicates what is vital; could consist of formal organisational processes and informal processes.
- **Stories:** The description that expedites by the employees of an organisation that embed the presents and mark up necessary event and personalities, and generally related to success, heroes, defeat, criminal, and mavericks.
- **Symbols:** This is the logo, cars, offices, titles and type of language or the terminology, which can become a short presentation of the organisational nature.
- **Power structures:** the power that peoples of an organisation depends on management position and seniority.
- **Control systems:** The amount and the compensations systems that highlights what is essential to control and spotlight the attention and activity.
- **Organisational structure:** The power structure defines the relationship and activities within the company.
- **Paradigm:** Covers and emphasizes the behaviours evaluated in another element of the cultural web.

## **4. Uniqlo Pestel Analysis**

### **4.1 Political**

Uniqlo's corporate statement is Changing clothes, changing conventional wisdom, Change the world, Fast retailing aims to expand its organisations operation globally, they also admit that the further their global organisations develop, the better the demand for a good global approach to tax matters. Fast retailing management is the leader for driving a Global One, Zen-in Keiei approach to tax affair which is whether in the market that Uniqlo operates o tax practices enclosed to cross-border firm or new market, this means the company encourages every members of the team to aim to secure full legal requirements within the appropriate management tax affairs (*Retailing, 2021*). Uniqlo also complies with the government guidelines, with the global pandemic of Covid-19, the company is required to follow the government rules such as implementing social distancing rules in the stores through the instalment of barrie4rs between the tills and self-checkout and within two metre signs on the floor and doors.

### **4.2 Economic**

Generally, the price of enterprises and cheaper electronic stuffs has boosted to push down the annual rate of UK inflation more than was expected from last month; July 2021, from two-point five percent to two percent, according to official figures ,with the effect of covid-19, lower sales were promoted in 2020 when enterprises were trying to make the most of their sales after the long lockdown and when the restrictions were eased, July bargains has resumed (*Elliot, 2021*).

### **4.3 Social**

Uniqlo initiates to extend their hands to help combat Covid-1, it is providing support to individuals around the world. It has donated fifteen million masks to medical facilities in Japan and other countries with the help of Uniqlo's partners productions and working on communities through clothing including Airm and Heattech (*Uniqlo, 2021*). Also, the company supports refugees by giving an opportunity to work and earn a living care, in 2018 UNHCR launched MADE51 which is the brand that features craft items made by refugees. Since 2020 Uniqlo have supported MASDE51; S refugee-reliance program (*Lifewear, 2021*).

#### **4.4 Technological**

Uniqlo is famously known to produce products such as Airmism (materials for summer that makes you feel cold when it is hot) and Heattech (make you feel warm when it's cold). The company continues growing and it continues developing new product innovations. It uses recycled polyester material made from post-consumer bottles to produce items such as Dry-ex polo shirts and Fluffy yarn Jackets (*Uniqlo, 2021*). J brand clothes is known for producing Mid-rise super skinny which its jeans are manufactured from identifiable cotton and recycled polyester and are developed with technology by reducing water consumption in the process of the product finishing.

#### **4.5 Environmental**

Fast Retailing (FR) strives to produce high-quality, long-lasting clothes with enduring appeal. The firm focus to give to the premises of a rounded economy and make the most of the resource efficiency by waste elimination. In regards of the climate change, they will bring forward the cooperation with organisations partners and other stakeholders. Fast Retailing has joined an organisation which is a global non-profit firm, it provides cotton farmers education in regards the manipulation of water and agricultural chemicals, for rayon products. Fast Retailing promotes zero discharge of hazardous chemical in the manufacturing process by participating with the association of fashion industry involved with this issue, the ZDHC group. It uses recycled Polyester, encourages to reduce water and energy use by organising assessments related to ecological impact to Uniqlo's core fabric mills. It participates to solve problem of marine plastic pollution (*Uniqlo, 2021*). It also uses recycled down feathers for it jackets.

#### **4.6 Legal**

Uniqlo seeks to accomplish its tax payment responsibilities by following with local and international tax laws and OECD Transfer Pricing Guidelines. The company perceive that the level of Fast Retailing Group tax management is multiplying in complication as their global operations widen, therefore they aim to reduce tax-related risk by investigation of all necessary requirements earlier by consulting with tax advisors' experts. Fast Retailing does not use tax havens for the purpose of tax avoidance (*Retailing, 2021*).

### **5. Uniqlo Porters five forces analysis**

#### **5.1 Competitive Rivalry**

Fashion brands like H&M and Zara with their great emphasize on aiming famous clothing trends, Gap with the offers of long- lasting trends and some niche retailers with the

focus on clothing style difference, makes Uniqlo a great challenge to remain competitive in the market. In the fashion industry, retailers used to compete with terms of race to the bottom strategy to achieve the competitive advantage, but Uniqlo, Zara and H&M does not use this strategy as race to bottom strategy means to sell their product into low prices and this does not build a long-term sustainable competitive advantage (*Abdurakhmonov, 2021*).

Uniqlo products are high quality and innovative, it is known for Heattech and AIRism product technology, and these facts differentiate the company from its rivals, it also focuses on the daily clothing, unlike Zara and H&M focuses on what is trending.

## **5.2 Supplier Power**

Uniqlo Factory are mainly in Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam (*Retailing, 2021*), there are only few in Japan as labour cost in Japan are mostly high compared to the other Asian countries. Strategically the number of suppliers of Uniqlo is a lot and this makes the company bargaining the power of supplier easier which the company controls over the prices as it has option to go over other suppliers where prices are lower.

## **5.3 Buyer Power**

Uniqlo products are most likely to be high quality and this differentiation to its competitors will make difficult to switch if products from Uniqlo and other brand are producing the same product but not with the same quality, this makes bargaining the power of buyer. Customer come often buy especially clothes for work, an everyday use and this means if it is use everyday quality should last longer. Also developing product that makes them different from its competitors can also bargain the power of buyers, products such as Heattech and Airm.

## **5.4 Threat of substitution**

There are just some of substitutes available products that Uniqlo produces in the industry. Some products of Uniqlo like the Heattech items, some firms are starting to copy its functions such as thermal leggings could be bought in some other stores. To tackle this threat, Uniqlo improves its product not only in Heattech but generally, every year the quality of its product is better than the last year season. Therefore, with its quality over price, buyers would be thinking whether to buy a cheaper product with low quality one a bit higher price but with a long-lasting quality.

## **5.5 Threat of new entry**

Threats to enter the fashion industry is easy if the firm does not provide any products or services that makes them different from others. Uniqlo has a very strong product

differentiation and standardised product, this will help to face the threat of new entrants, but with the current Covid-19 pandemic, the threat of new entrants is most likely to be hard as the economic situation is bad, in fact many retail industries were forced to close their firm affected by the Covid-19.

## 6. Organisational culture

Around nineteen the second half of the twentieth century a new approach of organisational culture was recognized: the concept of culture as the social fabric of the firm, being part of the mutual process of building a distinctive organisational aspect. Afterwards, several numbers of definitions were introduced, for example, organisational cultured has been considered as a factor that separates between organizations base on staff's mindsets or the mind collection program which analyses the members of one organization or another (Kassem & Ajmal, 2019). It also has been defined as the arranged of shared values and beliefs that supports the associates of a firm meaning and implement rules for behaviour in the organization (Singh, 2018).

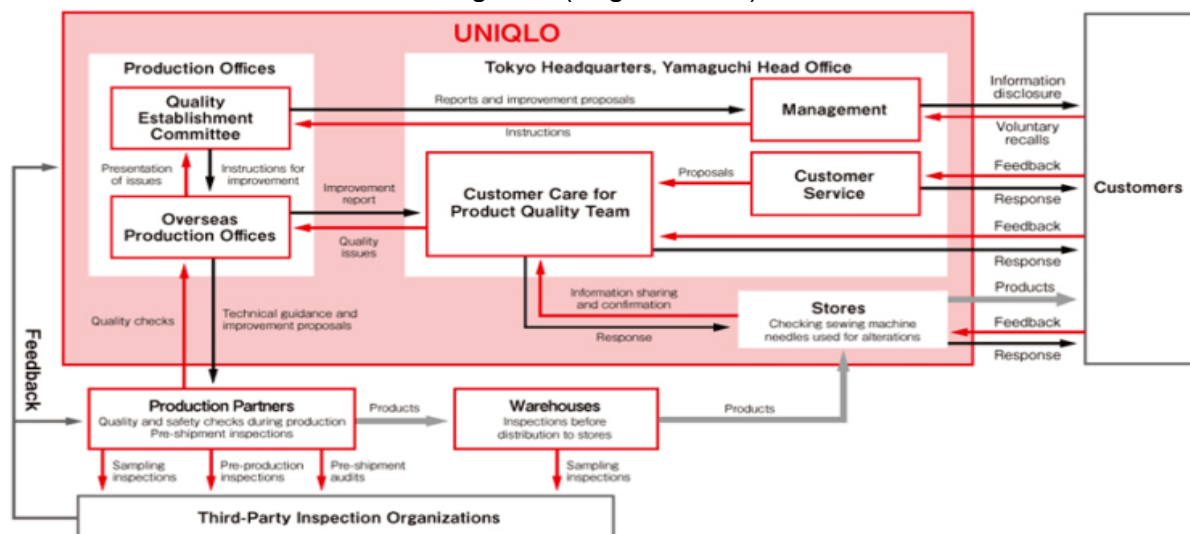
## 7. Uniqlo Cultural Web

### 7.1 Paradigm

Uniqlo has adapted a sustainability mission statement “Unlocking the Power of Clothing” with the goal for harmony, the sustainable management of natural assets and take responsibility in regards of developing of human potential, it focuses on society, people, and the planet. They believe that their apparel has the power to change the world for the better (Uniqlo, 2021).

### 7.2 Organisational structure

Figure 1 (Segura, 2017)



### 7.3 Symbols



### 7.4 Rituals and Routines

Uniqlo daily routines in a shop as a staff member with a position of a customer service advisor, one of the important daily routines; all staff members are required to write down daily information about the figures such as yesterday target, today's target and weekly target, top five best sellers' item of the day and weekly one. Also, staffs are required to see the board to copy their daily rotational task, as staffs are allocated in different tasks in every hour. Staff are weekly required to sign their information's which shows the total hours they have worked in a week to avoid any errors in their payments.

### 7.5 Stories

Uniqlo has this kind of reward system which employees are compensated for their hard work, one a month the company chose a customer advisor of a month, and they are based on their hard work and stories that customers can comment on our website.

### 7.6 Power systems

Uniqlo power system is like a hierarchy which each store has an area manager that supervises the general manager of each store then the general manager is the one who supervised the store manager, then store manager supervised the managers and supervisors, then the supervisor to team leaders and customer advisors.

### 7.7 Control systems

A part from monthly reward for the best customer advisor, the company also provides bonuses for the management team when hitting the target and in Christmas it also provides Christmas compensation. Uniqlo thank you card giving system has been implemented for a long time, but to motivate more people to thank staffs, it also gives a reward who has a thank you card the most, done monthly.

## **8. Organisational Culture and External Factors**

Uniqlo's mission is to change the world through the clothing as statements says "Unlocking the power of clothing" with this, the goal of the company is to be sustainable all the time by focusing of the natural resources, planet, society, and the people. Believing that the clothing has the power to change the world and is committed on making less impact on the environments to achieve the sustainable firm, with this external factor, the effect on the organisational culture is within the power systems as to achieve the mission on its statement everyone must be agreed to reduce what it needs to be reduced to be sustainable.

Technologically, Uniqlo uses the technology to produce unique products such as Airm and Heattech, but aside from those, using recycled materials to produce some clothes such as Dry- ex material that are made from recycled plastic bottles, this supports the mission to achieve a sustained business.

Socially, the company have donated fifteen million masks to hospital in Japan and around the world during the covid-19 pandemic and supports refugees, this impact its organisational culture as it seems Uniqlo routines are always happy to help not just during the pandemic as it supports organisations such as UNHCR and UN woman.

## **9. Organisational Culture and Performance**

Uniqlo organisational culture are focused on producing clothing that will change the world and changing the world not just by using sustainable material but also, socially, the company supports UNCHR organisations, UN woman, refugees, and recruits' employees with disabilities. Overall main concerns of the organisation are the planet, society, and the people, these cultures impact its performance positively, especially when the main objective is to be sustainable, when it uses recycles material for the clothing production, it will benefit the planet and at the same time economically.

## **10. Ethical Dilemma**

Ethics is a discipline that is assigned to figure out what is good and what is bad and with moral duty and obligation. It circles the principles and rules leading the standards of conduct of people such as an organisation or a profession. It can be referred as moral philosophy (*Russell & Handy, 2018*). Organization's ethics is scholarships on organisations positions where concerns what is right or wrong, business ethics are to comprehends the organisations situations. Examples on ethical dilemmas on Social enterprise organisations are some studies encountered dilemmas on whether hiring employees suffering from addiction linked to their public missions, other Social enterprise organisations encountered dilemmas on charging higher -income customers without affecting lower -income clients

who pay less, these samples are indicators that Social enterprise organisations are standing to benefit from public service ethical guidance social missions to supply ethical guidance business concerns situations (*Heckler & Ronquillo, 2020*).

Uniqlo mission is to be a sustainable business, as a staff member of Uniqlo, in regards of environmental factors, as it was discussed previously, in some products of Uniqlo, they try to use recycled material to benefit the environment but still there is a lot to balance. Even though their effort for the planet is high, still when the products come to its stores, they individually packed in a plastic one, even one pair of socks are pack in one plastic. If you work with Uniqlo in its stores to replenish, the waste of plastic is massively high but then this dilemma would have already discussed between the upper management, the discussion it either send the items without plastic or place it to plastic reusable totes, the thing is when it is replaced to the plastic totes without the plastic, the chances of getting it wet is high. Everyday an ethical dilemma is common in Uniqlo, as for example when products are not selling well, managers are required to think about locations of where it would be selling it well, some manager would suggest to hang the product and some are folded, as hanging items could show better the designs but only few can fit, not like folded facing would fit a lot of quantity but could not show all the designs.

## **11. Recommendations**

Uniqlo's organisational culture are generally good and have a positive mission with the planet, peoples and society as its main goal is to make the world better. As it was defining that Uniqlo is clothing brand from Japan therefore, the company tries to deliver Japanese culture all over the world not only by clothing but how its organisational performance, from its leadership to the employees. In this world no organisations are perfect but for other companies, it is advisable to follow Uniqlo strategies to not just to success but also to be innovative and sustainable business.

## **12. Conclusion**

Considering Covid-19 our lives have been dramatically affected especially it impacted the businesses globally, the tools Pestle analysis, Porters five forces analysis and cultural web is a very useful tool to analyse the organisational culture. By identifying it external factors and evaluating the workplace culture, it can clearly identify dilemmas in workplaces which will be good to tackle which is good or bad for the business that will prevent any failure, improves, and leads to success.

### 13. Reflective writing

What is the meaning of the organisational culture?, before doing this case study about the organisational culture I had no idea what was the meaning of an organisational culture, by researching it, I had found the several definitions of it which is according to Singh (2018) the pattern of shared values and beliefs that help to give the associates of a firm meaning and implement rules for behaviour in the organization. As I think it is mostly the beliefs and the values of an organisation, like how does it firms works with the external factors and internal factors such its structures, its collaboration with world and how does the business run in regards of employees training, treatments rewards, etc. In researching the external factor of the chose company, I have learned a lot and furthermore about the company as for example, even though I have been working in Uniqlo for almost three years, I had no idea about its sustainability factors, such as I did not know that they were using recycle bottle to produce clothes like the dry-ex polo shirts, rayon blouses and fluffy yarn. I was impressed that our company aims to hire at least one disabled person in each store and supports refugees by joining the UNCHR organisation. There are a lot of things that a simple customer advisor did not know about the product or services that we provide. In regards about the ethical dilemma, at first, I had no idea what it means but by reading back the lectures in Moodle and reading some books and articles, it helped me to understand what it means ethic which means according to Russell & Handy (2018) ethics is a discipline that is assigned to figure out what is good and what is bad and with moral duty and obligation. In Uniqlo using the ethics are used very often as for example with just simple task on a day, on tills where you are in charge of refund and exchanges, you are required to be attentive and your ethics should work here as you are in charge of judging about the product you're about to authorize the exchange or a refund, you think about where it is good or not to accept, as it is your responsibility to know whether it will be good condition or not. It is good and very useful to know all about these things as it helps even better to know the product that you are selling to the customers. Now I feel like I know more about the company I work for and in case they promote me, I would know better as this case study helped me to enhance my abilities and I feel like I am more prepared now to do a managerial position. I would improve our store team by providing not a perfect leadership but a happy leadership, as a leader you cannot be happy if his people is not happy, therefore happy staffs member leads to a contented customer which leads to a business success.

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