EGT2
ENGINEERING TRIPOS PART IIA

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Thursday 4 May 2023   09:30 to 11:10

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Module 3E6

ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

*Answer **two** out of three questions.*

All questions carry the same number of marks.

*The **approximate** percentage of marks allocated to each part of a question is indicated in the right margin.*

*Write your candidate number **not** your name on the cover sheet.*

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS
Single-sided script paper

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE SUPPLIED FOR THIS EXAM
None

10 minutes reading time is allowed for this paper at the start of the exam.

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed to do so.

You may not remove any stationery from the Examination Room.

1   Imagine that an organization has developed a very effective management practice to facilitate employee socialization and has just implemented it. Predict and explain how employee creativity will be affected by this practice.

Note: Assume that, except for the implementation of this practice, everything remains equal before and after implementation.   [100%]

[Answer] Employee creativity is fostered by providing ample opportunities for exposure to diverse ideas, opinions, and perspectives. Various theories, such as Amabile's Component Theory of Creativity, the Dual-pathway to Creativity Model, and Theories of Creativity Templates, support this idea. Students should explain one or more of these theories. However, the main goal of socialization is to make employees conform to the same norms and values. As a result of socialization, employees become similar to one another and increase their conformity to the majority's perspective. Here, students should define socialization and explain the main principle of socialization theory. Therefore, this organization's new practice may be detrimental to employee creativity, as it may suppress diversity and promote groupthink.

2   Entrepreneurs are increasingly turning to open platforms like Kickstarter.com to showcase and fund their ideas. For example, fashion designers may use the site to share their designs and seek funding from a global audience. Crowdfunding allows the public to evaluate the creativity of the designs and decide whether or not to financially support them. However, at Kickstarter.com it's not uncommon for evaluators from diverse cultural backgrounds to have differing opinions on the same idea; some may see it as creative while others may view it as uncreative. This raises the question of why individuals from different cultures often evaluate the same idea differently. Drawing on theories and empirical findings that you learned in the class, provide an elaborate answer to this question.

Note that whenever you draw on a theory, you should explain the basic tenets of the theory.   [100%]

[Answer] Cultures shape people's perception through socialization. People in a certain country or culture become similar to each other, but different from those in other countries because **socialization** makes people in the same group share similar mindsets. **As discussed in the lecture on Perception, people from different cultures perceive the same stimuli differently**. For example, in Eastern cultures, people tend to have a holistic perception, while in Western cultures, people tend to have an analytical perception. Therefore, evaluators from different cultural backgrounds are likely to have different standards to evaluate the same idea. For instance, an evaluator from an Eastern culture may consider a newly designed shirt that is harmonious with other existing clothing and shoes to be creative (i.e., a holistic perception). Another evaluator from a Western culture may consider a newly designed shirt that stands out and is less

harmonious with other existing clothing and shoes to be creative (i.e., valuing individuality and supporting analytical perception)

3   Imagine a company that has a very strong culture that stifles the sharing of unique and varied ideas. The CEO of this company finds that such a culture is counterproductive because it may reduce employee creativity. To counteract this, the CEO recruited multiple employees who score high in openness to experience, which is often found as an important predictor of creativity. Drawing on one or more theories covered in class, discuss whether these new employees will exhibit creativity by expressing their trait of openness to experience.

Note that whenever you draw on a theory, you should explain the basic tenets of the theory.   [100%]

> [Answer] According to trait activation theory, people tend to suppress the expression of their traits in strong social situations. They express their traits in their behavior only when social situations are less strong. This strong culture of the company suppresses the sharing of unique and different ideas, and it is likely to suppress the expression of new employees' trait of openness to experience. Furthermore, socialization theory suggests that strong cultures tend to lead to stronger socialization processes, which may socialize highly open new employees to become silent. According to ASA theory, those new employees may feel misaligned between their trait and the organizational culture, and thus, may decide to leave the company. Overall, those new employees are less likely to be creative by expressing their trait in this strong culture favoring the suppression of new ideas

END OF PAPER