

MET 1 Paper P5

Human Resources

Cribs

Q1: This is an expression of an engineering view of management which candidates should identify as being associated with scientific management and Taylorism. It also involves a mechanistic definition of organizations which candidates should identify as associated with Bureaucracy. The main vehicle for the provision of a critical discussion would be to compare these approaches to that of Human Relations Theory. As well as being able to point to the nature of, and contrasts between, these various approaches, good answers will be able to identify continuities amongst them. Excellent answers might well point to the way in which HRT and techniques following from it, could be regarded as a form of 'social engineering'. It would also be possible to include within the answer a discussion of the nature of social phenomenon, which, arguably, undermines the engineering view of management and organizations.

Q2: This question invites candidates to explain the role of emotions in organizations, perhaps indicating that this is an area which until recently has been rather neglected. They should be able to explain what emotional labour is and how it differs from emotion (i.e. because the former involves the management of emotions as an organizational resource). Issues of groups might be approached in terms of role-taking, anxiety-avoidance, groupthink and the Asch experiment. Candidates may take different views on the claim that organizations are *fundamentally* irrational: arguments can (and should) be made both ways, but good answers are likely to identify the fact that emotional labour, in particular, is an attempt to rationalise emotions. Excellent answers might consider whether rationality and emotionality are polar opposites and could make the case that conduct within groups, in particular, arguably proceeds with its own (even if bounded) rationality.

Q3: Candidates should be able to define and explain organizational structure. They should also review the case for structure being dependent upon size with reference to (at least) the Aston Studies and Blau curve, and to recognise that these two studies offer different explanations of the size-structure link. The more evaluative parts of the answer should consider the role of other factors (especially technology and strategy) in affecting organizational structure. Good answers would be likely to point to the isomorphism hypothesis of institutional theory and excellent answers could include a discussion of the problems of identifying causal relationships in this area.

Q4: Candidates could usefully place the statistic under discussion in the context of other data about gendered patterns of work, pay etc. The question invites candidates to explain the main variants of feminist analysis (liberal, socialist, radical). These should then be used to identify issues of, respectively, equal opportunities practices; the labour process; and patriarchy.

Q5 (HRM and IR in Britain)

Evaluate the view that individual blue-collar workers have more to gain from modern HRM practices and procedures than from previous systems of employment relations.

Brief comparison of HRM and collective bargaining (CB)

- individualism versus collectivism

Evaluation of the two methods to include the following dimensions

- economic (enhanced performance/pay, equity/differentiation etc);
- social (teamwork, supervisory styles/mutuality, conflict resolution);
- political (firm dependence/representation and wider focus etc);
- cultural (corporate culture/representation and independence etc).

Assessment of balance of benefits and costs for individuals

Q6 (Employee relations elsewhere in Europe)

What advantages and disadvantages have working people in Britain derived from EU Directives relating to their jobs?

Impact of EU Directives on national legislation:

- anti-discrimination:
 - o gender;
 - o race;
 - o disability;
 - o age;
 - o sexual orientation;
 - o religion/belief;
- working hours;
- freedom of movement;
- temporary employment;
- transfer of undertakings;
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Impact on structure of employment

Which people have benefited/not benefited?

Issues of Europhobia/Europhilia

Quantum of advantages/disadvantages?

Q7 (ICT)

What has ICT ever done to improve the employment lot of the average working man or woman?

Enhanced autonomy

More decision-making at lower hierarchical levels

More opportunities for 'atypical' employment (e.g. homeworking and teleworking)

Sharp fall in/disappearance of certain jobs (e.g. secretarial, clerical and other relatively low-grade jobs)

Opportunities for some office staff to be freed up from some mundane tasks

Newly acquired skills can offer opportunities to break through glass ceilings

Some opportunities for women to work on an equal footing

Opportunities for re-skilling

Deskilling

Opportunities for increased monitoring/surveillance by management

Decentralisation

Kondratieff's waves

Distribution of productivity gains from new technology

The extent to which HRM practices and the globalising of trade has been assisted by advances in ICT

Q8 (Globalisation and international HRM)

Evaluate the contention that the effect on employment of the current globalisation is greater in the advanced industrialised nations than in the less-developed countries.

Brief introduction explaining main trends in flows of jobs, skills, products/services between advanced countries and LDCs due to globalisation

Impacts in LDCs:

- economic (wage levels and regulation, life-style etc);
- social (familial, educational, generational, relocation etc);
- technical (training, authority, transfer etc);
- cultural (relocation, gender, agrarian decline, religion etc).

Similar framework for impacts in industrialised societies

Assessment in terms of issues such as:

- locus of and criteria for corporate decision-making;
- short-term versus long term effects;
- spin-off to political and ideological dimensions;
- convergence and homogenisation arguments;
- cultural hegemony and relativism arguments .

Summary