

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>TRIPOS</b>	<b>PAPER NO. &amp; TITLE</b>	<b>NAME OF AUTHOR</b>
2017	Engineering Tripos Part IIA	3E6 ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR	Andreas Richter

1 (a) What are the differences between leadership and management? Explain. [20%]

- Students should explain Kotter’s distinction between these two concepts. This distinction has been covered in both lecture and course book.
- Better students will also point out that critiques regard this distinction somewhat arbitrary, and that often enough we are not able to distinguish leadership from management.

(b) Explain the strengths and limitations of trait theories of leadership. [30%]

- Trait theories of leadership have been covered in both course book and lecture.
- Students should point out that although early trait approaches were less effective in predicting leadership effectiveness or leadership emergence, recent developments structuring traits around the Big 5 did predict leadership effectiveness and leadership emergence fairly well.
- Better students will also work out that trait approaches only in part serve to predict leadership effectiveness, and that they are not deterministic to leadership effectiveness. Recent research, for instance, on the leadership advantages of introverts, may serve to illustrate this point.

(c) “Transformational Leadership is the best leadership style for any manager in any organisation.” Discuss. [50%]

- This discussion question requires students to debate the pros and cons of transformational leadership.
- Better students will work out the limitations and theoretical contingencies of this leadership approach, which have been covered in class.
- Examples of limitations are the circularity of the transformational leadership construct definition, or the type of research (cross-sectional survey, correlational) that dominates the field. Examples of contingencies include culture, organisational type and organisational structure.

2 (a) Explain three characteristics of a mechanistic model of organisational design and three characteristics of an organic model of organisational design. [20%]

- Any three of:

<b>Mechanistic</b>	<b>Organic</b>
High specialization	Cross functional teams
Rigid departmentalization	Cross hierarchical teams
Clear chain of command	Free flow of information
Narrow spans of control	Wide spans of control
Centralization	Decentralization
High formalization	Low formalization

- The mechanistic model involves tight control, extensive work specialization, high formalization and high centralization, which enables a typical focus on efficiency and standardization of production.
- The organic model involves a loose structure, low specialization, low formalization and decentralization of decision making and authority, which enables effectiveness in anticipating and serving diverse customer needs and/or deploying novel technologies or approaches.
- Better answers will extend their explanations as indicated by the elements following “which enables”, or by including a larger number of characteristics.

(b) Dr. Ed Schein warns that the visible manifestations of culture, which his model calls ‘artifacts,’ may not be the truest expression of culture. Why? What else does one need to know in order to assess an organisational culture? [40%]

- Schein’s model posits that culture is manifest at three levels, that of: artifacts, (espoused) values, and basic assumptions. Artifacts are the most visible as they might include stories, rituals, language, interaction styles, dress, physical layouts, etc. Values are less immediately visible, and basic assumptions hardly visible at all because they inhere in taken-for-granted ways of acting. Schein asserts that basic assumptions, while the least visible, are the truest expression of culture as they guide behaviour through shaping what people take to be true and valuable within the culture.
- Better answers will elaborate on artifacts, values, and assumptions by giving some examples from companies studied in class, and using these to illustrate how

artifacts can either reinforce values or assumptions, or in some cases, misrepresent them.

- Better answers will recognize the importance of attending to all three (artifacts, values, and assumptions) and especially their congruence (or lack thereof) in assessing culture.

(c) Developing a 'learning organisation' is one approach to organisational change management. Suppose you are a consultant advising an organisation with a mechanistic organisational design and a culture that emphasises rigid adherence to written rules. What steps would you suggest this organisation should take in order to become a learning organisation? Explain. [40%]

- A learning organisation is one that has developed the capacity to continuously develop and change.
- Answers must recognize that the change involved is both a structural (organisational design) and cultural change.
- Answers should acknowledge that such changes are extremely difficult and rarely successful.
- Answers should invoke one of several possible models for change, such as Kotter's 8 steps. In each case, they should describe a sequence of steps that will help managers demonstrate the need for change, help others unlearn old patterns, and replace these with new ones.
- Specific structural and/or cultural interventions might include: implementing cross functional teams, giving guidelines or norms for behaviour and reinforcing these (instead of rules), increasing spans of control, reorganizing to decrease centralization, introducing slack to encourage innovation (e.g. like 3M 15% rule).
- Better answers will caution that such radical change requires a long period of time and significant reinforcement, and show a nuanced appreciation for the difficulty of such a transformation.
- Better answers will include both structural (organisational design) and cultural approaches, and explain why both are needed (for reinforcement).

3 In a fictional universe, a private equity firm has purchased all rights (and remaining assets) to former British car manufacturer Reliant. You have been recruited to spearhead a new initiative: to design, prototype, produce, and market a flying car. In tribute to Reliant's splendid history, the car will feature three wings. As a die-hard fan of Reliant cars, this is a dream come true. You are expected to put together a strong

team over the next two months. There are no restrictions on who, and how many, people you can recruit to your team.

(a) Explain the factors you would consider in determining how many people to recruit? [20%]

- Better students will make reference to the experiments of Ringelman and Ingham (as discussed in class) and their explanations for productivity loss (coordination costs and social loafing), and will contextualise their research by pointing at the limitations of using data based on additive tasks for what, in the question, is likely to be a conjunctive or disjunctive exercise. This realisation should point the very best students to the work of experiments on productivity and team size where people are differently skilled (e.g. Richard Hackman) and significant drops in productivity are observed beyond 5 or 7 individuals (depending on the experiment)

(b) Is it important for these people to get along in order for them to perform as a team? Why or why not? [40%]

- Better students will recall experiments (discussed in class, including by Barry Staw, Phillips et al., Hackman) that suggest many people mistakenly rely on their perceptions of the quality of interpersonal interactions to make judgements about team performance. Whereas people often believe interpersonal harmony to “cause” performance, social experimentation typically suggests that harmony is more likely to be the consequence of performance rather than to follow from it. They will also provide explanations for why it is that harmony is so often seen to be a worthwhile pursuit in business, and under what conditions harmony might actually help foster performance.

(c) Which is likely to matter more to the team’s success: individual technical capability or psychological safety? Explain. [40%]

- Better students will recall the work of Edmondson and colleagues on the importance of team psychological safety (as discussed in class), as well as work by Casciaro et al on the “cost” of highly capable but difficult people at work in causing team members to self-censor.

Version AR/2

**END OF PAPER**