

CRIB

Version AR/final

EGT2
ENGINEERING TRIPOS PART IIA

Friday 03 May 2017 09.30 to 11.10

Module 3E6

ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

*Answer not more than **two** 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

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.

1 (a) What is the democratic leadership style? Briefly describe and evaluate the idea. [20%]

- Students should be able to describe the notion of democratic leadership, particularly in relation to theme of decision-making.
- Better answers will then evaluate the concept. For example, the benefits include enhanced employee motivation, perceived ‘voice’ within the organisation, and access more ideas/solutions. The limitations include the slower speed that decisions are made (particularly problematic for some contexts) and the conflict that can emerge between divided parties.

(b) Compare and contrast transactional and transformational leadership. [40%]

- Students should analyse the key aspects of transformation and transactional leadership, in relation to the work of Burns (1978) and/or Bass (1985).
- Transformational leadership tends to focus on longer term visions for, and higher order needs of, followers. It is typically categorised as the following: (i) idealised influence, (ii) inspirational motivation, (iii) intellectual stimulation, (iv) individualised consideration.
- Transactional leadership, by contrast, focus on the proper exchange of resources: (i) clear expectations and reward, (ii) management by exception (i.e. the degree and approach that a leader takes towards corrective action around the leader-follower interactions).
- Stronger answers may demonstrate a degree of evaluation when contrasting the two leadership frameworks.

(c) Critically analyse the characteristics of charismatic leadership. [40%]

- Students are expected to outline the key characteristics of charismatic leadership. These include: vision and articulation, personal risk, sensitivity to follower needs, and unconventional behaviour.
- Charismatic leadership is increasingly researched as a leadership theory. It’s focus on followers makes it more distinctive from many leadership theories.
- However, conceptually, it overlaps quite a bit with transformational leadership. In practice, there are also questions about the way that charismatic leadership can be used to inspire people to destructive and unethical ends.

- Better answers will also include some application of the theory by using real life examples to support their points.

2 (a) Explain Adam Smith's notion of the 'division of labour' (also called 'work specialisation'). [20%]

- Students are expected to outline the process for facilitating efficiency into the work process, particularly around the repetition and narrowing of tasks and roles.
- Better answers draw attention to the criticisms of this approach, including the erosion of skills, and the diseconomies of scale that can occur through human boredom and disengagement when tasks and roles become too focused.

(b) Is it better for an organisation to have a strong rather than a weak organisational culture? Discuss. [40%]

- Students are expected to outline the difference between strong and weak organisational cultures (e.g. strong cultures relate to high buy-in and conformity to the organisation's values and norms)
- The advantages of strong organisational cultures include: employees having clearer understandings of expected behaviour; distributed decision making is more likely to be guided by values.
- However, strong organisational cultures are problematic during planned episodes of change and transformation, and can reduce the influence that change leaders have.

(c) Why would bureaucracy be a problematic organisational design for an innovative tech firm with 500 employees? Explain your answer. [40%]

- Students are expected to describe the tenets of bureaucracy, with reference to the work of Max Weber.
- Answers should then outline a series of arguments for why bureaucracy is problematic in large tech firms. These include: it's lack of flexibility, it's focus on process rather than mission, the subsequent implications for innovation and communication channels, and its inefficiency.

- Contrasting arguments could include reference to significance of some degree of bureaucracy in order to maintain control, particular in mid-large firms; some older studies also suggest bureaucracies tend to be more profitable (though not conducted on contemporary tech firms).

3 (a) A management consultant that you know recently perceived unfairness with regard to pay and recognition. What type of organisational injustice is this and what implications can it have? [20%]

- Unfairness related to pay and recognition is most likely to be a manifestation of distributive injustice, which refers to perceived unfairness of outcomes.
- The implications of distributive unfairness are that it can reduce the strength of positive work attitudes (e.g. job satisfaction, organisational commitment, organisational citizenship behaviour). It can also lead to workplace deviance.
- It is feasible to create an argument that the perceived unfairness noted in the question (about pay and recognition) could be about process (e.g. unfairly missing out on an expected promotion, which carries pay and recognition outcomes), which means the argument needs to be framed around procedural injustice.

(b) How could the job of 'software engineer' be designed to motivate people doing that job? Use Hackman and Oldham's job characteristics framework to guide your answer. [40%]

- Students are expected to analyse the Hackman and Oldham job characteristics framework, which identifies the motivational benefits of skills variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback.
- Better answers will link the job characteristics to 'critical psychological states'. In this, skill variety, task identity and task significance lead to greater experienced meaningfulness of work; autonomy links to greater experienced responsibility; and feedback leads to greater knowledge of results. Together, they all lead to high job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, and higher performance.
- Answers will demonstrate application to the role of software engineer, demonstrating an ability to link the theoretical model with practice.

(c) Critically evaluate expectancy theory. How could expectancy theory be used to enhance the performance of a sales team? [40%]

- Students should analyse expectancy theory by Vroom (1964); i.e. that individuals will be motivated when: they are confident of achieving high performance; when the attraction of a valued reward is high; and when they believe they are likely to receive the incentivising reward.
- Better answers will demonstrate evaluation: e.g. while the theory has been popular and is a straightforward model, it assumes rational decision-making models of human decision-making, both in how rewards are perceived and how they are offered (thus over relying on perception); and is difficult to apply in group situations.
- Answers should apply this to the financial sales context.

END OF PAPER