

3E6 Organizational Behaviour and Change: Cribs 2005

**These questions are tailored to meet the particular needs of engineering students taking what is a qualitative, social science based course so that they are neither disadvantaged by lack of background knowledge but also not precluded from displaying excellence. Thus each question is structured to test a) descriptive knowledge b) analytical skill c) critical awareness. Thus answers are decreasingly tightly specified across the three parts of each question. This approach has the advantage of allowing candidates with no background in the subject to score marks for descriptive knowledge whilst also offering candidates who, despite a lack of background, have developed a more sophisticated understanding to gain very high marks by demonstrating flair. In part c) answers, especially, there is scope for very considerable variation in answers – and marks.**

1 a) Candidates should describe, at least, the Illumination experiments; the relay assembly room experiment; the bank wiring room experiment; the interview experiment. Additional credit may be given for describing some of the less well-known experiments not described in the lectures e.g. the mica splitting room experiment. Descriptions should be accurate as to dates, numbers, job functions and implications of which the most important are: that the illumination experiment showed that social (researcher influence) factors explain production changes rather than the light level as such i.e. the ‘Hawthorne Effect’; that the relay assembly room experiment showed that the Hawthorne Effect is time limited; the bank wiring room experiment showed informal group norms and leadership effects; that the interview programme showed the importance of grievance discussion.

b) Distinctive: social factors recognised as needing management i.e. these factors to be brought into alignment with the organization rather than being (as previously hoped) eradicated; an understanding of motivation as social rather than solely economic; a recognition of psychological and unconscious drivers of workplace behaviour. Continuation: the original design of the experiments as attempts to advance scientific management and especially the impact of physical variables upon productivity; the attempt to enrol both social and economic motivations into the service of organizational purposes (e.g. productivity, profitability); shared commitment to scientific explanation of employee behaviour, but now extended to the ‘science’ of psychology.

c) Basic answers: neo-HRT eg Maslow, McGregor. Sophisticated answers: Rose’s ‘Governing the Soul’ argument.

2. a) This should be defined from Hochschild in terms of the expression or suppression of emotional countenance in order to produce the appropriate emotional reaction from others. That is, the key element must be an appreciation that it is the reaction which matters most, not the ‘input’. It should be specified that this takes different forms i.e. ‘integrative’ EL in which the customer (normally) is required to ‘feel good’ or ‘feel better’ (e.g. leisure/health industries); ‘differentiating’ EL in which the customer is

required to 'feel bad' (e.g. debt collection/some kinds of selling); 'masking' EL in which the customer or user is required to feel neutral (e.g. policing/professions).

b) The answer here is predominantly in terms of the way that customer service can be used to differentiate suppliers, rather than product/service. Candidates should be able to provide a range of examples, if only from the lectures e.g. British Airways, Burger King, AA, BUPA, Boots. The idea of customer loyalty and customer recommendation will be mentioned. But better answers will identify that EL can only provide business advantage as an addition to, not as a substitute for, substantively good products/services.

c) Basic answers: stress on staff; emotional dissonance. Sophisticated answers: duping and demeaning customers.

3. a) Various definitions are possible but all should explain that values *and* behaviours are at stake – it can't just be one. Strong cultures are those where there is a homogeneity of culture. Sub-cultures may exist, and candidates could give examples. A strong OC is to be contrasted with rule-based systems which only operate at a behavioural level (or, at least, only explicitly do so). Such an OC means – optimistically – that motivation is better, quality is better, supervision costs are reduced and conflict is minimised.

b) Recruitment (limit: who is available); sacking (limit: what technical skills the business needs); training (limit: cost, differential interpretation); communication (limit: cost; differential interpretation); symbol management, to include buildings, clothing, mission statements, events (limit: cost; consistency, differential interpretation). Other limits include resistance and cynicism. General issues include spontaneity versus manageability of culture (Smirchich, Meek etc)

c) Basic answers: 'brainwashing', disguise of inequality. Sophisticated answers: bureaucratization of sentiment; totalitarianism (Willmott, Axel Ray etc).

4. a) Rational Model: Identify problem; Identify objectives in light of problem; Systematic search for all alternative solutions; Identify criteria (e.g. cost/benefit analysis) for evaluation of solutions; Use criteria to select optimal solution; Implement solution; Monitor, and if necessary refine, implementation. Bounded Rational Model: Relating resources devoted to scale of problem (e.g. you would take more care in choosing a house than in choosing a chocolate bar); Making decisions incrementally (using previous solutions and evaluative criteria as a baseline); Accepting 'good enough' information; Seeking a satisfactory rather than an optimal solution; Ending solution search when a satisfactory solution is found, rather than identifying all solutions.

b) Best answered by contrasting a B/RDM model with a political model. Thus, B/RDM: Change is a process of aligning organization and environment; Decisions are made with rationality or at least bounded rationality; Implementation is assisted by techniques, or at least rules of thumb. But, on the political model: Change is the process by which individuals and groups compete over what the organization should do; Decisions reflect the political skill and power of these individuals and groups; Implementation is an

exercise in the relative power of those involved; Because organizations are not 'super-individuals' but collections of individuals, the definition of organizational purposes is not a given but depends on which view gets accepted as being that of the whole organization i.e. a political process; Because environments are complex and the future is largely unknown, it is indeterminate which features of the environment need to be adapted to and this again will be the outcome of a political process; Because rationality is bounded, questions about how it is bounded (e.g. what is satisfactory, what is good enough) will be subject to dispute and power and politics will influence the answers accepted

c) Basic answers: individuals have a 'natural' resistance to change – it is a psychological problem. Consultation may help. Sophisticated answers: resistance reflects differential political interests; resistance may be based upon superior knowledge of practical realities to that held by change initiators.