

3E6 Organizational Behaviour and Change: Crib 2007

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.

1a. in this question student's would give an out line of the ideal-type bureaucracy. Perceptive students will define what is meant by ideal-type in that it is not the most desirable, but what this organization looks like when it is distilled to its most natural parts – or taken to its most logical realization. Students must also reference the sociologist, Max Weber as the first academic to explain the workings of bureaucracy. Then they will describe the most well-known dimensions of the bureaucracy and explain each feature. These are Work performed as official duties, Paid, full-time, career structure, Authority comes from 'office' or position, Hierarchy and reporting structure, Division of labour, Employment based on qualifications and experience, Uniformity and impersonality in treatment of staff and customers.

1b. Here students will outline Weber's argument about what the bureaucratic form is considered to be the most rational and technically efficient form of organization. The lectures focused on bureaucracy compared to previous types of organization that worked more along the lines of patrimony. They will then make a distinction between formal and substantive rationality in order to highlight Weber's argument. Weber thought that organizations were technically rational because it was based upon Functional specialization, Hierarchy of authority, System of rules, Impersonality. They will define technical rationality as choosing the best (most rational) means to a given end. An example of technical rationality should be given as the lecture gave lots of empirical instances of technical rationality. Then, in comparison to this, perspective students will then discuss technical rationality in contrast to the other type of rationality that Weber called substantive rationality. This type of rationality focuses on whether the end chosen or achieved is itself rational. The lecture focused on the holocaust as an extreme example. The extermination of large numbers of people by the Nazi's was undertaken with extreme technical rationality (the means to achieve this end), especially as it utilized administrative procedures to achieve this horrible goals. From a substantive rationality perspective (concerned with the rationality of the ends), this was a very irrational organizational form. Good students will argue that substantive rationality is more concerned with values and as such bureaucracy is basically amoral (neither inherently good nor bad) because it can be used for a whole range of substantive ends. From this perspective then, bureaucracy might be considered irrational given its dehumanization and moral blindness.

1c. This question requires students to enumerate the dysfunctions of formal bureaucracy that were outlined in the lecture and then provide possible ways to counter them through forms of practice. There are four dysfunctions of bureaucracy that were covered in class and the students should also mention the names of the researchers who found them. First is the myth of impersonality described by Crozier. He argued that when he delved into the organization there was much personal bias present, patrimony, informal relations, etc. So the impersonal element of the ideal-type was completely missing and bureaucracies do in fact embody patronage and differential treatment. These can be prevented by being attuned to the power of informal forces in the organization and reinforcing the importance of a bureaucratic ethos described by du Gay. The second dysfunction is the 'work to rule' phenomenon witnessed by Blau. He found that organizational efficiency and effectiveness depends upon not following rules only, since workers could resist the organization by working to the letter of the law. In this sense, bureaucracies require some discretion, personal involvement and judgment in order to function. The work to rule phenomenon tells us that we ought to allow some personal flavor to the organization and that we cannot expect to expunge the personal completely if we want a well functioning organization. The third bureaucratic dysfunction is 'goal displacement' first mentioned by Merton. He argued that in many organizations following rules becomes an end in itself, rather than a means to an end, leading to the 'red tape' problem experienced by many of us. This can be prevented by having employees keep in mind the overall purpose of the organization and encourage them not to apply the rule at the expense of this overall purpose. The fourth dysfunction is 'mock bureaucracy' described by Gouldner in the gypsum plant in the US. This is where rules are in practice often ignored, although they are outwardly seen to be important. Gouldner used the example of safety whereby all the safety procedures were put in place but openly ignored by management and workers alike. This could be prevented by incentivising the following important rules associated with the bureaucracy and allow varying degrees of monitoring.

2a. In this question the student is given wide scope to explain the Hawthorne experiments. They ought to outline the context of the experiments – as an extension of scientific management that undermined this paradigm, and the historical importance of the experiments in that it set underway the human relations school of management in which the human factor was considered very important. Then the students need to explain that the experiments were conducted at the Hawthorne works, part of the Western Electric Company of AT&T between 1924 and 1932 (probably). Findings were analysed by, amongst others, Mayo, Roethlisberger & Dickson and Whitehead and this gave rise to Human Relations Theory (HRT) which transformed the theory and practice of organizations and management through to the present day. Then each of the four experiments should be explained – each experiment group were compared to a control group. The first is the Illumination experiment whereby the effect of varying lighting levels resulted in higher productivity regardless of it getting brighter or dimmer. This led to the Hawthorne effect, whereby the very fact that researchers' were taking an interest in the workers (recognizing them, etc.) had the influence on the productivity rate. The second experiment was the relay assembly room experiment in which a group of 6 women were selected (based upon friendship ties) and the researchers varied conditions of work (pay, rest, supervision style). An increase in productivity occurred again, but the Hawthorne effect this time was short-lived lived the novelty wore off. The third experiment was called the interview programme. This is where a two-tiered interview process took place. First interview level focused on

supervision issues and morale. The second type was much broader and was more concerned with general well-being, at home and at work. Productivity increases were very substantial since it allowed employees to air grievances and concerns. The fourth was the bank wiring room experiment which focused on the effect of the informal work group. Observers found that the informal group had a big impact on productivity since they elected their own leader (informal), restricted output even when productivity bonuses were offered.

2b. What are the managerial implications of the 'Hawthorne Effect'? Here the students would first of all give an overview of the Hawthorne effect, using the illumination experiment as the base for stating that it was the researchers observing, recognizing and having an interest in the work groups that increased productivity. Then they would open up a discussion about the broad implications of this issue which would vindicate the human relations theory emphasis on the informal elements of the organization and the importance of the human factor (something that scientific management and bureaucracy theory has not dealt with – or tried to manage away). The broad implications of the Hawthorne effect are that as a classic social science experiment, it tells us that human behaviour changes as a consequence of being studied and, more generally, being observed or involved. We also know from the relay assembly room experiment that the Hawthorne effect is time-limited, which means the novelty wears off among workers. This might suggest constant stimulation and change is required. The Hawthorne effect also tells us that people in organizations do not act like parts in a machine – they have other needs e.g. for involvement, recognition and that there is an 'informal' set of social relations in organizations with its own norms, rules, leaders etc. Students might extend themselves to discuss the managerial implications of the Hawthorne effect. They are as follows: Work is a social as well as an economic activity, and needs to be structured and motivated accordingly. Managers should interest themselves in the social well-being and morale of workers. Managers must establish systems to communicate, consult and support the workforce. The 'informal organization' needs managing so as to be consistent with the formal purposes of the organization. Very good students will critically discuss whether the informal elements of the organization can be managed, and demonstrate how this issue has been a concern for management up to the present day with discussions around emotional labour, culture and empowerment.

2c. According to many commentators there were some serious methodological problems with the Hawthorne studies. The first is the omission of non-co-operative employees in the experiment groups. Researchers probably did this because they thought that including so-called 'trouble-makers' in the groups would in some way skew the results (which assumes that most of the workers, most of the time were happy with their work – a very strong managerial assumption). But the result was to de-politicise the experiments – and thus inadvertently select people who were probably more amenable to the Hawthorne effect. The other major methodological problem derived from some of the interpretations of the results (and the type of data collected). e.g. whether group norms is a social phenomena or a means of achieving economic goals. More generally, a tendency to 'psychologise' and interpret resistances and even union membership as signs of maladjustment or even mental illness was evident. This derived from the psychiatric slant that the researchers had, perceiving behaviour that derived from structural antagonisms as a psychological phenomenon (and thus pathologizing resistant workers).

3a. Why has Organisation Behaviour traditionally neglected emotions in organizations? Here students can illustrate their grasp of the organisation behaviour field by showing how it has been dominated by the machine metaphor found in the classic approaches of bureaucracy and scientific management. Has traditionally been neglected because work organizations were seen as a site of rationality, not emotions. At a general level, this reflects the split in Modern society (i.e. since the scientific and industrial revolutions) between the public sphere (work, politics, rationality) and the private sphere (home, relationships, emotionality). At a specific level this reflects the impact of bureaucratic models of organization (*'sine ira et studio'*). Even where recognized (e.g. in HRT) it was partial, concerned with 'needs', 'motivation', 'satisfaction' and similar terms. There may also be a latent fear about emotions – that it is the source of trouble, instability and unpredictability, which reflects the more general bias towards rationality and in particular bureaucracy.

3b. In this question, students will give a quick synopsis or definition regarding the meaning of emotional labour. They will define it as work that “requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others” (Hochschild, 1983). It is 'labour' because it is paid for as part of the job of work i.e. it is not simply the emotional effort expended 'naturally'. The key point is that it is about how people make *others* feel (e.g. colleagues but especially customers). They will give examples of different types of emotional labour as well in order to frame its importance. They might refer to Integrative ('Feel Good') EL: the aim is to make the customer feel a positive emotion, Differentiating ('Feel Bad') EL: the aim is to make the customer feel a negative emotion or Masking EL: the aim is to conceal emotion in order to make the customer feel comfortable. Then they will argue why it has become such an important topic in organization behavior. Many jobs now depend on emotional responses and triggers in the customer service section – examples of this can be given, such as Hochschild airline attendants. In other words, service levels are a key differentiator in highly competitive markets. Front-line staff are now the interface between an organization and its customers and can aid customer retention, customer loyalty and referrals to new customers. Traditional jobs too – lawyers, teachers, etc. also have an important emotional management component. Moreover, in all organizations, it is clear that a fuller range of human emotions is present in the workplace e.g. love, hate, envy, lust, friendship, fear, resentment, anger, bitterness, suspicion, joy, pride, guilt, shame, desire, ambition, hope – therefore we need to understand how they are used in the organizational context. Scholarship, especially feminist scholarship, has questioned both the desiccated view of humanity in earlier theories and the split between public/private; rationality/emotionality. New work patterns have put great stress on emotion through the 'feminization of management' (stress on communication, consensus, relationship-building) and 'emotional labour' as a way of working in service economies.

3c. The limitations of emotional labour refer to the problematic issues that can arise for workers and customers alike. Much has been said about the stress caused by 'dissonance' around emotional labour. This is where there is a conflict between genuine feelings and those which must be displayed for the job. Individuals might feel alienated from their true feelings or begin to question who they really are. Burnout might result if the dissonance is extreme. Dissonance is heightened if emotional labour is used to 'patch' inadequate product or service offerings. This is because

workers realise that they might be selling a faulty product and therefore a moral conflict might occur within their roles (insurance sales-people, for example). Emotional labour might be perceived by customers as inauthentic or irritating since they can tell when individual workers are simply faking it or going through the motions.

4a. The generic rational decision making model of change management involves several steps. It suggests that change agents' first need to identify the problem that needs to be dealt with. Then one should identify objectives in light of problem. Next a systematic search for all alternative solutions should be conducted in a rational and logical way. Agents should then identify criteria (e.g. cost/benefit analysis) for evaluation of solutions. They ought to use these criteria to select optimal solution and then implement the solution. Finally change agents should monitor, and if necessary refine, implementation of the change programme. This approach to change management relies upon an assumption of rationality regarding the change process and is generally very linear in its approach. As a result it involves certain limitations, even though it is by far the most popular model in large-scale change programmes. First of all it is expensive approach because so much information needs to be gathered. This is because it requires all options to be explored and therefore this requires resources. It is also generally a very lengthy approach to change because it is linear and drawn-out given the certainty it requires for a right solution to be made. Information has to be gathered and processed, which takes time. Moreover, in its pure form it is impossible to evaluate every possible alternative and solution since bounded rationality dictates that perfect information is unattainable. It also fails to recognise the limitations of people in the change approach – indeed, people are not the rational, information processing mechanism that the model presumes. Politics may also be an important facet that 'corrupts' the rational model. There is also a very important limitation of information that may be caused by a number of factors, from inadequate resources to political pressures. Students might then go on to show how the bounded rational decision making approach to change might address some of these issues given that it assumes more limited information in the change process.

4b. Power and politics influence change management processes in a number of ways, according to the Political Model of change management. Students will first of all define power and politics, as per the lecture. Politics: the process through which competing aims, views and interests are reconciled or adjudicated between. Power: the resources mobilised by individuals and groups within this process. Then they will outline the tenets of the political model of change, which demonstrates the influence of power and politics in the change management process. Change is the process by which individuals and groups compete over what the organization should do and thus this is a political process since people have different interests and views about the organization. Decisions reflect the political skill and power of these individuals and groups and the implementation of change is an exercise in the relative power of those involved. Individuals seek their own ends, groups of individuals with particular agendas for the organization may influence the change process and shifting alliances based not on fixed groupings and agendas but in response to particular issues are important. Moreover, some groups or individuals may also resist change for a variety of reasons. Why is this approach important for understanding change? 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. Moreover, environments are complex and the future is largely unknown, it is indeterminate which features of the environment need to be adapted to and this will be the outcome of a political process. And because rationality is bounded, questions about how it is bounded will be subject to dispute and power and politics will influence the answers accepted.

4c. Change management programmes often fail for a number of reasons. People might resist the change and thus thwart the process. They resist for several reasons. They have a fear of new things. It threatens their material or psychological well-being. They don't know why change is being implemented, or don't believe the reasons given. They don't know what the effects will be. They don't think the change will work. There are other reasons why failure might occur. There may be inadequate resources available to implement change. Unforeseen problems generated by the change itself might arise (e.g. subcontracting may save money but reduce quality levels). Change programmes may be overtaken by events (e.g. business downturn during culture change programme; technological changes during new product launch). Also, there may be a lack of genuine support from top managers (i.e. leadership failures).