YEAR	TRIPOS	PAPER NO. & TITLE	NAME OF AUTHOR
2011	Engineering Tripos Part IIA	3E6 Organizational Behaviour	Dr Jochen Menges

1. (a) Compare the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to the Big Five Personality Model. Which one is more accepted by researchers and why? [40%]

Students should describe the MBTI and Big Five Personality Model and discuss the evidence for the validity of both constructs. They should cite key references (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge, Heller & Mount, 2002):

- The MBTI is a personality test that asks people to make binary choices (yes/no) about how they usually feel or act in particular situations. On the basis of their answers, individuals are classified as extraverted or introverted, sensing or intuitive, thinking or feeling, and judging or perceiving. These classifications together describe 16 personality types.
- The Big Five Model indicates that there are five basic dimensions of personality that underlie all others and encompass most of the significant variations in human personality. The five dimensions are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability (or neuroticism – its opposite), and openness to experience.
- Evidence is mixed about the MBTI's validity as a measure of personality because it forces a person into either one type or another. The MBTI is suitable, however, for personal reflection and to identify preferences and areas of development.
- The Big Five model has been extensively tested and there is solid evidence for the validity of the model. Students should mention associations between the Big Five traits and outcome variables such as job performance and job satisfaction.

(b) Describe the Big Five Personality dimension of emotional stability and explain how it can predict behaviour at work. [20%]

Students should identify the following key points:

- Emotional stability, often labelled by its converse, neuroticism, captures a person's ability to withstand stress.
- People with strong emotional stability tend to be calm, self-confident, and secure. They also tend to be more optimistic in their thinking, and experience fewer negative emotions. In contrast, people with weak emotional stability tend to be particularly sensitive, but they are also often nervous, anxious, depressed, and insecure. They tend to be hypervigilant and vulnerable to psychological effects of stress.

- Among the Big Five traits, emotional stability is most strongly related to life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and low stress levels.
- In the work place, people high on emotional stability are likely to better withstand adversity and stress and are less likely to affect team emotions negatively. People low on emotional stability are more likely to sense concerns and detect problems, which is also valuable for teams and in organizations.

(c) To what extent can personality be measured? Discuss the advantages and limitations of personality assessments in organizations. [40%]

Students should identify the following points:

- Personality can be measured in various ways. Most common are self-report surveys. Individuals answer a series of questions to determine their personality. A second type is observer-ratings surveys. In these surveys, a neutral party assesses the individual's personality.
- Self ratings suffer from impression management activities and changes due to the emotional state of the respondent.
- Observer-ratings surveys tend to be more accurate, but they depend on a sufficiently reliable observation. For a reliable observation, the observation needs to be of an adequate length and is ideally conducted by more than one person.
- Personality assessments are useful to determine the fit of an employee with the job or the organization. Students get extra points if they discuss these issues.

2. (a) Explain the five-stage group development model and discuss its usefulness in an organizational context. [30%]

Students are expected to provide one paragraph of explanation for each stage of Tuckman's model and comment on the trend of organizations to move towards team work.

- Forming
- Storming
- Norming
- Performing
- Adjourning

(b) Identify the benefits and disadvantages of cohesive groups and discuss how managers can encourage cohesiveness. [30%]

Students should mention the following points:

- The link between cohesiveness and productivity depends on the performance-related norms (e.g., output orientation, emphasis on quality work) established by the group. If performance-related norms are high, highly cohesive groups are more productive than low cohesive groups. If performance-related norms are low, highly cohesive groups are less productive than low cohesive groups.
- To encourage cohesiveness, managers can
    o Make the group smaller
    o Encourage agreement with group goals
    o Increase time members spend together
    o Increase status of the group (increase difficulty to become a member)
    o Stimulate competition with other groups
    o Give rewards to the group, not individuals
    o Physically isolate the group.

(c) Should team leaders make decisions for, or with, their team? Discuss at least four strengths and at least four weaknesses of team decision making. [40%]

Students should not respond with yes or no to the initial question. They should explain that the best way to make decisions depends on various factors. They should then identify and explain four or more strength and four or more weaknesses of team decision making, and refer to key references (e.g., Kerr & Tindale, 2004; Kozlowski et al., 2003).

- Strengths of team decision making:
    o Teams generate more complete information and knowledge.
    o Teams bring more input into decision process.
    o Teams offer increased diversity of views. This opens up the opportunity for more approaches and alternatives to be considered.
    o Teams usually generate higher quality decisions.
    o Teams lead to increased acceptance of a solution. Members who participate in making a decision are likely to enthusiastically support the decision and encourage others to accept it.
- Weaknesses of team decision making:
    o Team processes are time consuming. They take more time to reach a solution than would be the case if an individual were making the decision alone.
    o Teams suffer from conformity pressures.
    o The desire by team members to be accepted and considered an asset to the team can result in suppressing any overt disagreement.
    o Team discussion can be dominated by one or a few members. If this dominant coalition is composed of low and moderate ability members, the team's overall effectiveness will suffer.
    o Team decisions suffer from ambiguous responsibility (diffusion of responsibility).

Final Version

3. (a) Is job satisfaction an emotion? Include a discussion of Affective Events Theory in your response. [30%]

Students should identify the following points and refer to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996).

- Job satisfaction is not an emotion per se, but includes emotional information.
- Affective events theory (AET) is a model that suggests that workplace events cause emotional reactions among employees, which then influence workplace attitudes and behaviors. The AET begins by recognizing that emotions are a response to an event in the work environment. The work environment includes everything surrounding the job – the variety of tasks and degree of autonomy, job demands, and requirement for expressing emotional labor. This environment creates work events that can be hassles, uplifts, or both. Examples of hassles are colleagues who refuse to carry their share of work, conflicting directions by different managers, and excessive time pressures. Examples of uplifting events included meeting a goal, getting support from colleagues, and receiving recognition for an accomplishment. These work events trigger positive or negative emotional reactions. But employees' personalities and moods predisposes them to respond with greater or lesser intensity to the event. For instance, people who score low on emotional stability are more likely to react strongly to negative events, and their mood introduces the reality that their general affect cycle creates fluctuations. A person's emotional response to a given event can therefore change depending on mood.

(b) Why do the emotions of customer service representatives matter for organizations? [30%]

Students should mention the following points:

- Customer service representatives' emotional states influence customer service, which influences levels of repeat business and levels of customer satisfaction. Providing quality customer service makes demands on employees because it often puts them in a state of emotional dissonance – their felt emotion is different from the emotion they ought to express to the customer. Over time, this state can lead to job burnout, declines in job performance, and lower job satisfaction.
- Employees' emotions transfer to the customer. Studies indicate a matching effect between employee and customer emotions, an effect that is called emotional contagion, the "catching" of emotions from others.
- Emotional contagion relies on mimicry and automatic copying of other's emotions. When someone experiences positive emotions and laughs and smiles at you, you begin to copy that person's behaviour. So when employees express positive emotions, customers tend to respond positively. This applies to negative emotions, too.

Final Version

- If students note that the contagion goes two ways and elaborate on the Social Interaction Model of emotion contagion (Côté, 2005), they show particular depth of knowledge and understanding.

(c) Describe emotional intelligence and give examples of how each dimension of emotional intelligence could be applied in organizational settings? [40%]

Students should refer to key references (e.g., Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). For each dimension, students should write a paragraph of discussion, and provide an example how the specific ability can be applied in business:

- Perceiving and expressing emotions
- Using emotions to facilitate thinking
- Understanding emotions
- Regulating / managing emotions

4. (a) Identify and comment on the needs in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and discuss the usefulness of Maslow's Model for organizations. [20%]

For each dimension, students should write a paragraph of explanation:

- Dimensions:
    - Physiological needs
    - Safety needs
    - Social needs
    - Esteem
    - Self-actualization
- Organizations vary in the extent to which physiological, safety and social needs are met. In situations, in which the basic needs are not met, however, the model is useful and determines the needs to be satisfied before performance can be expected. In situations, in which the basic needs are met, the usefulness of the model is limited, because it is unclear how to fulfil the esteem and self-actualization needs.

(b) Describe the Job Characteristics Model and give examples of how this Model is applied in organizations. [40%]

Students should identify all five components of the Model. For each component, they should write a paragraph of description and provide an organizational example of its application. They should also refer to Hackman and Oldham (1976):

- Skill variety, the degree to which a job requires a variety of different activities.

- Task identity, the degree to which a job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work.
- Task significance, the degree to which a job has an impact on the lives or work of other people.
- Autonomy, the degree to which carrying out work activities generates direct and clear information about performance.
- Feedback, the degree to which a job provides information about the effectiveness of the employee's performance.

(c) Compare and contrast the benefits of intrinsic rewards, such as interesting work, and extrinsic rewards, such as pay, for motivating employees. [40%]

Students should explain intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, and discuss their benefits and disadvantages:

- Pay, an extrinsic reward, is not the primary factor driving job satisfaction; however, it does motivate people, and companies often underestimate its importance in keeping top talent. No matter how much recognition a top performer gets, he will be tempted to leave if the pay scale is much lower than the market and another offer arrives.
- An obvious advantage of intrinsic rewards, e.g. interesting work, is that they are relatively inexpensive. Management can target jobs with low skill variety and task identity, and enrich them so that they are naturally more engaging for employees. Management can also design jobs in the first instance so that they are intrinsically more appealing to employees, saving them the downstream cost of having to provide high compensation to offset the unappealing nature of the work.
- Variable pay structures, such as bonuses are often good production motivators. When pay is tied to performance, the employee's earnings also recognize contribution rather than being a form of entitlement. Over time, low performers' pay stagnates, while high performers enjoy pay increases commensurate with their contributions.
- Research suggests financial incentives may be more motivating in the short term, but in the long run intrinsic incentives will retain good employees if the extrinsic incentives are competitive.

END OF PAPER

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