

YEAR	TRIPOS	PAPER NO. & TITLE	NAME OF AUTHOR
2012	Engineering Tripos Part IIA	3E5 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	Andreas Richter

- 1 (a) Describe three incentives that form part of at-risk compensation. [20%]
- (b) Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of these three incentives. [50%]
- (c) How do these three incentives fit with the four common human resource strategies? [30%]

- Various incentives such as team bonuses, profit sharing, or gainsharing, have been introduced in class. Similarly, benefits and drawbacks of each incentive have been discussed. Students are thus requested to reproduce course materials. Better papers will go beyond course materials and consider additional benefits and drawbacks not covered in class.

Part C of the question targets at the four common strategies “bargain labourer, free agent, loyal soldier, and committed expert”, which form the strategic lens that was adopted in this course. Different incentives fit differentially with these four strategies.

Both lecture and course book cover the relevant materials to answer these questions.

- 2 (a) Describe both the Big 5 personality test and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). [20%]
- (b) Evaluate both instruments with respect to their validity, reliability, utility, and fairness. [40%]
- (c) Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of personality inventories for different application areas. [40%]

- Both the Big 5 personality test and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) have been discussed in class, and students have completed both tests themselves. The validity, reliability, utility, & fairness were discussed for the Big 5, and to some extent for the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Better students will point out that the Big 5 personality test is a more valid, reliable, and (if used for personnel selection purposes) fairer tool than the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI).

Students should discuss in question (c) different application areas of personality inventories, such as personnel selection, leadership/team development, or self-reflection. Better students will point out that the MBTI is not suitable for personnel selection, but can be very useful as a self-reflection tool. Conversely, the Big 5 personality test can be useful for personnel selection purposes. Both lecture and course book cover the relevant materials to answer these questions.

- 3 (a) Describe three different job analysis methods. What are the differences between them? [30%]
- (b) Describe the four approaches to job design. What are the differences between them? [40%]
- (c) Under which conditions would you advise managers to design jobs with low levels of autonomy? Discuss. [30%]

- Task analysis inventory, critical incident technique, and the position analysis questionnaire have been introduced in the lecture. Differences between them have been discussed in class. Competency modelling as a contemporary alternative to more traditional job analysis methods has similarly been introduced in class.

The four approaches to job design are the motivational, mechanistic, perceptual, and biological approach. The differences between them, in particular between the mechanistic and motivational approach, have been discussed in class. Subject to which of the four common human resource strategies an organization follows (e.g., bargain laborer strategy), low levels of autonomy may represent a good fit from a strategic HR perspective. However, irrespective of which of the four strategies organizations adopt, employees may find autonomy highly

motivating (cf. The Hovey & Beard company case that was discussed in class). Better students will go beyond these discussions from class and discuss conditions that make employee autonomy less beneficial for organizations. Examples could be a need for very high control by management, or a low emphasis on motivating employees.

Both lecture and course book cover the relevant materials to answer questions (a) and (b). Answering question (c) requires transfer from class materials.

- 4 (a) Describe in detail four common problems of performance measurement. [50%]
- (b) How can these problems be remedied? [20%]
- (c) Discuss the benefits and drawbacks of absolute and relative performance rating formats. [30%]

- Problems of performance measurement that were introduced in class include situational influences, changes over time, rater bias, and various rater errors. Remedies to these problems include enhancing rater awareness, rating standardization, training (e.g., frame-of-reference training), and the use of suitable rating formats. Benefits and drawbacks of absolute and relative performance rating formats have been discussed in class. For instance, relative measurement may force supervisors to differentiate among employees, while absolute measurement is legally more easily defensible. Both lecture and course book cover the relevant materials to answer these questions.

END OF PAPER

