

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
FINAL EXAMINATION 2020/2021, SEMESTER I
OSP9334/ MSP9334/ MCP2134- ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOUR
DURATION: 03 HOURS



Date: 03rd April 2021

Time: 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

No. of Questions: 05

No. of Pages: 04

Instructions: ANSWER **FOUR (04)** QUESTIONS **INCLUDING QUESTION NO. 01**, WHICH IS COMPULSORY.
ALL ANSWERS SHOULD BE WRITTEN NEATLY AND FOCUSED.

1. Read the following case study and answer the questions given at the end.

DILEMMA AT DEVIL'S DEN

My name is Susan, and I'm a business student at Mt. Eagle College. Let me tell you about one of my worst experiences. I had a part time job in the campus snack bar, The Devil's Den. At the time, I was 21 years old and a junior with a concentration in finance. I originally started working at the Den in order to earn some extra money for my spending. I had been working there for one semester and became unhappy with some of the happenings. The Den was managed on contract by an external company, College Food Services (CFS). What bothered me was that many employees were allowing their friends to take free food, and the employees themselves were also taking food in large quantities when leaving their shifts. The policy was that employees could eat whatever they liked free of charge while they were working, but it had become common for employees to leave with food and not to be charged for their snacks while off duty as well.

I felt these problems were occurring for several reasons. For example, employee wages were low, there was easy access to the unlocked storage room door, and inventory was poorly controlled. Also, there was weak supervision by the student managers and no written rules or strict guidelines. It seems that most of the employees were enjoying "freebies" and it had been going on for long that it was taken for granted. The problem got so far out of hand the customers who had seen what the others do, it felt free to do it, whether they knew the workers or not. The employees who witnessed this never challenged anyone because, in my opinion, they did not care and they feared the loss of friendship or being frowned upon by others. Apparently, speaking up was more costly to employees than the loss of money to CFS for the unpaid food items. It seemed obvious to me that employees felt too secured in their jobs and did not feel that their jobs were in jeopardy.

The employees involved were those who worked the night shifts and on the weekends. They were students at the college and were under the supervision of another student, who held the position of manager. There were approximately 30 student employees and 6 student managers on the staff. During the day there were no student managers; instead, a full time manager was employed by CFS to supervise the Den. The employees and student managers were mostly freshmen and second year students, probably because of the low wages, inconvenient hours (late weeknights and weekends), and the duties of the job itself.

Employees were hard to come by; the night rate of employee turnover indicated that the job qualifications and the selection process were minimal.

The student managers were previous employees chosen-by other student managers and the full time CFS day manager-based upon their ability to work and on their length of employment. They receive no further formal training or written rules beyond what they had already learned by working there. The student managers were briefed on how to close the snack bar at night but still did not get the job done properly. They received authority and responsibility over events occurring during their shifts as manager, although they were never actually taught how and when to enforce it! Their increase in pay was small, from a starting pay of just over minimum wage to an additional 15 percent for student managers. Regular employees received extra allowance for each semester of employment.

Although I only worked seven hours for a week, I was in the Den often as a customer and saw the problem frequently. I felt the problem was on a large enough scale that action should have been taken, not only to correct any financial loss that the Den might have experienced but also to help give the student employees a true sense of their responsibilities, the limits of their freedom, respect for rules, and pride in their jobs. The issue at hand bothered my conscience although I was not directly involved. I felt that the employees and customers were taking advantage of the situation whereby they could "steal" food almost whenever they wanted. I believed that I had been brought up correctly and knew "right" from "wrong", and I felt that the happening in the Den were wrong. It was not fair that CFS paid for others' greediness or urges to show what they could get away with in front of their friends.

I was also bothered by the lack of responsibility of the managers to get the employees to do their work. I had seen the morning employees work very hard trying to do their jobs, in addition to the jobs, workers of the closing shift should have done. I assumed the night managers did not care or think about who worked the next day. It bothered me to think that the morning employees were suffering because of careless employees and student managers from the night before.

I had never heard of CFS mentioning any problems or taking any corrective action; therefore, I was not sure whether they knew what was going on, or if they were ignoring it. I was speaking to a close friend, Mack, a student manager at the Den, and I mentioned the fact that the frequently unlocked door to the storage room was an easy exit through which I had seen different quantities of unpaid goods taken out. I told him about some specific instances and said that I believed that it happened rather frequently. Nothing was ever said to other employees about this, and the only corrective action was that the door was locked more often, yet the key to the lock was still available upon request to all employees during their shifts.

Another lack of strong corrective action I remembered was when an employee was caught pocketing cash from the register. The student was neither suspended nor threatened with losing his job (nor was the event even mentioned). Instead, he was just told to stay away from the register. I felt that this weak punishment was carried out not because he was a good worker but because he worked so many hours and it would be difficult to find someone who would work all those hours and remain working for more than a few months. Although the incident was reported by a customer, I still felt that management should have taken more corrective action.

The attitudes of the student managers seemed to vary. I had noticed that one in particular, Bill, always got the job done. He made a list of each small duty that needed to be done, such as restocking, and he made sure the jobs were divided among the employees and finished before his shift was over. Bill also “stared down” employees who allowed thefts by their friends or who took freebies themselves; yet I had never heard of an employee being challenged verbally, nor had anyone ever been fired for these actions. My friend Mack was concerned about theft, or so I assumed, because he had taken some action about locking doors, but he didn’t really get after employees to work if they were slacking off.

I didn’t think the rest of the student managers were good motivators. I noticed that they did little work themselves and did not show much control over the employees. The student managers allowed their friends to take food for free, therefore setting bad examples for the other workers, and allowed the employees to take what they wanted even when they were not working. I thought their attitudes were shared by most of the other employees; not caring about their jobs or working hard, as long as they got paid and their jobs were threatened.

I had let the “thefts” continue without mention because I felt that no one else really cared and may even have frowned upon me for trying to take action. Management thus far had not reported significant losses to the employees so as to encourage them to watch for theft and prevent it. Management did not threaten employees with job loss, nor did they provide employees with supervision. I felt it was not my place to report the theft to management, because I was “just an employee” and I would be overstepping the student managers. Also, I was unsure whether management would do anything about it any way-maybe they did not care. I felt that talking to the student managers or other employees would be useless, because they were either abusing the rules themselves or were clearly aware of what was going on and just ignored it. I felt that others may have frowned upon me and made it uncomfortable for me to continue working there. This would be very difficult for me, because I wanted to become a student manager the next semester and did not want to create any waves that might have prevented me from doing so. I recognized the student manager position as a chance to gain some managerial and leadership skills, while at the same time adding a great plus to my resume when I graduated. Besides, as a student manager, I would be in a better position to do something about all the problems at the Den that bothers me so much.

What could I do in the meantime to clear my conscience of the “freebies”, favors to friends, and employee snacks? What could I do without ruining my chances of becoming a student manager myself someday? I hated just keeping quiet, but I didn’t want to make a fool of myself. I was really stuck.

Source: Cohen, A.R., Fink, S.L., Gadon, H., and Willits, R.D., (2001). Effective Behaviour in Organizations; Cases, Concepts, and Student Experiences. McGraw Hill Companies Inc., New York.

Questions:

- I. As Susan’s story given above, what is/are the major issue/s you can identify in the Devil’s Den? Analyze that/those issue/s using relevant concepts and theories you learned in Organizational Behaviour.
(20 marks)
- II. What would you suggest as a remedial course of action to the issue/s you identified above? Justify your answer.

(20 marks)

2. "Job stress can have psychological, physiological and behavioural effects".
 - I. Explain what is meant by 'job stress'.

(06 marks)
 - II. Discuss the relationship between job stress and its outcomes mentioned in above statement.

(14 marks)

3. "Employee job satisfaction impacts positively on organizational effectiveness".
 - I. What are the major factors influences on employee job satisfaction? Explain.

(08marks)
 - II. Discuss using practical examples, how significant outcomes of employee job satisfaction positively impact on organizational effectiveness.

(12 marks)

4.
 - I. Explain how 'dominant culture' differs from 'sub culture'. Use practical examples to elaborate your answer.

(08 marks)
 - II. How does organizational culture develop? Explain it with four steps that occur commonly.

(12marks)

5.
 - I. Explain the meaning of the term 'attitude', highlighting it components.

(06 marks)
 - II. Explain what types of barriers prevent people from changing their attitudes? How can attitudes be changed? Elaborate your answer using practical examples.

(14 marks)

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