

The Open University of Sri Lanka
Master of Business Administration in Human Resource Management
Final Examination 2016, Semester I
MCP2134- Organizational Behaviour
Duration: 03 Hours



Date: 27th August 2016

Time: From 1.30 p.m. to 4.30 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.

SICK...AGAIN

Sick again! Selina Anderson sat looking at the message her secretary left on her desk: Jennifer called in sick today; sorry! Selina was disgusted. This was the second Monday in a row that Jennifer Tate called in sick. She seemed fine to Selina on Friday. Jennifer had been working on the Northeast Corporation account, which was now two days behind schedule, probably soon to be three days. To make matters worse, Mr. Bradley, the firm's managing partner, was particularly interested in the progress on the Northeast account.

During their Monday morning meeting, Selina had the unpleasant task of updating Mr. Bradley on the status of the Northeast account. She also informed him of Jennifer's untimely sick day. She told Mr. Bradley that she planned to talk to Jennifer when she returned to work concerning the many sick days she had recently taken. She would inform Jennifer that the next time she called in sick she would be given a written warning which would be included in her permanent file. Just as she had suspected, Mr. Bradley was not pleased to hear the news. He agreed with Selina that Jennifer needed a "good talking to". He pondered aloud that he was rather disappointed in Jennifer's poor attendance and bad attitude. It seemed to him that the rest of the staff was working harder than ever to get new client and increase revenues and productivity.

Jennifer Tate had worked in the Accounting Department of Quantum Corporation for just under five years. She had started with Quantum when she was a senior in college, in an internship programme which enabled students to get on-the-job experience. She had done such good work in the internship programme that she was offered a position at Quantum when she graduated from college.

Quantum Corporation was a medium-sized consulting firm with six different locations in the New England and New York areas. It had been in the consulting industry since 1960, when its first office opened in Boston, Massachusetts. Business for Quantum had paralleled the Northeast economy and thus the 80s proved to be prosperous, while the early 90s saw a decline in both revenues and clients.

Jennifer worked in Quantum's Worcester, Massachusetts, office. The atmosphere here was friendly yet competitive. The staff accountants generally played office politics, which meant "brown-nosing" the partners and "Shmoozing" the clients. They made every attempt to be recognized as partner material and hoped to get promoted in the process. Since business had been particularly stagnant, there had been a recent push by the partners to get new clients. Jennifer was hard worker who always got her work done on a timely basis but took quite a few sick days in the

process. Also, since she was a little on the quiet side, her ability to attract new clientele was merely satisfactory. Because she kept to herself and didn't go out of her way to talk to the partners, Jennifer had received only one promotion in her almost five years with the company.

Even though the partners didn't think Jennifer was a star, her manager Selina thought she was a hard worker who should be at a higher level. Selina knew the reason Jennifer wasn't at a higher level was because she didn't play "office politics". She also felt bad for Jennifer, who had no family except her husband. Since she had moved to Worcester from New York, Jennifer did not have many friends in the area. Her personal history was sad; it explained why she was so quiet and kept to herself most of the time. Jennifer was adopted as a baby and had never known her real parents. The couple that adopted her was older and had severe health problems. They died when Jennifer was 15 years old. She moved around a lot after their death, usually staying with different friends of her parents and even on occasion living in her car. Jennifer decided to go to a small college in Massachusetts to try to start a new life. She wanted to make new friends, be accepted, and prepare herself for a rewarding career upon graduation. It was at college that she met her soon-to-be-husband Mitch. Selina knew Jennifer's personal history and admired her courage and spirit in all of the adversities she had struggled through. She felt that Jennifer worked harder to get to where she was than many of the staff at Quantum who seemed to have everything handed to them on a silver platter. This was why Selina took Jennifer under her wing and became her mentor at Quantum.

This was also why Selina was not looking forward to talking to Jennifer about her absence. In her mind she had gone over and over what she would say to Jennifer and how Jennifer would respond. It was Wednesday when Jennifer finally returned to work. She seemed very nervous and uncomfortable and kept even more to herself than usual. If she had gone over it a thousand times in her mind, Selina would never have been prepared for Jennifer's explanation of her many recent absences. Jennifer told Selina the reason she was out so often was because her husband Mitch had been physically abusing her. She explained that they recently went through a difficult time having a new house built and that this frustration, coupled with problems at work, had made Mitch very stressed and irritable. The economy was hitting the banking business hard, which was the industry Mitch was employed in. He recently found out that his office might be forced to move to Hartford, or more likely, that he would be laid off. Also his salary was very low, and it seemed as though he was always getting passed over for promotions. Jennifer made considerably more money than Mitch, which hurt his pride and made him jealous and resentful of her.

Selina had heard of Jennifer's concerns about Mitch and his increasingly frequent temper tantrums. The staff accountants at Quantum had met Jennifer's husband at various social events the company sponsored. They thought he was domineering and possessive and didn't seem very comfortable in social situations. Jennifer had told her close friends at Quantum that Mitch had an "old school mentality" and believed that a woman's place was in the home; he expected Jennifer to have dinner ready every night when he got home from work and also for her to do all of the house work and bill paying, and so forth. He had come from a home where his mother was very subservient to his father, and he expected Jennifer to behave similarly.

Jennifer told Selina that Mitch had beaten her up rather badly this time and had even tried to kill her! Jennifer called police and they made Mitch leave. Jennifer filed a restraining order and also called a lawyer to file for a divorce. She told Selina this was not the first time it had happened and she was sure if she stayed with him it wouldn't be the last. She was told the restraining order would be hard to enforce because she and Mitch still had joint possessions and if he wanted to talk to her about them, he could. Since the incident Mitch had been back to the house to get his things

and asked Jennifer to take him back. He threatened her repeatedly that if she didn't take him back, he would continue to harass her until she changed her mind. True to his word, he called continuously on the phone until she took it off the hook. He then went to their house and tried to break in. She called the police, who took him away and reprimanded him.

When Jennifer spoke to Selina, she was very upset and not sure what to do or whom to turn to. She told Selina she would need a few days away from work to move out of the house and begin divorce proceedings. She also asked Selina not to tell any of the other staff accountants. Jennifer said she was worried for her safety and thought Mitch would probably call or come to Quantum looking for her. Since she had moved out of the house, work was only place he would be able to find her. Jennifer asked Selina to think about precautions Quantum could take until the divorce and the imminent danger of the situation was over.

Selina told Jennifer, that she felt sick over what had happened to her. She felt very sympathetic that Jennifer had no family and few friends in the area to turn to. She thought that it was her place as her supervisor and friend to help in whatever way she could, especially as far as Jennifer's safety at Quantum was concerned. Selina assured Jennifer that a company like Quantum must certainly have policies and procedures for situations like this. Selina was sure that there were precautions that could be taken to ensure Jennifer's safety. She told Jennifer that she would confer with the managing partner, Mr. Bradley, and see what steps they should take.

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. What is/are the major issue/s you have identified in Quantum Corporation? Discuss using relevant concepts and theories. (15 marks)
 - II. Analyze the behaviour pattern of Selina as the immediate boss of Jennifer. (10 marks)
 - III. Advise Mr. Bradley on the steps what he should take for the issue/s in the Quantum Corporation. Elaborate your answer with suitable examples. (15 marks)
2. "Through launching a motivational programme, organizational objectives can be achieved by getting work effectively and efficiently done".
 - I. Do you agree with this statement? Discuss why. (10 marks)
 - II. Discuss how far theories of motivation provide a framework to motivate different levels of employees in the hierarchy of an organization. (10 marks)
 3.
 - I. Define the terms 'dominant culture' and 'sub culture, and discuss how does dominant culture differ from a sub culture. (10 marks)
 - II. How does organizational culture develop? Explain it with four steps that occur commonly.

(10marks)

4. "There is a positive relationship between the effective communication and organizational effectiveness".

Explain main characteristics of effective feedback and using practical examples discuss, how feedback is so important to effective communication in an organization.

(20marks)

5. I. Explain what are three critical situational variables identified by Feidler from his contingency model. If these are very favourable, what is the most effective leadership style that can be used for organizational success? Discuss.

(10 marks)

- II. Explain major differences between transactional leaders and transformational leaders and briefly explain how the said leadership styles are used to lead modern day organizations.

(10 marks)

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