Tutorial Letter 201/2/2018

Organisational communication
COM2601

Semester 2

Department of Communication Science

This tutorial letter contains important information
about your module.

BARCODE

Define tomorrow.

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CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Dear Student

We hope you have enjoyed your studies on organisational communication thus far.

Please note that the comments in the tutorial letters are important and are intended to help you gain a better understanding of the work and help you prepare for the examination. It is therefore important to read through all of your tutorial letters carefully. This tutorial letter contains general comments, feedback on the assignments for Semester 2 and a description of the action words used throughout this course.

2 GENERAL COMMENTS

You can compare the feedback given in this tutorial letter with the answers you provided in your assignment. Please contact us if you would like to discuss the content of the tutorial letter, if you need further explanations or want to query a mark. Remember, as this module is a semester module, you will not have much time between receiving this tutorial letter and the examination portfolio, so it is important to work through the feedback as soon as possible. Furthermore, once the marks for this module have been finalised (when the examination portfolio, year and module marks are released), we can no longer amend or change an assignment mark for you – it will be too late.

If you have any **academic enquiries**, kindly contact your lecturers for this module. Their details are as follows:

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3 FEEDBACK ON ASSIGNMENTS: SEMESTER 2

Tutorial Letter 101/2018 which you received when you registered for COM2601, contained the two compulsory assignments.

This tutorial letter provides feedback on Assignment 01, which you had to submit in order to gain admission to the examination and which contributes 15% towards your final module mark, as well as on Assignment 02, which contributes 5% towards your final module mark.

Please note that there are various activities in the study guide that serve as self-assessment exercises in preparation for the examination. Please remember that the study guide was written in such a way as to guide you through the work and help you answer the questions. Try to complete all the activities to ensure that you understand the work.

3.1 Assignment 01

Unique assignment number: **866001**

Due date: **3 August 2018**

You had to answer all the questions in Assignment 01.

YOU HAD TO SUBMIT THIS ASSIGNMENT IN ORDER TO GAIN EXAMINATION ADMISSION.

THE MARK YOU RECEIVE FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT CONTRIBUTES 15% TOWARDS YOUR FINAL MODULE MARK.

The following are broad guidelines for answering the questions:

When answering questions in this module, always remember that the first part of your answer should be a theoretical discussion based on the theory given in the prescribed book. The second part of your answer should focus on applying the theory to the scenario given in the question. Read through your questions carefully, and make sure you answer the question asked. For future assignments, ask the lecturers for help if you do not fully understand the questions.

The theoretical component, for the purposes of this module, must always outweigh the scenario or practical component, as this is a **theoretical** module. This means that the bulk of your answer must focus on discussing the **theory,** with substantially less focus on your application of the theory to the scenario.

The application, which is rooted in **your own understanding** of the theory, obviously has an array of possible model answers. For this reason, there is no "correct" or "incorrect" way of interpreting theory. If you justified and substantiated your interpretation and application with the correct theoretical elements, your answer would have been (and will always be) considered for mark allocation (i.e. you will receive marks).

It is important to make sure you understand the way theory and application complement each other in an academic discussion, because in the portfolio examination for this module you will be expected to apply theory to a real-life organisational setting. In this way, this assignment prepares you for the portfolio.

In order to answer the questions in the assignment, the following theoretical principles are discussed. Although the feedback below is given in telegram format to allow you to easily see what was expected, in the assignment itself you had to discuss the core aspects in paragraph format with full sentences.

ASSIGNMENT 01

QUESTION 1

In a multi-cultural country like South-Africa with 11 official languages and various different cultures, it is easy for conflict to arise within the workplace. Conflict management is crucial because conflict within the organisation tends to influence other aspects of organisational life, like team communication and decision-making.

Keeping this statement in mind, discuss the types of conflict that may arise and the importance of conflict management. Also discuss how conflict can influence team communication and the decision-making styles of individuals. (15 marks)

Answering Question 1

The primary source is the prescribed book, <u>chapter 3, pages 82-86</u>. Additional background information can be sourced in other sections of chapter 3 and in students' own search for online sources.

In your discussion(s), you can structure your answer(s) according to the following:

Define conflict* **(1 <u>additional</u> mark)**

NOTE:

This definition is not compulsory, but an additional mark can be given for the definition if the total marks awarded do not increase beyond the maximum by doing so.

Any of the following elements can be included in the introductory definition:

The working definition provided in the prescribed book is as follows:

Conflict occurs in interaction between interdependent people who perceive there to be disagreement on goals, aims and values, and who view other parties as potentially interfering with the realisation of these goals, aims and values.

In your description you can refer to the following:

Conflict occurs where differences in power, values and attitudes lead to disagreement, opposition and animosity between two or more people.

There are three main characteristics of conflict:

- incompatible goals

- interdependence of individuals

- interaction between individuals

The basis of organisational conflict is:

- the perception of *incompatibility* or *disagreement* regarding various organisational issues

- where behaviours of individuals are *interdependent*

- the *expression* of incompatibility (not the mere existence of incompatibility)

Constructive conflict involves little emotion; destructive conflict is loaded with emotion which usually tends to be negative, such as anger and frustration. The ideal situation is to have a moderate level of conflict which is effectively managed to ensure the organisation's and its members' optimal, innovative functioning in response to these challenges. Communication is the means by which conflict is both incited and constructively dealt with.

Types of conflict and conflict management   (8 marks)

NOTE:

In your answer you may discuss <u>types</u> of conflict and/or as <u>levels</u> of conflict. <u>Types</u> of conflict <u>must</u> be included in the answer but <u>levels</u> of conflict are optional. Five (5) additional marks for levels of conflict (see page 7 of this tutorial letter) can be given <u>up to the maximum that is awarded for this question</u> (total marks for this question can therefore not exceed 8 marks).

In your discussion(s), you can structure your answer(s) according to the following:

Types of conflict

In your description, you can refer to the following:

Conflict is not always good, but it is sometimes beneficial to the organisation (conflict can therefore be *functional* and *dysfunctional*):

- *Functional conflict (also termed constructive conflict)*

It occurs where conflict results in open discussion. It helps to better understand differences and leads to innovative solutions and greater commitment. Conflict is functional when it provides opportunities for sharing opposing ideas, seeking information, evaluating options, and negotiating goals and alternatives. Functional conflict is a driver of change that focuses on task conflict or cognitive conflict where members still focus on the organisation's objectives, and it leads to improved team work, quality decision-making, satisfaction, commitment, cohesiveness, creativity, mutual understanding and enhanced performance.   (4 marks)

- *Dysfunctional conflict (also termed destructive conflict, affect conflict, relationship conflict or interpersonal conflict)*

It occurs when the focus is on emotions rather than goals or tasks, and when people view differences as personal attacks and not as attempts to find solutions to a problem. It usually stems from personal or socio-emotional clashes and, because members focus on each other rather than the problem, can be destructive if no solutions are reached and morale is negatively affected. This type of conflict hinders progress, leads to indecisiveness, reduces cohesiveness and disengages people from one another and the task at hand.   (4 marks)

Levels of organisational conflict*   **(5 <u>additional</u> marks)**

In your description, you can refer to the following:

NOTE:

<u>*Levels of conflict are optional*</u>*. Five (5) additional marks for levels of conflict can be given but the total for the whole question cannot exceed the maximum of 8 marks.*

- *Intrapersonal conflict*

This conflict occurs when a member of the organisation has to make an important personal decision regarding their work circumstances. They decide on their own what the most appropriate action is. This can result in their being unable to perform optimally.

- *Interpersonal conflict*

When individual members of the organisation perceive goal incompatibility, conflict can occur, often between supervisors and subordinates.

- *Intergroup conflict*

This exists when groups of people within an organisation (such as teams, departments or sections) are parties in the conflict. One member can be in conflict with the rest of the team or several team members can be in conflict with one another.

- *Intragroup conflict*

Smaller sections within an existing group in an organisation can cause conflict when they must compete for scarce resources.

- *Inter-organisational conflict*

This occurs when there are disputes or competition between two or more organisations.
                                                                                     (5x1=5 marks)

The importance of conflict management   **(1 mark)**

In your description, you can refer to the following: Conflict management ensures the optimal, innovative functioning of the organisation and its members in response to challenges.

How conflict influences team communication and the decision-making styles of individuals   **(1 mark)**

In your description, you can refer to the following:

Team communication and the decision-making styles of individuals improve if conflict management is integrated, better communication is used, employment selection is based on common values, organisational structure is adapted, groups and individuals are incentivised, and a "devil's advocate" is appointed to ensure consideration of alternative views.

Scenario application (5 marks)

NOTE:

The scenario applications can be discussed within the discussion on each step, or they can be discussed at the end, after the theoretical discussion. Marks are awarded for the application of the theory discussed above to the South African scenario of organisations with 11 official languages and different cultures.

There are no absolutely right or wrong answers, but your argument(s)/discussion(s) were assessed in terms of their logic and relevance to the topic.

Marks were awarded as follows:

- Three (3) marks for a discussion of types of conflict that may arise in the South African organisational context.

- One (1) mark for the importance of conflict management in the South African organisational context.

- One (1) mark for a discussion of how conflict influences team communication and the decision-making styles of individuals in the South African organisational context.

Important:
Please note:
Headings with an asterisk (*) indicate content that counts additional marks. Additional marks may be awarded according to the outline provided and must not exceed the individual mark allocation.
Definition   =   1 additional mark
Levels of organisational conflict   =   5 additional marks
The total additional marks awarded in conjunction with the mark allocation may not exceed the 15 marks for the entire question 1.

ASSIGNMENT 01

QUESTION 2

Themba has recently been appointed as the communication practitioner for Globe Inc, an organisation dealing in environmental management. Globe Inc is currently restructuring their organisation and asks you to do research on the employees' perception of management in the organisation. Not only will Themba have to do research on the employees' perception of management, but he will have to do research on a new management approach for the organisation. Themba approaches you and asks for your help.

2.1   Help Themba to make a decision on which research method to use by comparing interviews with focus groups. Also indicate which one of the methods you will recommend.   (5 marks)

2.2   Help Themba choose a management approach by comparing the classical management approach and the humanistic management approach in terms of principles, nature of communication, advantages and disadvantages.   (20 marks)

Answering Question 2

Question 2.1 **(5 marks)**

The primary source is the prescribed book, <u>chapter 11, page 411</u>. Mark allocation: 2 marks for listing characteristics of interviewing and 2 marks for listing characteristics of focus groups and 1 mark for application to scenario.

In your description, you can refer to the following:

Interviewing

- Should be used selectively because it is time consuming and requires high levels of involvement from the researcher.

- An interview is a one on one verbal interaction between the researcher and the respondent.

- This method is usually applied when in depth knowledge on an issue is needed (e.g. finding the reason behind employees engaging in an industrial strike).

- Used when highly sensitive issues or topics are explored (e.g.speaking about corruption in the organisation).

- Used when it is difficult to gather individuals together constituting a group for a focus group interview.

- The focus of interviews is on the experiences, attitudes, feelings and the opinions of the people involved.

- It is the appropriate method of obtaining information from individuals in high level positions.

- Careful design, planning and scheduling is needed to make the interview method successful.

Focus groups

- This method of obtaining information has become very popular.

- Focus groups are in essence a small temporary community formed for the collaborative purpose of discovery.

- Consist of 6 to 12 participants.

- Focus groups are a targeted, well designed meeting organised to deal with a specific topic or area of interest.

- The role of the moderator is specifically important to the success of the focus group.

- It is therefore crucial for moderators of facilitators to have the relevant skills and knowledge to handle focus groups.

- Focus groups can be used to study the preferences, opinions, and behaviours of consumers.

- One advantage of focus groups is that the data generated is determined not only by the contributions of individuals within the group but by the group dynamics that evolve during the discussion.

- Focus groups are an effective way of encouraging people to get involved in the decision-making process and have them provide their input on topics.

Due to the number of participants and time constraints Themba should use focus groups to obtain the most data. He should facilitate the groups in a manner that provides accurate data and not allow the sessions to become "bashing management" sessions. Focus groups need to be controlled and led to yield accurate useful information.

Question 2.2   **(20 marks)**

The primary source is the prescribed book, <u>chapter 4, page 125-142</u>. Mark allocation: 9 marks for discussing the classical management approach and 9 marks for discussing the humanistic management approach in terms of principle, nature and advantages and disadvantages. Two marks for application to the scenario.

In your description, you can refer to the following:

The classical management approach

This approach is typically found in larger, formal, bureaucratic organisations. The classical management approach is associated with what some authors refer to as the mechanistic view, which maintains that control and regulation should be reflected in the managerial and communication approaches used in the organisation. Communication is continuously controlled, regulated, and formal.

The basic **principles** of communication in the classical management approach:

- Communication flows downwards through the formal, basic media of communication, such as oral and/or written and visual communication.

- Limited feedback is given to any inquiry, and even this feedback moves through various organisational levels from the sender to the receiver.

- The main purpose of communication is to regulate and instruct.

- Communication is used to create and use opportunities to make the long- and short-term goals of the organisation clear.

- Communication is used to change "unacceptable" attitudes and opinions by moulding new ones through manipulation.

- Communication aims to prevent or correct misunderstanding that might have arisen from a lack of information. If information gaps are not adequately addressed, communication-starved employees become susceptible to rumours and can become apathetic.

- Some managers who experience mounting pressures might distort downward communication by withholding, screening and manipulating information. This results in an organisational climate of suspicion and distrust.

- Although there's a limited feedback system, upward communication from employees to management is accomplished chiefly by written status reports. Employees who attempt to communicate ideas, suggestions or recommendations to their managers usually find them to be unreceptive.

The **nature** of communication in the classical management approach:

In this approach communication is continuously controlled, regulated, and formal despite human relations research which has shown that this type of communication is ineffective. Recent studies have also shown that employees feel uncomfortable with the classical model because it tends to breed mediocrity and low morale among employees.

The model of the verbal communication process used in most classical management approaches is illustrated in the figure below. This model is characteristic of the classical period in which communication flowed in one direction (downward) and employees were expected to respond to instructions and directives without questioning the source of information or providing any innovative feedback.

Message: one-way flow (down)

Management (senders)	→ (various hierarchical levels)	Employees (receivers)
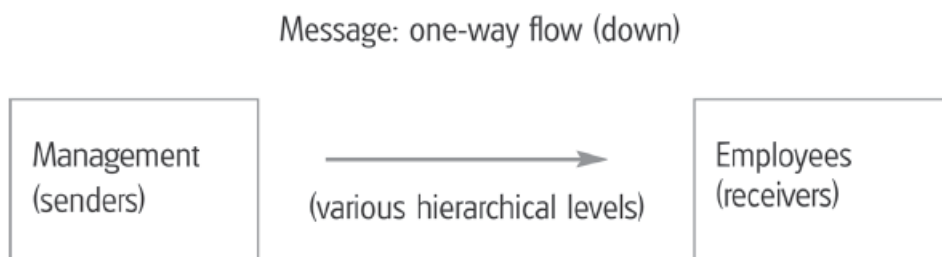
Advantages of the classical management approach:

- Ensures uniformity and predictability.

- Most effective in organisations that mass produce or have limited variety.

- Ensures simple large scale order.

- Efficiency through division of labour.

- Creates a sense of fairness.

- Helps managers enforce tough discipline, make tough decisions and implement tough regulations and policies.

- Maintains the status quo.

Disadvantages of the classical management approach:

- Unable to deal with changes, complexities and challenges in the surrounding environment.

- Employees are seen as production costs rather than as a valuable resource.

- Hinders the creativity of the employee that can assist the organisation during transformation processes.

- Simplistic view which implies ignorance of the complex nature of employees and their needs.

- Communication is scalar, downward and one-directional without the opportunity for feedback.

- Opportunity for alternative workable solutions to problems is limited.

- Does not provide cross functional communication or continual peer level evaluation.

- Controlling methods and rigidity can lead to insensitive treatment of employees.

- Cannot quickly assimilate the influx of new technology.

- Hinders adaptation and innovation to new development.

- Issues arise when unexpected challenges present themselves.

- Not flexible or adaptable and responds slowly to change.

The humanistic management approach

This approach examines a social, interactive and often transactional phenomenon. Through reciprocal (two-way) sharing, people learn about themselves and others, thus leading to trust. The idea that trust and openness lead to better communication between two or more people applies to the humanistic management approach. This approach focuses on organisational development through the establishment of effective group communication and participation.
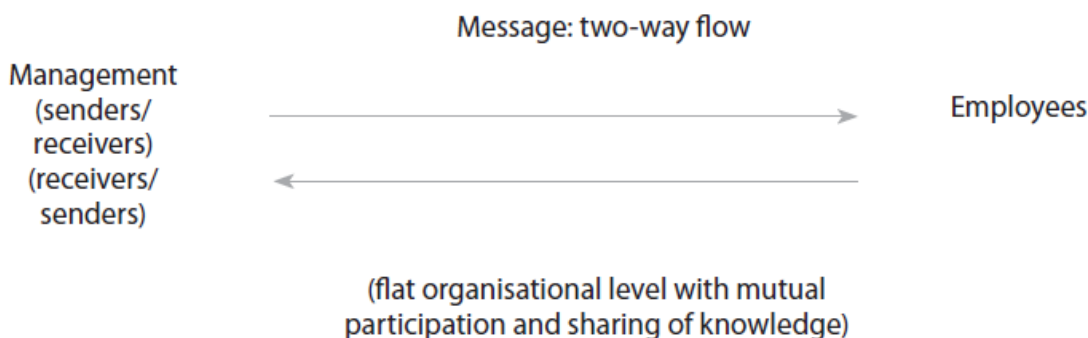
The basic **principles** of communication in the humanistic management approach:

- The competence of the persons receiving the communication must be adequate because communication is established only when meaning between the sender and the receiver is shared. Further, participation by both the sender and the receiver will only be possible if sufficient information is transmitted and received.

- Information provided to employees in a specific department should be relevant and familiar in order for them to contribute and participate effectively. This also implies that information should be limited to what is relevant to each department.

- Detailed communication provides each member of a department with sufficient information, assumptions, goals and attitudes influencing their decisions. It also provides a set of stable and comprehensive expectations as to what other group members are doing and how they're likely to react to what each member is doing.

- Organisational communication should reflect the goals of management and the processes of change, innovation and growth.

- It attempts to place communication in an open system in which sharing can take place.

- In order to establish communication, communication channels should be open, two-directional, and clear.

The **nature** of communication in the humanistic management approach:

People engage in communication with others in the hope that the outcome might lead to mutual trust. Only through reciprocal (two-way) sharing can people learn about themselves and about others. In communication practice, sharing occurs only when people develop trust in each other. The idea that trust and openness lead to better communication between two or more people applies to the humanistic management approach. This approach focuses on organisational development through the establishment of effective group communication and participation. The figure below illustrates the process of communication in an organisation with a humanistic managerial approach.

Message: two-way flow

Management
(senders/
receivers)
(receivers/
senders) → Employees

(flat organisational level with mutual
participation and sharing of knowledge)

The above figure clearly illustrates the nature of communication in the humanistic management approach. Communication is usually an interactional and continuous process. There might or might not be various organisational levels. However, this approach differs considerably from the classical management approach in that any level can communicate directly with the one above or below it without following the route of formal, one-way communication.

Communication between the sender and the receiver should provide clear, undistorted information, assumptions, goals and attitudes; this will then enable a process of sharing and understanding that in turn contributes to a similar interpretation of transmitted messages. Thus, sharing of meaning can occur only if both the sender and the receiver agree on the meaning and importance of a message; only then can communication take place as intended.

Advantages of the humanistic management approach:

- It recognises the importance of interaction between all participants.

- It focuses on the interrelated relationships of subsystems, that is, the participation between all departments in the organisation.

- Change in one department will create change in another.

- Communication is perceived as important in relating the parts of the organisation to the whole.

- Mutual open two-way communication is a requirement.

- Earlier theories focused primarily on the productive and management subsystems. The cybernetics theory highlights the importance of maintaining good relations with significant elements in the environment, maintaining good internal relations, developing the human resources of the system, acting to adapt to changes in the environment.

Disadvantages of the humanistic management approach:

- When problems arise the approach still tends to view the elements in the communication process in isolation instead of taking all variables into consideration.

- Responses to these isolated elements often become routine.

- This implies that inputs are processed in a planned manner rather than an innovative manner.

- Problems are solved in a routine, regulatory manner.

- Approaching issues in this manner can push an organisation back into the classical model.

- It is mainly concerned with populations and shows little concern for the subsystems that function as units on their own.

The best approach to adopt taking into account the industry as well as the management restructuring is the humanistic approach. This approach allows for the development of employees as well as the adaptation need in a turbulent corporate environment.

TECHNICAL PRESENTATION

The remainder of the marks for this assignment were awarded for the technical presentation or quality of your written work. **(10 marks)**

Although all the requirements of the technical presentation are clearly discussed in Tutorial Letter CMNALLE/301, the specific requirements include the following:

Declaration of own work submitted **(1 mark)**

This declaration must be placed at the **front** of the assignment. The wording is given below. You are allowed to paraphrase this.

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this is my own and personal work, except where the work(s) or publications of others have been acknowledged by means of reference techniques.

I have read through and understand Tutorial Letter CMNALLE/301 regarding technical and presentation requirements, referencing techniques and plagiarism.

Student's signature

Student's name

Student number

Date

A witness's signature

Table of contents **(2 marks)**

The following is a **hypothetical example** of how you could present a table of contents:

CONTENTS **PAGE**

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	THEORETICAL POINTS OF DEPARTURE	2
3	INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION	5
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4.1	Basic assumptions	8
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4.2.2	*From the perspective of the audience*	10
5	QUANTITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS	11
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6	CONCLUSION	14
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Introduction and conclusion or summary　　　　　　　　**(1 mark each)**

As a general guideline, you should begin with a short introductory paragraph to set out the problem and relate it to the study material.

You should also round off the assignment with a concluding paragraph (or summary), indicating how you solved the problem, or summarising the main arguments.

You may do this for **every** question, or **generally** for the assignment as a whole.

Sources consulted　　　　　**(5 marks for a list of sources and in-text referencing)**
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(Maximum of 10 marks)

We are trying to teach you the importance of making reference to each and every source you consult. We are very strict about this point. If you did not reference, in the list of sources consulted **as well as** in the text, you received a mark of zero (0) for your technical presentation, as this constitutes plagiarism.

Examples of our adaptation of the Harvard method are as follows, first in the list of sources consulted:

Allen, M, Titsworth, S & Hunt, SK. 2009. *Quantitative research in communication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Huang, CJ. 2005. Exploring types of organization-public relationships and their implication for relationship management in public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 17(4):393–425.

Stewart, TD. 2002. *Principles of research in communication*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

In the text the references look like the following examples:

Internal organisational communication has been credited with being "the lifeblood of an organisation" (Dolphin 2005:173), as it is a major gauging ...
or
According to Van der Walt (2006:359), the context in which the research phenomenon exists ...

3.2   Assignment 02

Unique assignment number: **885165**

Due date: **3 September 2018**

This assignment consisted of 20 multiple choice questions.

Each question counted two (2) marks.

THE MARK YOU RECEIVE FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT CONTRIBUTES 5% TOWARDS YOUR FINAL MODULE MARK.

Question 1
Choose one of the following conflict strategies that specifically scores high on *conflict resolution*. The strategy implies that people involved in the conflict strategy endeavour to create situations in which the goals and objectives of every relevant person can be attained by establishing mutually acceptable and constructive solutions to the conflict. (1)   Compromising (2)   Accommodating (3)   Avoiding **(4)   Confronting**
Answer/Explanation
Option (4) **Confronting** Option 4 is the key; as confronting involves a situation whereby the goals and objectives of every relevant person can be attained by establishing mutually acceptable and constructive solutions to the conflict. Option 1 is incorrect in that people involved in the compromising strategy are prepared to modify their goals and persuade others to do the same so that common goals can be reached. Option 2 is incorrect due to the fact that accommodation focuses on maintaining good relationships, and is adopted by people who perceive their goals to be of lesser importance than the goals of others. Option 3 is also incorrect as avoiders are people who choose to ignore or withdraw from conflict.

Question 2
Symbols can be described as words, gestures and pictures that carry a particular meaning within a particular culture and which allow members of an organisation to communicate and understand each other. According to Barker and Angelopulo (2013:93) which of the following aspect of symbols **CANNOT** be used during times of change and uncertainty to give members direction? (1)   Objects **(2)   Language** (3)   Performers (4)   Roles
Answer/Explanation
Option (2) **Language** Option 2 is the key, as Barker and Angelopulo (2013:93) reason that language cannot be used during the change and uncertainty. However, option 1, option 3, option 4 (objects, performers and roles, respectively) can indeed be used in times of organisational change and to ease uncertainty within the organisation.

Question 3
Elena has an interview at a prestigious public relations firm. When she arrives at the organisation for the interview, she obtains a sense that the environment is hostile and not one she would be able to work well in. Which of the following has Elena experienced? (1)   Organisational culture (2)   Organisational change **(3)   Organisational climate** (4)   Organisational transition
Answer/Explanation
Option (3) **Organisational climate** Climate is defined as a set of organisational attributes which have endured and persisted over time in spite of changes in individual member's attitudes. These are often the feelings that people have about the atmosphere of an organisation. Elena experienced the organisation to be hostile and one she would be unable to work in. Option 1 is incorrect as culture often refers to the shared beliefs, values, norms and perceptions of a group and not just an individual. Option 2 is incorrect because organisational change refers to the alteration of employee and organisational objectives. This is not the case with Elena, as she merely went to an interview. Option 4 is incorrect as transition refers to a period of change from one state to another. This option was merely included as a distractor and is not applicable to the scenario given.

Question 4
Behavioural concepts are considered an element of organisational culture. They assist in helping members of an organisation reach organisational goals and determine which behaviour is appropriate and which is not. Which one of the following is **not** a behavioural concept? (1)   Rites **(2)   Technology** (3)   Rituals (4)   Ceremonies
Answer/Explanation

Option (2)
Technology

See page 93 of the prescribed book. The technology that an organisation makes use of forms part of the artefacts as an element of organisational culture. The artefacts of an organisation are often the most physical characteristics of an organisation.

Option 1 is an element of the behavioural concepts as rites convey cultural messages to members and may be useful in guiding members on the path of understanding what is appropriate and what is not.

Option 3 is an element of behavioural concepts as it can contribute to a member's sense of belonging and motivation.

Option 4 is an element of behavioural elements as things such as ceremonies, prizes and speeches help in reinforcing cultural values in an organisation.

Question 5
Organisational ……… may be defined as the continuous need for proactive communication with personnel in order to assist personnel and business in altering individual and business objectives. **(1)   change** (2)   culture (3)   climate (4)   language
Answer/Explanation

Option (1)
Change

Option 1 is correct, as this definition provided in the prescribed book represents a desire to move from a current state of affairs to a desired one, which may simply be defined as change.

Option 2 is incorrect as culture can be defined as the shared beliefs, values, feelings, norms or common perceptions held by members of an organisation that are apparent in behaviour, that connect a group of people; that guide the functioning of an organisation through symbols, processes and cultural elements.

Option 3 is incorrect because climate refers to a set of organisational attributes which have endured and persisted over time in spite of changes in individual members' attitudes.

Option 4 is incorrect because 'language' with reference to organisational culture is shared meaning of symbols, humour, metaphors, slogans, jargon, specialised vocabulary and gestures.

Question 6
Doug Allen is the founder of *Allen Cosmetics*. Over the last four decades he managed to build an empire while inspiring people to achieve what everyone thinks is impossible. Which one of the elements of organisational culture does Doug Allen's story embrace? (1)   Artefacts (2)   Symbols (3)   Behavioural concepts **(4)   Heroes**
Answer/Explanation
Option (4) **Heroes** In organisational culture, heroes are symbolic models of valued attitudes and behaviours. Depicted in the scenario above, Doug Allen is portrayed as the hero of the organisation as he fulfils the function that will allow employees to feel that success is not impossible, encourages high standards of performance as well as being a prevailing symbol to external stakeholders as well. Option 1 is incorrect because artefacts refer mainly to the physical and socially created environment within the organisation. Option 2 is incorrect because symbols refer to words, gestures, pictures, etc. which allow members to communicate and understand one another. This is their most important function. Option 3 is incorrect because behavioural concepts are meant to guide members in understanding what is appropriate and what is not and are the result of two-way communication. Heroes are meant to inspire more than simply prescribe standards of behaviour.

Question 7
An agricultural firm has put together a number of people tasked with finding more eco-friendly ways of removing pests from agricultural crops. What would you classify the following as? (1)   Informal group **(2)   Team** (3)   Group (4)   Formal group
Answer/Explanation
Option (2) **Team** See page 98 of the prescribed book. Option 2 is the key, as a team is a group of people working towards a common goal to achieve a specific outcome. In the scenario above, the team has been tasked with finding more eco-friendly ways of removing pests from agricultural crops. Option 1 is incorrect as members form an informal group by themselves and join voluntarily.

Option 3 is incorrect because groups are normally formed for the benefit of individual members and not a collective force.

Option 4 is incorrect as formal groups usually work in harmonisation with other formal groups characterised by many rules, regulations and policies.

Question 8

The systems theory is regarded as the foundation of the humanistic and knowledge management managerial approaches. Identify the option that best describes the systems theory.

(1) Independence among organisational sub-system and a relationship of dissonance with the external environment.
(2) Holism and interrelatedness between organisational sub-systems and a conflict relationships with the external environment.
(3) Holism and interrelatedness between organisational sub-systems and a relationship with the external environment.
(4) Independence among organisational sub-systems and a relationship with the external environment.

Answer/Explanation

Option (3)
Holism and interrelatedness between organisational sub-systems and a relationship with the external environment.

The systems theory is indeed characterised by holism, interrelatedness and a relationship with the external environment.

Both options 1 and 4 are incorrect, since "independence" is listed as a characteristic which is in contrast with the systems theory's principles of holism and interrelatedness.

Option 2 is also not correct, as the systems theory is not characterised by a conflict relationship.

Question 9

Select the option that best describes the classic management approach.

(1) Recognition of employees in decision making.
(2) Employees' knowledge are recognised and applied in the organisation.
(3) Downward communication aimed at moulding employees' opinions through manipulation.
(4) It allows formal, external message flow.

Answer/Explanation

Option (3)
Downward communication aimed at moulding employees' opinions through manipulation.

Option 3 correctly encapsulates some of the communication principles of this approach. Downward communication is evident in the classic management approach whereby unacceptable attitudes and opinions are altered through manipulation.

Although option 4 correctly highlights formal message flows, the classic management approach focuses on internal message flow and not external message flow.

Both options 1 and 2 characterise the knowledge management and humanistic management approaches.

Question 10

Mr Joubert is the CEO of *Creme Cosmetics* in Centurion. He needs to implement a new supervision system in the organisation as directed by the head office. Mr Joubert decides to firstly prepare employees for the change by holding various meetings and question-and-answer sessions to encourage employees to recognise the need for such a system. Once Mr Joubert felt that employees were sufficiently prepared, the new supervision system was implemented. To prevent employees from regressing back to old habits, Mr Joubert implemented weekly, compulsory staff meetings within each department which should be utilised as a platform for employees to raise issues of concern associated with the new supervision system. Identify the steps of the change management process that Mr Joubert employed to implement this supervision system:

(1)   Unfreezing; freezing; refreezing
(2)   Unfreezing; change; refreezing
(3)   Unfreezing; change; freezing
(4)   Unfreezing; refreezing; change

Answer/Explanation

Option (2)
Unfreezing; change; refreezing

These are the three correct steps of the three-step model of change. Firstly, employees are prepared for the change (unfreeze); secondly, the actual change is implemented (change/movement); and lastly, the new strategy should be reinforced to prevent employees from regressing back into old habits (refreezing).

Question 11

The fact that more organisations are becoming heterogeneous represents which proposition regarding the role of communication in the organisation?

(1)   Communicating is the fundamental process of organising human actions.
(2)   Communication skills form the basis for effective leadership in the organisation.
(3)   Communication is the key to sound decision making within the organisation.
(4)   Diversity characterises modern organisations.

Answer/Explanation

Option (4)
Diversity characterises modern organisations.

Diversity in modern organisations highlight that organisations are becoming more heterogeneous. Not only are modern organisations more multicultural, but they also provide more opportunities for women and disabled people at various levels.

Options 1 to 3 were all propositions not relating to the statement in the question.

Question 12
What are the focus and purpose of an organisational manager?
(1) To direct and manage resources required for a specific task and to provide guidance and the required procedures necessary to effectively manage complexities in the organisation.
(2) To empower individuals and to adopt personal and active attitudes towards both individual and organisational objectives.
(3) To recognise, understand and react emphatically to his/her and others' emotions and objectives.
(4) To direct and manage resources required for a specific task and to empower individuals.

Answer/Explanation
Option (4)
To direct and manage resources required for a specific task and to empower individuals.
Option 1 highlights the two core purposes of an organisational manager.
Options 2 and 3 represent the purposes of an organisational leader.
Although one of the purposes listed in option 4 is that of an organisational manager, "empowering people" is a purpose of an organisational leader.

Question 13
At BaYayi organisation, the following network of communication does not restrict any members of communication networks; each person can directly communicate information to other employees of the organisation. The above description best describes which of the following networks of communication?
(1) Wheel network
(2) Y-network
(3) Chain network
(4) All-Channel network

Answer/Explanation
Option (4)
All-Channel network
The scenario states that in BaYayi organisation, communication is not restricted to any member of the communication network. Each person can directly communicate information to other members. This describes the All-Channel network, as no constraint on communication is placed in this informal network.
Option 1 is not correct, as the wheel network of communication is centralised to one person who relays messages, as is the Y-network communication which makes it an incorrect option also.
Likewise, in the Chain network (option 3), there are also various restrictions that dictate which members of the network may speak to whom. This option could therefore also not be correct.

Question 14
At the annual meeting of *DIDA* organisation, the human resources department proposes an increase of pay (salary) for the next financial year; however the finance department of the same organisation disagrees over pay increases. The above scenario of *DIDA* organisation best describes which of the following levels of organisational conflict? (1)   Interpersonal conflict **(2)   Intergroup conflict** (3)   Intragroup conflict (4)   Interorganisational conflict
Answer/Explanation
Option (2) **Intergroup conflict** The scenario paints the picture of different departments within the organisation experiencing conflict (or at least a conflict of interest) regarding resources in the organisation. If the different departments are viewed as different groups, then we realise that one group is conflicting with another group over resources. This is exactly how intergroup conflict is defined in the prescribed book which makes option 2 the key. Option 1 is incorrect, as interpersonal conflict takes place between individuals, intragroup conflict (option 3) takes place when there is conflict within one group (for example between entities within the same department). Lastly, interorganisational conflict (option 4) takes place between two different organisations, which is also not what is portrayed in the scenario of the question.

Question 15
The power crisis in South-Africa, with the subsequent load shedding, has forced many organisations, both small and large, to alter their business practices. As the communications practitioner at Eskom you have been requested to conduct an audit to determine if the communication activities that were used, helped the organisation communicate the message about the power crisis to its stakeholders. From the prevalent classifications of organisational communication research, based on the scenario above, which audit would be suitable for the communications practitioner to use to complete his/her task? (1)   Social audit **(2)   Communication content audit** (3)   Environmental monitoring (4)   Corporate communication/public relations audit
Answer/Explanation
Option (2) **Communication content audit** A communication content audit evaluates organisational communication programmes or plans to establish whether messages that are being communicated reach the targeted audience; in essence it intends on assessing communication activities. Option 1, 3 and 4, like option 2, all focus on the opinions stakeholders have; however, they do not assess or focus on the content of messages being communicated or disseminated to audiences.

Option 1 – social audit, determines the effect an organisation's performance has on its stakeholders.

Option 3 – environmental monitoring, aims to identify the trends in opinions that are relevant to the organisation, which could come from the public, customers, sponsors or the organisation's employees.

Option 4 – corporate communication/public relations audit, aims to define stakeholders, as well as to determine how they perceive and evaluate the organisation; in this context the audit could either be audience identification or corporate image studies.

Question 16

Organisations need to understand the confront changes occurring in the business environment in order to promote the effective management of organisational culture, this is done by considering certain factors. Which four factors need to be considered to enable the organisation to manage culture?

(1)   Responsibility/autonomy; satisfaction; desire to change & innovativeness.
(2)   Directive style; analytical style; conceptual styles & behavior style.
(3)   Individual characteristics; organisational ethics; organisational processes & organisational structure.
(4)   Investigate the extent and rationale of the quality initiative; to encourage support; to eradicate.

Answer/Explanation

Option (3)
Individual characteristics; organisational ethics; organisational processes & organisational structure.

Option 1 refers to the characteristics of that contribute towards developing relevant criteria to determine if an organisation is ready to implement a total quality management programme.

Option 2 refers to the decision making styles that can be used during the decision making process.

Option 4 relates to the organisational readiness assessment of the first phase that precedes the implementation phase of the total quality management (TQM) approach.

Question 17

According to Van Der Walt (2006:72) change in the organisation is defined as "constant, certain and continuous actions with the purpose of adjusting and/or modifying existing practices towards new practice". In addition Grobler identifies that change can either be … .

(1)   Incremental or radical/profound
(2)   Macro/organisational level or micro/individual level
(3)   Convergence or divergence
(4)   Internal networks or external networks

Answer/Explanation
Option (1) **Incremental or radical/profound** Option 2 refers to the importance of communication during the change process at the various levels. Option 3 refers to the patterns of viewing the challenges of globalisation in the organisation; communication in the organisation intends on finding a balance between convergence and divergence by encouraging people to adjust to the cultural differences worldwide. Option 4 refers to the communication networks that promote the direction in which messages flows in the organisation; the networks interconnect the lines of communication to ensure that messages are exchanged and interpreted correctly.

Read the following case study on organisational conflict by Taylor (2000) and answer the three questions that follow:

In a large publishing company in New York, a young woman, Laura, was hired as a copy editor for one of the many journals produced by the company. Seven other employees worked on this team editing this journal, including a senior editor named Tim. Laura had worked there for about a month when she and her fellow co-workers went for happy-hour after work. Everybody had a great time and had consumed a fair amount of alcohol. When everybody was leaving the bar to head home, Tim, who had been secretly attracted to Laura since she started work at the journal, hailed a cab and offered to share the ride with Laura. Laura accepted the offer. Once she was inside the cab, Tim then suddenly made an aggressive sexual advance toward her. Horrified, Laura pushed him away and told him to get out of the cab. Mortified, Tim slinked out of the cab.

The next day, Laura came to work with some apprehension. How would she deal with Tim? Would the cab incident affect her job? Although Tim did not supervise her, would he try to get her fired? Tim immediately went to her office and apologized for his extremely inappropriate behavior in the cab. Relieved at his apology, Laura decided not to pursue the matter through any formal channels in the office.

Everything would have been okay if Tim had stopped at just one sincerely expressed apology. However, whenever he found himself alone with Laura, Tim apologized again. And again. He said he was sorry about the incident at every opportunity he had for three months. This constant apology was awkward and annoying to Laura. Ironically, by Tim apologizing continuously for his unwanted attention in the cab, he was foisting another form of unwanted attention upon Laura. When he first started apologizing, Laura told him that "it was okay". After three months of many apologies, she reached a point where she asked him to stop apologizing, to no avail. Frustrated, she confided in a few co-workers about her unusual dilemma. Consequently, these co-workers lost respect for Tim.

Although the cab incident was not common knowledge in the office, Tim sensed that others knew about it by the way they interacted with him. The incident became the office "elephant" that the employees "in the know" saw, but didn't explicitly acknowledge. Meanwhile, Laura was tired of hearing Tim apologize and her feelings of discomfort increased. So when another editor position opened up in another journal division of the company, she applied for the job and was transferred to the other journal. In her new position, she didn't have Tim bothering her anymore. But she was unhappy with her new job. The journal material was very boring. She didn't work as well with her co-workers as she did in the previous journal (excepting Tim). She realized that she really enjoyed her old job. She began to regret her decision to avoid the conflict with Tim by moving to the new job. In an effort to seek advice as to how to solve her problem, Laura decided to consult with the company ombudsman.

Question 18
Various levels of organisational conflict are discernible in the case study above. Firstly and perhaps most obviously, there is conflict between Laura and Tim. This form of conflict points to ………. conflict. (1)   Intrapersonal **(2)   Interpersonal** (3)   Intergroup (4)   Interorganisational
Answer/Explanation
Option (2) **Interpersonal** *Turn to chapter 3, section 3.7.2 of your prescribed book.* In this case study by Taylor (2000) a picture is painted that predominantly focusses on the interactions and conflict between two individuals: Laura and Tim. When conflict arises between two individuals within the organisation, interpersonal conflict is identified – option (2). Intergroup conflict (option 3) refers to conflict that takes place between two **groups** of people, whilst interorganisational conflict (option 4) refers to the conflict that takes place between different **organisations**. As the conflict highlighted in this question is between two individuals – not groups or organisations – these two options cannot be seen as correct. Furthermore, intrapersonal conflict (option 1) refers to the conflict that resides **within one individual** and since there are two parties to the conflict highlighted in this question, this option cannot be seen as appropriate or correct either.

Question 19
At the end of the case study, Laura decides to consult with the company ombudsman. Intervention by an ombudsman is typically associated with which one of the following strategies of conflict management? (1)   Mediation (2)   Social Intervention Programmes **(3)   Arbitration** (4)   Negotiation

Answer/Explanation

Option (3)
Arbitration

Turn to chapter 3, section 3.7.4 of your prescribed book.

An arbitrator (option 3) is a neutral party who will listen to the accounts and versions of both parties to the conflict, discuss possible solutions with the parties, and who will then make a final, binding decision regarding the conflict that both parties would have to adhere to. This is exactly the role of the ombudsman in a situation such as this. The fact that the ombudsman does not involve both parties to **collectively** seek a solution regarding the conflict situation, as in this case, sets it apart from other strategies where a neutral third party is involved.

For example, in both mediation (option 1) and negotiation (option 4), the parties to the conflict find solutions to the conflict **together**. For this reason, neither of these two options could be regarded as the key.

Furthermore, option 2 – Social Intervention Programmes – does not involve a neutral third party at all, and is therefore also not the key.

Question 20

Various levels of organisational conflict are discernible in the case study above. Towards the end of the case study, we see that Laura decides to go after another position in a different division in the organisation. Soon after obtaining it, however, Laura starts to regret her decision, and doubts that it was a good one. This form of conflict points to ………. conflict.

(1) Intrapersonal
(2) Interpersonal
(3) Intergroup
(4) Interorganisational

Answer/Explanation

Option (1)
Intrapersonal

Turn to Chapter 3, section 3.7.2 of your prescribed book.

In the case study, one can see that Laura experiences conflict within herself – conflict that is not inflicted by another person. Conflict **within** a single individual is known as intrapersonal conflict. For this reason, option 1 is the key to this question.

Intergroup conflict (option 3) refers to conflict that takes place between two **groups** of people, whilst interorganisational conflict (option 4) refers to the conflict that takes place between different **organisations**. In the conflict highlighted in this question neither groups of individuals, nor organisations come into play. Therefore, options 3 and 4 cannot be seen as correct.

Furthermore, interpersonal conflict (option 1) refers to the conflict that occurs between two or more individuals. Although the conflict between Laura and Tim serves as an impetus to her moving divisions, the conflict of her decision in itself, is not reliant on Tim or any other individual – it resides **within** Laura specifically. For this reason, option 1 is incorrect as well.

(40 marks)

4   MEANING OF ACTION WORDS

The following is an alphabetical list of action words (verbs) usually found in assignments and portfolio examination questions, as well as definitions explaining what is expected in each case.

Analyse
Divide the concept into units or elements and discuss each unit or element in full.

Compare
Identify the similarities and/or differences between facts, or examine the similarities and/or differences between ideas, facts, viewpoints and so forth.

Contrast
Point out the differences between the characteristics of certain indicated concepts.

Criticise
Point out good and bad characteristics, and give your own opinion after taking all the facts, arguments and/or assumptions into account.

Define or give the definition
Give a short and concise description of the subject or concept.

Describe
Give a detailed account of the characteristics of a topic. This should be done in a logical and well-structured manner.

Discuss
Elaborate on a topic by examining its various aspects. A critical approach should be followed.

Distinguish
Note the differences that distinguish two topics from one another.

Evaluate
Give an informed opinion on a topic, as measured against certain standards.

Examine
Investigate and critically discuss a topic in terms of definite criteria and/or guidelines.

Explain
Justify and clarify to ensure that the reader clearly understands your arguments. Make use of illustrations, descriptions or simple but logical explanations.

Give
State only the facts without any discussion.

Give an outline
Present the data in a brief, logical and systematic manner.

Identify

List the most important characteristics of a topic.

Illustrate

Give examples or draw a diagram to elucidate a particular topic or subject.

Interpret

Explain or give the meaning of something in terms of a more common concept. Your explanation should be as practical as possible.

List

Give a list of names, facts, items, and so on, in a specific order or according to a specific category.

Name

Give the names, characteristics, items or facts.

Offer comments

Give a more personal opinion on the matter.

Point out

Present a premise logically by means of thorough reasoning.

Summarise

Give the key aspects of a topic.

5   CONCLUSION

We hope you found this tutorial letter helpful. If you have any questions about your assignments, please contact us as soon as possible. Please check myUnisa on a regular basis for relevant information.

We wish you success with your studies and in the examination.

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