

Examen Organizational Behaviour Januari 2022

Online openboekexamen

Q1 ('Concept' question). /15

One of the central concepts in perceived organizational justice theory is 'merit' (also called equity).

1. Can you explain? What is merit and how does it relate to perceived organizational justice? (*answer should be approx. 5 lines*)

2. According to diversity and inclusion scholars, however, the idea of merit (and 'meritocracy') can be problematic when we link it to discrimination and inequalities in the labor market. Please explain why they say that. (*approx. 0.5 page*)

3. Do you agree with these diversity and inclusion scholars, or not? Base your answer on one specific argument they use (choose one), that you find particularly convincing or unconvincing. (*approx. 10 lines*)

Q2 ('Dilemma' question). /15

We hear more and more calls in the mass media, as well as in internal company communications, for people to reduce their 'carbon footprint' by flying less. For instance, it has been suggested that business people and academics (such as myself) should reflect more deeply about whether it is truly necessary to take the airplane for every meeting with an international collaborator or client. The KU Leuven, as well, suggests that we (professors and researchers) consider traveling by train for trips within Europe, and that we pay a carbon offsetting fee for all the flights we take for work on an annual basis (incidentally, most professors pay these fees from research budgets, which come from public funding and thus indirectly, from tax payers in Belgium and Europe).

For me, the call to fly less represents a dilemma: traveling is my passion in life, and one of the reasons why I love my job. Before the pandemic, I took about 12 to 15 flights each year, half of which within Europe, half of which intercontinental. I also believe there is great added value in attending conferences and working with co-authors face to face, rather than over Skype (like almost any academic, I really hate phone- and video-calls). I rationalize my frequent flying to myself by saying I have no children, I do not drive a car, and I eat almost no meat, so my carbon footprint on those aspects (which are in fact true of the majority of people; most people have a car, kids, and eat meat) is actually much lower than average. In addition, as soon as the option was presented by the KU Leuven I started paying the carbon offsetting fee for all of my flights (as well as for those of my PhD students), no questions asked. I do wonder now, if this means that I am "buying off my guilt"?

What should I do? Is this an ethical dilemma, yes or no? Do you feel I *should* change my behavior, or alternatively, would you *not* judge me if I do not change anything?

1. Evaluate this question based on the three different moral principles that can be used to resolve ethical dilemmas. *What “should” I do according to each of these moral principles?* I expect you to draw (at least somewhat) different conclusions based on the different moral principles! Bear in mind that there is no “one right” answer to this dilemma, but that your internal logic and application of the different moral principles should be consistent and correct. *(approx. 1 page)*
2. If you were in my shoes yourself, what would your personal decision be? With which moral principle from 1. does this decision align the most, and why? Do you think you judge the scenario differently if you are talking about what someone else (me) “should” do versus what you *yourself* “would” do? Why? *(approx. 10 lines)*
3. Finally, are there any insights you gained from your answers to questions 1 and 2 above that you feel could be valuable in your future role as a (human resource/personnel management or other type of) manager/leader? In other words, what perspective would you take if you were in a *management* position in a company (and thus responsible for the people working for you)? Also explain how this position potentially differs from your more abstract position on the matter (question 1) and your more personal position (question 2). *(approx. 15 lines)*

→ Throughout your answers to questions 1, 2 and 3, you need to correctly integrate into your logic (as well as define/explain), the following terms (*at least once and wherever you choose, but not necessarily in this order; and of course you are allowed to conjugate the terms!*): slippery slope; motivated blindness; behavioral forecasting; ethical fading.

Q3 (‘Case’ question). /15

You have been hired by a small start-up company as a consultant, to advise them on how to negotiate salaries (both entry salaries upon hire and pay raises) with their employees. Since this is a new company and its managers are mostly technological experts with little experience with people management, they find the negotiation of salaries a difficult and unpleasant task. You have been asked to come give a training on salary negotiation and write a short text outlining a procedure for such negotiations.

1. Write a short training manual advising the managers of this company on how to negotiate salaries and salary increases. Base your arguments on three specific concepts from the behavioral economics literature: anchoring, framing, and intertemporal choice. *(Integrate this terminology naturally and logically into your manual, rather than merely defining or namedropping the three concepts.)*
Make sure to write your answer in the form of a (very brief) consulting report, addressing the specific concerns of your client, and offering very specific advice on the procedures they should follow when negotiating salaries. *(approx. 1 page)*
2. Now it becomes even more interesting: your best friend tells you (s)he wants to apply for a job at this company. Taking into account the salary negotiation strategy of the company—which you designed yourself!—what advice would you give your friend that would lead to the highest possible hiring salary on their side? *(approx. 15 lines)*

Q4 ('Self-reflection' question).

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There are four specific boundary conditions under which it could be beneficial to deviate from norms (i.e., demonstrate “nonconformity”) in terms of being perceived as a competent, high-status individual by others.

1. The observation that wearing nonconforming clothes can lead to perceptions of higher status is a good example of reverse-causality theorizing—i.e., researchers developing and testing hypotheses that reverse traditional theoretical assumptions about the relationship between two variables. Explain. (*approx. 5 lines*)
2. Choose two of these boundary conditions to write a reflection about what you can learn from research on nonconformity for your own future career. (You can refer to job interviews, performance appraisals, promotion decisions, or other aspects relevant to the workplace.) How might you take this theoretical knowledge and apply it to your advantage in the workplace? Alternatively, instead of writing a future workplace case example, you can also apply this question to your current role as a student. Make sure to clearly define both boundary conditions and apply them correctly to your personal (current or future) case. (*approx. 1 page*)
3. Do you think this strategy of nonconformity would work equally well for racial minorities (for instance, people of color working in/applying for jobs at Belgian companies) as for majority-group individuals? Why (not)? (*approx. 10 lines*)