TRUE/FALSE QUESTIONS

THE MANAGER: OMNIPOTENT OR SYMBOLIC?

1. In the symbolic view of management, managers are seen as directly responsible for an organization’s success or failure.
   (False; easy; p. 50)

2. The current dominant assumption in management theory suggests that managers are omnipotent.
   (True; moderate; p. 50)

3. The view of managers as omnipotent is consistent with the stereotypical picture of the take-charge business executive who can overcome any obstacle in carrying out the organization’s objectives.
   (True; moderate; p. 50)

4. The symbolic view of management impact is useful in explaining the high turnover among college and professional sports coaches, who can be considered the “managers” of their teams.
   (False; difficult; p. 50)

5. In the omnipotent view of management, much of an organization’s success or failure is due to forces outside management’s control.
   (False; easy; p. 50)

6. If an organization subscribes to the symbolic view of managers, it is unreasonable to expect managers to have a significant effect on the organization’s performance.
   (True; easy; p. 50)

7. A manager’s role in the omnipotent view of management is to create meaning out of randomness, confusion, and ambiguity.
   (False; moderate; p. 50)
**THE ORGANIZATION’S CULTURE**

8. An organizational culture refers to a system of shared meaning.
   (True; moderate; p. 52)

9. The organizational culture is a system of shared meaning held by members that distinguishes the organization from other organizations.
   (True; moderate; p. 52)

10. Organizational culture is a perception, not reality.
    (True; moderate; p. 52)

11. Presently, there is no method for analyzing or assessing organizational culture.
    (False; moderate; p. 52)

12. Strong cultures have more influence on employees than weak ones.
    (True; moderate; p. 53)

13. An increasing body of evidence suggests that strong cultures are associated with high organizational performance.
    (True; easy; p. 53)

14. Compensation is mentioned in the textbook as a dimension of organizational culture.
    (False; moderate; p. 52)

15. Most organizations have very weak cultures.
    (False; moderate; p. 53)

16. An organization’s founder has little influence on its culture.
    (False; moderate; p. 54)

17. Rituals are repetitive sequences of activities that express and reinforce the key values of an organization.

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18. Organizational stories typically contain a narrative of significant events or people.  
   (True; moderate; p. 56)

19. Employee stock options are mentioned in the textbook as an example of a material symbol.  
   (False; moderate; p. 57)

20. The link between values and managerial behavior is fairly straightforward.  
   (True; moderate; p. 59)

THE ENVIRONMENT

21. The part of the environment directly related to achievement of an organization’s goals is the specific environment.  
   (True; moderate; p. 64)

22. The general environment refers to everything inside the organization.  
   (False; easy; p. 66)

23. Environmental uncertainty can be divided into two dimensions: degree of trust and degree of integration.  
   (False; difficult; p. 69)

24. Because certainty is a threat to an organization’s effectiveness, managers try to minimize it.  
   (False; easy; p. 69)

25. The term suppliers includes providers of financial and labor inputs.  
   (True; moderate; p. 65)

26. To a national network such as NBC, your home VCR is considered a competitor.  
   (True; moderate; p. 66)

27. Industry conditions are an example of an organization’s general environment.  
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28. Economic conditions are part of the organization’s specific environment.
   (False; moderate; p. 66)

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

For each of the following choose the answer that most completely answers the question.

THE MANAGER: OMNIPOTENT OR SYMBOLIC?

29. What are the two views of managerial impact on the success or failure of the organization?
   a. omnipotent and symbolic
   b. omnipotent and reflective
   c. symbolic and interactive
   d. reflective and interactive
   (a; moderate; p. 50)

30. The omnipotent view of management means ________________.
   a. the top manager is the only person in charge
   b. managers are directly responsible for an organization’s success or failure
   c. that there is only one boss in the organization, and she or he is responsible for delegating orders
   d. managers have little or no responsibility for an organization’s success or failure
   (b; easy; p. 50)

31. The ______ view of management is consistent with the stereotypical picture of the take-charge business executive who can overcome any obstacle in carrying out the organization’s objectives.
   a. omnipotent
   b. symbolic
   c. functional
   d. systems
   (a; hard; p. 50)

32. The symbolic view of management means ____________.

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a. managers are directly responsible for an organization’s success or failure  
b. managers have little or no responsibility for an organization’s success or failure  
c. that external forces are directly responsible for an organization’s success or failure  
d. the employees are directly responsible for an organization’s success or failure  

(c; easy; p. 50)

33. Internal constraints that restrict a manager’s decision options _______________.  
   a. exist within every organization  
   b. do not exist, as all managers can decide as they please  
   c. exist only to the extent that upper management imposes them  
   d. exist only to the extent that followers won’t do as they are told  

(a; easy; p. 51)

34. The current dominant assumption in management theory _______________.  
   a. suggests a balanced view of managers as symbolic and omnipotent  
   b. suggests managers are symbolic  
   c. suggests managers are omnipotent  
   d. is that both the symbolic and omnipotent views are fading  

(c; moderate; p. 50)

35. Which of the following views of managerial impact is useful in explaining the high turnover among college and professional sports coaches who can be considered the “managers” of their teams?  
   a. symbolic  
   b. omnipotent  
   c. generalist  
   d. autocratic  

(b; moderate; p. 50)

36. According to the symbolic view, managers have a(n) ____________ effect on substantive organizational outcomes.  
   a. substantial  
   b. moderate  
   c. limited  

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37. Managers operate within the constraints imposed by ________________.
   a. government at the federal and state level
   b. the employees of the organization
   c. the organization’s culture and environment
   d. the organization’s board of directors
   (c; moderate; p. 51)

38. A manager may be able to expand their area of discretion by ________________.
   a. telling the employees what to do
   b. changing and influencing their organization’s culture and environment
   c. electing new government officials at the federal and state level
   d. changing employers and thus their boss
   (b; moderate; p. 51)

39. __________ that restrict a manager’s decision options exist within every organization.
   a. Internal constraints
   b. External constraints
   c. Organizational external environments
   d. Organizational environment changes
   (a; hard; p. 51)

THE ORGANIZATION’S CULTURE

40. Organizational culture is similar to an individual’s ____________.
   a. skills
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b. personality
c. motivation
d. ability
(b; easy; p. 52)

41. An organization’s culture is ______________.
   a. represented in organizational meetings by the top manager of the organization
   b. represented by a common perception held by interest groups that watch the organization
   c. represented by a common perception held by the organization’s members
   d. changed when the organization is purchased by new owners
   (c; hard; p. 52)

42. Organizational culture is concerned with how members perceive the organization not whether they __________.
   a. like it
   b. like their peers
   c. like their boss
   d. like their customers
   (a; easy; p. 52)

43. Strong cultures ________________.
   a. are found in organizations with strong leaders
   b. have a minimal influence on the employee when she or he is making decisions
   c. can be found in all organizations that exist
   d. have a greater influence on employees than do weak cultures
   (d; moderate; p. 53)

44. Employees in organizations with strong cultures ________________.
   a. are more committed to their organization
   b. are more likely to leave the organization than stay
   c. are more willing to perform illegal activities
   d. are more likely to follow directives from peers
   (a; moderate; p. 53)

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45. Which of the following phrases is associated with the definition of organizational culture?
   a. individual response
   b. shared meaning
   c. diversity of thought
   d. explicit directions

(b; easy; p. 52)
46. Which of the following is not mentioned in the textbook as a dimension of organizational culture?
   a. attention to detail
   b. people orientation
   c. compensation
   d. aggressiveness
   (c; moderate; p. 52)

47. Sony Corporation’s focus on product innovation is an example of which of the following dimensions of organizational culture?
   a. attention to detail
   b. people orientation
   c. outcome orientation
   d. aggressiveness
   (c; moderate; p. 53)

48. Corporate __________ are repetitive sequences of activities that express and reinforce the values of the organization, what goals are most important, which people are important, and which are expendable.
   a. languages
   b. rituals
   c. symbols
   d. ceremonies
   (b; easy; p. 57)

49. The most significant ways that culture is transmitted to employees consist of __________.
   a. rituals, tales of woe, symbols, and language
   b. symbols, rituals, language, and systems
   c. stories, rituals, symbols, and language
   d. language, stories, rituals, and rewards
   (c; moderate; p. 56)

50. When employees at Microsoft use words such as: work judo, eating your own dog food, and flat food, they are using organizational __________.
   a. languages

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b. rituals

c. symbols

d. ceremonies

(a; easy; p. 57)

51. Most organizations have ___________ cultures.
   a. very weak
   b. weak to moderate
   c. moderate
   d. moderate to strong

(d; moderate; p. 53)

52. The original source of an organization’s culture usually ________________.
   a. is shared among the first workers hired into the organization
   b. is formulated by the board of directors when the organization is formed
   c. identifies what the organization is successful doing
   d. reflects the vision or mission of the organization’s founder

(d; moderate; p. 53)

53. Organizational ____________ typically contain(s) a narrative of significant events or people.
   a. stories
   b. rituals
   c. charts
   d. material symbols

(a; moderate; p. 56)

54. All of the following are mentioned in the textbook as examples of material symbols except ____________.
   a. dress attire
   b. size of offices
   c. employee stock options

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d. reserved parking spaces for certain employees
(c; moderate; p. 57)

55. The link between organizational values and managerial behavior is _____________.
   a. uncertain
   b. fairly straightforward
   c. loose and difficult to see
   d. unimportant
(b; moderate; p. 59)

56. By learning organizational language, member’s _________________.
   a. can communicate with the stockholders of the organization
   b. know that the boss will be promoting them to greater responsibility
   c. attest to their acceptance of the culture and their willingness to help preserve the culture
   d. can share material symbols with other members
(c; hard; p. 57)

57. An organization’s culture _________________.
   a. constrains what managers can do and are rarely explicit
   b. seldom constrains what managers can, cannot do, and are rarely explicit
   c. seldom constrains what managers can, cannot do, and are rarely implicit
   d. constrains what managers can, cannot do, and are rarely explicit
(d; hard; p. 52)

THE ENVIRONMENT

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58. External environment refers to _______________.
   a. institutions outside the organization that affect the organization’s performance
   b. forces and institutions outside the organization that potentially can affect the organization’s performance
   c. forces and institutions inside the organization that affect the organization’s performance
   d. forces inside the organization that affect the organization’s performance
   (b; hard; p. 64)

59. According to the textbook, the _______________ environment includes those constituencies that have a direct and immediate impact on managers’ decisions and actions and are directly relevant to the achievement of the organization’s goals.
   a. general
   b. specific
   c. secondary
   d. forward
   (b; moderate; p. 64)

60. An organization’s specific environment _________________.
   a. is unique and changes with conditions
   b. is the same regardless of the organization’s age
   c. is determined by the top level of management
   d. is quantified to determine its existence
   (a; moderate; p. 64)

61. The specific environment of organizations consists of constituencies that have a direct impact on managers’ decisions and actions. The main constituencies are made up of customers, suppliers, competitors, and __________.
   a. legislators
   b. pressure groups
   c. employees
   d. lawyers
   (b; moderate; p. 64)

62. Which of the following is not an example of a constituency that makes up the specific environment?

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a. customers  
b. sociocultural factors  
c. suppliers  
d. competitors  

(b; moderate; p. 64)

63. When you think of an organization’s suppliers, you _____________.  
a. know that they are the main customers of the organization  
b. typically think of governments that pass the laws the organization must follow  
c. know that they are located close to the buying organization  
d. typically think in terms of organizations that provide materials and equipment  

(d; moderate; p. 65)

64. Managers seek to ensure a steady _____________.  
a. cash flow from stockholders into the organization  
b. flow of needed inputs at the lowest price available  
c. flow of customers at the company’s outlet store  
d. flow of suppliers to keep the competition among suppliers at a peak  

(b; moderate; p. 65)

65. The Internet is having an impact on who an organization’s competitors are because it has ____________.  
a. defined the common markets for the organizations  
b. made the products they sell invaluable to the customer  
c. virtually eliminated the need for shopping malls  
d. virtually eliminated the geographic boundaries  

(d; hard; p. 66)

66. For a company such as Walt Disney World in Florida, a bank would be an example of what kind of factor in their specific environment?  
a. competitor  
b. supplier  
c. special-interest group  

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67. Which of the following is not an example of a specific environmental factor?
   a. suppliers
   b. political conditions
   c. governmental agencies
   d. B and C are correct.
   (d; moderate; p. 65)

68. For an organization such as a hospital that needs nurses, the labor union and the local labor market are examples of what kinds of factors in their specific environment?
   a. special-interest group and supplier
   b. customer and special-interest group
   c. both are examples of suppliers
   d. government agency and competitor
   (c; difficult; p. 65)

69. Typically, the specific organizational environment includes which of the following?
   a. economic factors
   b. political conditions
   c. technological factors
   d. competitors
   (d; moderate; p. 64)

70. United Parcel Service represents what factor to the U.S. Postal Service in its specific environment?
   a. competitor
   b. supplier
   c. customer
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71. The general economic condition consist of all of the following except ______________.
   a. legislation recently passed by Congress
   b. interest rates
   c. change in disposable income
   d. stock market fluctuations
   (a; moderate; p. 66)

72. Sociocultural conditions consist of ______________.
   a. demographic profiles of the organization’s suppliers
   b. legal issues as determined by court decisions
   c. the level of unemployment and real economic incomes of workers
   d. changing expectations of the society in which they operate
   (d; hard; p. 67)

73. To a national network such as NBC, your home VCR is considered a ____________.
   a. customer
   b. supplier
   c. special-interest group
   d. competitor
   (d; moderate; p. 66)

74. According to the textbook, ____________ is having an impact on determining an organization’s competitors because it has virtually eliminated the geographic boundaries.
   a. local area network
   b. the intranet
   c. the Internet
   d. video conferencing
   (c; easy; p. 66)

75. Ralph Nader’s Center for Responsive Law is an example of what factor in the specific external environment?

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a. competitor  
b. pressure group  
c. customer  
d. government agency  
(b; moderate; p. 66)

76. Typically, the general organizational environment includes which of the following?
   a. political conditions  
b. issues directly relevant to achieving organizational goals  
c. stakeholders  
d. suppliers  
(a; moderate; p. 66)

77. Compared to the specific environment, which of the following is an accurate statement about the general environment of an organization?
   a. It has less impact on the organization’s operations.  
b. It has more impact on the organization’s operations.  
c. It has about the same impact on an organization’s operations.  
d. It is the concern of upper management.  
(a; difficult; p. 66)

78. Which of the following is not an example of an organization’s general environment?
   a. economic conditions  
b. political conditions  
c. social conditions  
d. industry conditions  
(d; moderate; p. 66)

79. Interest rates, inflation rates, and stock market indexes are all examples of what factor in an organization’s general environment?
   a. economic  
b. political  
c. social  
d. technological  
(a; moderate; p. 66)

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80. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is an example of a __________.
   a. sociolegal condition
   b. political/legal condition
   c. political/sociological condition
   d. sociocultural condition
   (b; moderate; p. 66)

81. A downturn in the contributions from the public to the United Way charity is an example of the impact from what factor in its general environment?
   a. political
   b. social
   c. technological
   d. economic
   (d; moderate; p. 66)

82. According to the textbook, which of the following groups includes individuals who were born between the years 1946–1964?
   a. the Depression group
   b. the World War II group
   c. the baby boomers
   d. Generation X
   (c; difficult; p. 58)

83. According to the textbook, the members of which one of the following groups are thinking, learning, creating, shopping, and playing in fundamentally different ways that are likely to greatly impact organizations and managers?
   a. the Depression group
   b. the World War II group
   c. the baby boomers
   d. Generation Y
   
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84. Generation Y is predicted to be __________ their baby boomer parents’ generation.
   a. as large as, if not larger than
   b. large, but not as large as
   c. not anywhere nearly as large as
   d. much, much smaller than
   (a; moderate; p. 68)

85. Which factor has been the most rapidly changing component in an organization’s general environment in the past quarter-century?
   a. global
   b. economic
   c. social
   d. technological
   (d; moderate; p. 68)

86. The enhanced speed and quality of managerial decision making due to an integrated office system is an example of the impact of which general environmental factor?
   a. global
   b. social
   c. political
   d. technological
   (d; moderate; p. 68)

87. Which of the following are the two dimensions of environmental uncertainty?
   a. degree of change and degree of complexity
   b. degree of change and degree of volume
   c. degree of complexity and degree of impact
   d. degree of impact and degree of timing
   (a; moderate; p. 60)

88. We call it a __________ environment if the components in an organization’s environment change frequently.

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89. Managers try to minimize ________ because it is a threat to an organization’s effectiveness.
   a. product development
   b. uncertainty
   c. price charges
   d. the number of suppliers
   **(b; moderate; p. 69)**

90. _________ are any constituencies in the organization’s external environment that are affected by the organization’s decisions and actions.
   a. Stockholders
   b. Pressure groups
   c. Suppliers
   d. Stakeholders
   **(d; moderate; p. 71)**

91. According to the textbook, ____________ refers to the number of components in an organization’s environment and the extent of the knowledge that the organization has about those components.
   a. degree of stability
   b. openness
   c. degree of complexity
   d. change
   **(c; moderate; p. 70)**

92. The first step of managing external stakeholder relationships is to identify who the stakeholders are. The second step is to _____________.

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a. determine what specific approach they should use to manage the stakeholder relationship
b. determine what the courts might do when stakeholder files a claim against the organization
c. determine what particular interests or concerns these stakeholders might have
d. determine how many stakeholders there are in each stakeholder group

(c; hard; p. 71)

SCENARIOS AND QUESTIONS
For each of the following, choose the answer that most completely answers the question.

THE ORGANIZATION’S CULTURE

Corporate Takeover (Scenario)

Todd works for SeaLan Tech, an environmental consulting firm that has just been purchased by Zerex, Inc., a biomedical research organization. Based on his early encounters with the new upper management from Zerex, he feels that SeaLan is a “lower-key, friendlier” organization. He is concerned that the new company will eliminate SeaLan’s old culture, and he does not like the prospects.

93. If you were talking with Todd and asked him what the term culture meant, he would reply that, basically, it is _________________.
   a. the formal rules of an organization
   b. the nationality of the workers in the company
   c. a system of shared meaning
   d. a system that reflects diversity and respect for differences

(c; easy; p. 52)
94. Todd is concerned with the degree to which managers focus on results or outcomes rather than techniques and the processes used to achieve those outcomes. He is concerned with _____________.
   a. stability
   b. aggressiveness
   c. team orientation
   d. outcome orientation
   (d; moderate; p. 53)

95. Todd notices that management is very concerned with the effects of outcomes on people within the organization. This is referred to as _____________.
   a. stability
   b. aggressiveness
   c. team orientation
   d. people orientation
   (d; moderate; p. 53)

96. Todd is assessing the organization’s ____________, the degree to which organizational activities emphasize maintaining the status quo in contrast to growth.
   a. stability
   b. aggressiveness
   c. team orientation
   d. outcome orientation
   (a; moderate; p. 52)

97. Todd has been learning the seven dimensions of organizational culture. Which of the following is not one of those seven dimensions?
   a. stability
   b. aggressiveness
   c. member orientation
   d. outcome orientation
   (c; moderate; p. 52)

Changing Organizational Culture (Scenario)
Mary has been asked by the company president to change the organizational culture to reflect the company’s new organizational goals. As executive vice president, she certainly understands the goals, but is really not sure that she understands what to do about the culture.

98. Mary asked employees if they knew what constituted “good employee behavior.” She found that very few understood, and most had a variety of ideas. This is one indication that her company ____________.
   a. has a strong culture
   b. has a weak culture
   c. has no culture
   d. must have high turnover
   (b; moderate; p. 53)

99. Mary also found out that in order to build a strong new culture, she should do all but which of the following?
   a. utilize their recruitment efforts
   b. develop socialization practices to build culture
   c. encourage a high turnover rate
   d. have management make explicit what is valued in the organization
   (c; difficult; p. 53)

100. Mary was surprised to find that most organizational culture strengths are ____________.
    a. weak
    b. weak to moderate
    c. moderate to strong
    d. strong
    (c; moderate; p. 53)

THE MANAGER: OMNIPOTENT OR SYMBOLIC?

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101. Mary has also been asked, as part of the cultural change, to build on the belief that managers are directly responsible for the organization’s success or failure and not forces outside their control. This would be consistent with an organizational culture that has a(n) ______________ view of management.
   a. traditional
   b. omnipotent
   c. standard
   d. symbolic
   (b; moderate; p. 50)

102. The new view of management change for the new culture will be difficult because, in the past, success has been viewed as being outside management’s control, a view known as _____________.
   a. traditional
   b. omnipotent
   c. standard
   d. symbolic
   (d; moderate; p. 50)

THE ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Constraints (Scenario)

It is safe to say that managers do not have complete control over organizational outcomes; the environment has a significant impact. However, there are different environmental factors that shape a manager’s work life.

103. As a manager, if you were working in an industry that was dependent on Internet connections and the many new customers vying for the same space, this would be an example of what kind of environment?
   a. general
   b. static
   c. stable
   d. dynamic
   (d; moderate; p. 69)

104. Political conditions, which include attitudes that officials hold toward specific industries, fall within an organization’s ____________ environment.

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DEFINING THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The Election (Scenario)

At the present time, your organization is confronting the election of a new president and congress, changes in how the customer wants your product to look in design, changes in the age and education level of your customer, and the desire of the customer to have the product made in the newly discovered plastics used in the construction of your product.

105. The changes in the presidency and congress compose what for your organization?
   a. general environment
   b. specific environment
   c. pressure group
   d. interest group
   (a; moderate; p. 66)

106. The change in how the customer wants your product to look in design is an example of what?
   a. general environment
   b. specific environment
   c. pressure group
   d. interest group
   (b; hard; p. 64)

107. The changes in the age and education level of your customer are an example of which of the following?
   a. economic condition
   b. political/legal condition
   c. sociocultural condition
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d. technological condition

(c; moderate; p. 67)

108. To have the product made in the newly discovered plastics used in the construction of your product is an example of which of the following?
   a. economic condition
   b. political/legal condition
   c. sociocultural condition
   d. technological condition

(d; moderate; p. 68)

The New Medical Product (Scenario)

You are a manager of marketing and are planning on introducing a new medical product that has stirred up controversy among certain public groups. Members of the research and development staff have pointed out that the company has a history of introducing controversial products and being successful doing so. Members among your staff have stated that this product is more controversial than any product introduced previously.

109. The public group that is opposed to the introduction of the new medical product is known as which of the following?
   a. service group
   b. defense group
   c. pressure group
   d. informal group

(c; moderate; p. 66)

110. When looking at the introduction of the new product into particular market niche, this niche is which of the following to the organization as a whole?
   a. general environment
   b. specific environment
   c. political/legal condition
   d. sociocultural condition

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111. The research and development department is acting on the common perception held by that department known as what?
   a. omnipotent view of management
   b. organizational culture
   c. internal constraint
   d. external constraint

112. The marketing staff’s resistance to introducing the new medical product is which of the following for the marketing manager?
   a. omnipotent view of management
   b. organizational culture
   c. external constraint
   d. internal constraint
STRONG VERSUS WEAK CULTURE

113. If the marketing department staff had agreed with the research and development staff, then it could be said that the organization probably possesses what?
   a. strong culture
   b. weak culture
   c. specific internal environment
   d. specific internal constraint

   (a; easy; p. 53)

Operating Within the Environment (Scenario)

The environment places constraints on the behavior of managers. Suppose you are a manager trying to understand the forces within your organization’s environment.

114. Imagine you are the manager of a real estate office trying to maximize profits. If the mortgage interest rates increase, this would be an example of changing ____________ in your general environment.
   a. economic conditions
   b. political conditions
   c. competition
   d. social conditions

   (a; moderate; p. 66)

Chris Co. (Scenario)

Mr. Taylor has been hired by Chris Co., a manufacturer of precious metal jewelry. Chris Co. has been having significant issues with some of their major stakeholders such as poor quality from their suppliers and complaints from their customers. Mr. Taylor has been hired to help resolve these issues and to help build a plan for resolving the company’s problem with their major stakeholders.

115. Mr. Taylor finds out how critical each stakeholder is to the organization’s decisions and actions. This is the ____________.
   a. first step
   b. second step

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116. Mr. Taylor identifies who the organizations’ stakeholders are. This is the ____________.
   a. first step
   b. second step
   c. third step
   d. final step
   (a; easy; p. 71)

117. Mr. Taylor decides how to manage the external stakeholder relationships. This is the ____________.
   a. first step
   b. second step
   c. third step
   d. final step
   (d; easy; p. 71)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

THE MANAGER: OMNIPOTENT OR SYMBOLIC?

118. In a short essay, differentiate between the symbolic view and the omnipotent view of management. Include specific examples of each view to support your answer.

   Answer
   a. The view of managers as omnipotent is consistent with the stereotypical picture of the take-charge business executive who can overcome any obstacle in carrying out the organization’s objectives. This
omnipotent view isn’t limited to business organizations. It can also be used to help explain the high turnover among college and professional sports coaches, who can be considered the “managers” of their teams. Coaches who lose more games than they win are seen as ineffective. They are fired and replaced by new coaches who, it is hoped, will correct the inadequate performance. In the omnipotent view, when organizations perform poorly, someone has to be held accountable regardless of the reasons why, and in our society, that “someone” is managers. Of course, when things go well, someone needs to be praised. So managers also get the credit—even if they had little to do with achieving positive outcomes.

b. The symbolic view says that a manager’s ability to affect outcomes is influenced and constrained by external factors. In this view, it is unreasonable to expect managers to significantly affect an organization’s performance. Instead, an organization’s results are influenced by factors outside the control of management. These factors include the economy, market changes, governmental policies, competitors’ actions, conditions in the particular industry, control over proprietary technology, and decisions made by the previous manager. For example, when Winn-Dixie Stores decided to close 10 percent of its stores and cut 11,000 jobs in April 2000, competitors like Kroger found its business volume and revenues increasing. The symbolic view would suggest that the positive performance wasn’t due to anything that the managers did, but instead was due to forces beyond their control.

(moderate; p. 50)

THE ORGANIZATION’S CULTURE

119. In a short essay, define organizational culture and discuss the three implications of culture as discussed in the textbook.

Answer
Organizational culture is a system of shared meaning and beliefs held by organizational members that determines, in large degree, how they act. It represents a common perception held by the organization’s members. In every organization, there are systems or patterns of values, symbols, rituals, myths, and practices that have evolved over time. These shared values determine, to a large degree, what employees see, and how they respond to their world. When confronted with problems or work issues, the organizational culture influences what employees can do and how they conceptualize, define, analyze, and resolve these issues.

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This definition of culture implies several things. First, culture is a perception. Individuals perceive the organizational culture on the basis of what they see, hear, or experience within the organization. Second, even though individuals may have different backgrounds or work at different organizational levels, they tend to describe the organization’s culture in similar terms. That is the shared aspect of culture. Finally, organizational culture is a descriptive term. It’s concerned with how members perceive the organization, not with whether they like it. It describes rather than evaluates.

(moderate; p. 51)

120. In a short essay, identify and define the seven dimensions that make up an organization’s culture.

Answer

a. Innovation and risk taking—degree to which employees are encouraged to be innovative and to take risks.
b. Attention to detail—degree to which employees are expected to exhibit precision, analysis, and attention to detail.
c. Outcome orientation—degree to which managers focus on results or outcomes rather than on how these outcomes are achieved.
d. People orientation—degree to which management decisions take into account the effects on people in the organization.
e. Team orientation—degree to which work is organized around teams rather than individuals.
f. Aggressiveness—degree to which employees are aggressive and competitive rather than cooperative.
g. Stability—degree to which organizational decisions and actions emphasize maintaining the status quo.

(difficult; p. 52)

121. In a short essay, discuss how culture constrains managers. Include specific examples to support your answer.

Answer

An organization’s culture is particularly relevant to managers because it constrains what they can and cannot do. However, these constraints are rarely explicit. They’re not written down, and it’s unlikely that they’ll even be spoken. But they’re there, and all managers quickly learn what to do and not to do in their organization. For instance, you won’t find the following values written down anywhere, but each example comes from a real organization.

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a. “Look busy even if you’re not.”
b. “If you take risks and fail around here, you’ll pay dearly for it.”
c. “Before you make a decision, run it by your boss so that he or she is never surprised.”
d. “We make our product only as good as the competition forces us to.”
e. “What made us successful in the past will make us successful in the future.”
f. “If you want to get to the top here, you have to be a team player.”

(moderate; p. 58)

122. List the factors that influence the strength of an organization’s culture and discuss the impact of a strong culture on employees.

Answer

Factors:
   a. size of the organization
   b. how long it has been around
   c. how much turnover there has been among employees
   d. intensity with which the culture was originated
   e. clear to employees what is important and what is not important

The more employees accept the organization’s key values and the greater their commitment to those values, the stronger the culture is. Strong cultures have a greater influence on employees than do weak cultures and are associated with high organizational performance. Strong culture also enhances performances

Explanation of this is that if values are clear and widely accepted, employees know what they’re supposed to do and what’s expected of them so they can act quickly to take care of problems, thus preventing any potential performance decline.

(moderate; p. 53)