

BBM 360: ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY AND BEHAVIOR EXAM
Instructions: Answer question one and any other three.

Question ONE:

READ THE CASE BELOW AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS WHICH FOLLOW

Advocacy versus inquiry in action: The Bay of Pigs and the Cuban missile crisis

Perhaps the best demonstration of advocacy versus inquiry comes from the administration of President John F. Kennedy. During his first two years in office, Kennedy wrestled with two critical foreign policy decisions: the Bay of Pigs invasion and the Cuban missile crisis. Both were assigned to cabinet level task forces, involving many of the same players, the same political interests, and extremely high stakes. But the results were extra ordinary different, largely because the two groups operated in different modes

The first group, charged with deciding whether to support an invasion of Cuba by a small army of U.S. trained Cuban exiles, worked in advocacy mode, and the outcome is widely regarded as an example of flawed decision making. Shortly after taking office, President Kennedy learned of the attack of Cuba developed by the CIA during the Eisenhower administration. Backed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the CIA argued forcefully for the invasion and minimized the risks, filtering the information presented to the president to reinforce the agencies position. Knowledgeable individuals on the state departments Latin America desk were excluded from deliberations because of their likely opposition.

Some members of Kennedy's staff opposed the plan but held their tongues for fear of strong advocacy by the CIA. As a result, there was little debate, and the group failed to test some critical underlying assumptions. For example, they didn't question whether the landing would in fact lead to a rapid domestic uprising against Castro, and they failed to find out whether the exiles could fade into the mountains (which were 80 miles from the landing sites) should they meet with the strong resistance. The resulting invasion is generally considered to be one of the low points of the cold war. About 100 lives were lost, and the rest of exiles were taken hostage. The incident was a major embarrassment to the Kennedy administration and dealt a blow to American's global standing.

After the botched invasion, Kennedy conducted a review of the foreign policy decision making process and introduced five major changes, essentially transforming the process into one of inquiry. First, people were urged to participate in discussion as "skeptical generalists" - that is, as disinterested critical thinkers rather than as representatives of particular departments. Second, Robert Kennedy and Theodore Sorensen were assigned the role of intellectual watchdog, expected to pursue every possible point of contention, uncovering witnesses and untested assumptions. Third, task forces were urged to abandon the rules of protocol, eliminating formal agendas and difference to rank. Fourth, participants were expected to split occasionally into subgroups to develop a broad range of options. And finally, President Kennedy decided to absent himself from some of the early task force meetings to avoid influencing other participants and slanting the debate.

The inquiry mode was used to great effect when in October 1962 President Kennedy learned the Soviet Union had placed nuclear missiles on Cuban soil, despite repeated assurances from the soviet ambassador that this would not occur. Kennedy immediately convened high -level task force, which contained many of the same men responsible for the Bay of Pigs invasion, and asked them to frame a response. The group met night and day for two weeks, often inviting additional members to join in their deliberations to broaden their perspective. Occasionally, to encourage the free flow of ideas, they met without the president. Robert Kennedy played his new role thoughtfully, critiquing options frequently and encouraging the group to develop additional alternatives. In particular, he urged the group to move beyond a simple go-no-go decision on a military air strike.

Ultimately, subgroups developed two positions, one favoring blockade and the other an air strike. These groups gathered information from a broad range of sources, viewed and interpreted the same intelligence photos, and took great care to identify and test underlying assumptions, such as whether the tactical air command was indeed capable of eliminating all soviet missiles in surgical air strike. The subgroup exchanged position papers, critiqued each other's proposals, and came together to debate the alternatives. They presented Kennedy with both options, leaving him to make the final choice. The result was carefully framed response, leading to a successful blockade and peaceful end to the crisis.

- a) Based on the above case identify and explain four perspectives or frameworks of organizational behavior which have been exposed. (8 Marks)
- b) If you were in a similar position as the president was in respect of developing organizational policies, how differently would you have acted and why? (10 Marks)
- c) What do you consider as the main strengths/weaknesses of running an organization highlighted in this case? (7 Marks)

Question TWO:

It is defined as "the systematic evaluation of the performance of employees and to understand the abilities of a person for further growth and development in an organizational set up". Identify this act and :

- a) Explain in detail its main objectives (10 Marks)
- b) Enumerate and illustrate its main tools and techniques (5 Marks)

Question THREE

- a) Organizations are faced with conflicts on a day to day basis and this has led to inefficiency and ineffectiveness. Identify the five levels of conflict in organizations, define each briefly, state the causes of each and illustrate how these causes can be managed. (15 Marks)

Question FOUR

- a) The government of Kenya adopted and promulgated the new constitution so as to fast track development in the forty seven county government. This has however been faced with various challenges and shortcomings due to the different styles of leadership exhibited by the county governors. In your observation, what leadership styles have you seen and which one would you consider appropriate for the smooth running of the counties, support your discussion with relevant examples.

(15 Marks)

Question FIVE:

- a) State and illustrate how the two main theories of learning can be applied in the contemporary world. (8 Marks)
- b) Learning should be supported by a conducive environment. Discuss (7 Marks)

Question SIX:

- a) One of the causes of stress among employees at the work place is inability to manage time effectively. Explain the characteristics of a person who suffers from this inability. (8 marks)
- b) Managers are from time to time required to use different methods for the motivation of employees in an organization. Explain five reasons that make this requirement necessary. (7 marks)