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CIPS L5M1

Basic characteristics of an organizations - correct answer Structure

Objectives

People

Fayols 5 functions of management - correct answer Planning

Organising

Commanding

Co ordinating

Controlling

STEEPLE - correct answer Socio- cultural ,Technological, Economic, Ecological, Political, Legal and Ethical

CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) - correct answer Commitment to systematic consideration of the environmental, social and cultural aspects of an organisations operations

Any of the following considerations may be relevant in assessing an organisations CSR obligations

- sustainability issues

- environmental issues

- ethical trading

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CIPS Managing Teams and Individuals Sample Questions (Q29-Q34):

NEW QUESTION # 29

(Explain 5 different metaphors that can be used to describe an organisation)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Organisations can be understood in many different ways through metaphors, which help managers and leaders interpret behaviour, culture and performance. Morgan's metaphors are widely used to explain these perspectives. Five key metaphors are explained below.

The first metaphor is the organisation as a machine. Here the business is seen like a well-oiled mechanism with standardised processes, clear rules, hierarchy and repeatable outputs. This works well for efficiency and control, for example in a procurement shared services function, but can be rigid and demotivating if flexibility and creativity are required.

The second is the organisation as an organism. This views the business as a living system that must adapt to its environment. Structures, processes and leadership styles must "fit" the context, whether technological, market-driven or human needs. In procurement, this could be seen when category teams adapt to sudden supply market changes, showing flexibility to survive in a dynamic environment.

The third is the organisation as a brain. This emphasises learning, feedback loops, and knowledge-sharing, where continuous improvement and innovation are central. Leaders encourage collaboration, reflection and data-driven decision-making. For procurement, this might be using spend analytics, lessons learned from supplier negotiations, and knowledge sharing across teams to improve sourcing strategies.

The fourth metaphor is the organisation as a culture. This highlights the shared values, beliefs and rituals that shape "how things are done." Leadership here involves role-modelling behaviours, building ethical cultures, and maintaining consistency between words and actions. In procurement, culture may show through an organisation's commitment to ethical sourcing, sustainability, and supplier diversity.

Finally, the organisation as a political system sees it as an arena of power and influence where decisions are made through negotiation, persuasion and coalition-building. Managers must understand power bases and stakeholder interests. In procurement, for instance, winning senior approval for a sourcing strategy may require influencing finance, operations, and CSR teams with different agendas.

In summary, each metaphor offers insights into how organisations function. The machine focuses on control, the organism on adaptability, the brain on learning, the culture on shared values, and the political system on power and influence. Good leaders in procurement should recognise that all these metaphors may apply in different situations, and use them to manage individuals and teams more effectively.

NEW QUESTION # 30

Explain what a 'bureaucratic' management style is (10 points). What are the advantages and disadvantages of this? (10 points)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

A bureaucratic management style is based on the theories of Max Weber, who described bureaucracy as a structured, rule-based and hierarchical way of organising work. In this style, managers rely heavily on formal rules, policies and procedures to direct employee behaviour. Decision-making authority follows a clear chain of command, and employees are expected to follow established processes without deviation. Job roles are highly specialised and responsibilities are clearly defined. The emphasis is on order, consistency and compliance rather than flexibility or creativity.

This approach is often seen in government departments, regulatory bodies, or large organisations where compliance, accountability and control are critical. For example, in procurement and supply, bureaucratic management may be applied in highly regulated environments such as public sector purchasing, where adherence to policies, legal frameworks and audit requirements is essential.

Advantages of the bureaucratic style include:

Clarity and consistency: clear rules and procedures mean employees know exactly what is expected of them.

Fairness and equality: decisions are made based on rules, not personal favouritism, reducing bias.

Accountability and control: strong documentation and audit trails improve transparency.

Efficiency in routine tasks: structured processes can streamline repetitive, transactional work (e.g., purchase-to-pay).

Disadvantages include:

Inflexibility: rigid rules make it difficult to adapt to change or unique situations.

Low motivation: workers may feel disempowered or demoralised by lack of autonomy.

Slow decision-making: multiple levels of approval can create delays.

Stifled innovation: focus on compliance discourages creativity and proactive problem-solving.

In conclusion, the bureaucratic management style is effective where consistency, compliance and control are needed, such as in regulated procurement activities. However, it can be limiting in dynamic environments where flexibility, innovation and speed of decision-making are essential. Successful managers may therefore adopt bureaucratic methods for governance but balance them with more adaptive styles for strategic and innovative work.

NEW QUESTION # 31

Describe THREE ways in which a procurement professional could be biased when selecting suppliers to work with (15 points).

What are the benefits of remaining unbiased when selecting suppliers? (10 points).

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Part A - Three Ways a Procurement Professional Could Be Biased (15 marks):

Personal Relationships / Conflicts of Interest:

A buyer may favour a supplier due to friendship, family connection, or long-standing personal ties. For example, awarding a contract to a supplier owned by a relative, even if another supplier offers better value. This undermines fairness and can damage organisational reputation.

Preference for Incumbent Suppliers (Status Quo Bias):

Professionals may repeatedly select the same suppliers simply because they are familiar, ignoring new entrants who could provide better innovation, cost savings, or sustainability. This limits competition and supplier diversity.

Cultural or Geographical Bias:

A procurement professional may favour local suppliers over international ones, or show unconscious bias against suppliers from certain regions. While local sourcing can have benefits, excluding other suppliers without objective evaluation reduces fairness and potentially increases costs.

(Other possible biases include brand preference, ignoring SMEs, or favouring suppliers who provide personal benefits - but only three are required for full marks.) Part B - Benefits of Remaining Unbiased (10 marks):

Remaining unbiased means making supplier decisions based on objective, transparent, and fair criteria such as cost, quality, delivery performance, risk, and sustainability. The benefits include:

Fairness and Transparency: All suppliers have equal opportunity, protecting the organisation's integrity and compliance with regulations.

Best Value for Money: Objective evaluation ensures the chosen supplier offers the best mix of cost, quality, and service.

Encouraging Innovation: By considering a wider pool of suppliers, procurement can benefit from new ideas and technologies.

Ethical Compliance: Avoids corruption, fraud, or bribery, maintaining alignment with the CIPS Code of Conduct.

Reputation and Trust: Stakeholders and the market see the organisation as professional and ethical, which strengthens long-term supplier relationships.

Conclusion:

Procurement professionals may show bias through personal relationships, favouring incumbents, or cultural preferences. Remaining unbiased ensures decisions are fair, transparent, and ethical, leading to better value, innovation, and stronger supplier trust. This supports both organisational objectives and the professional standards of procurement.

NEW QUESTION # 32

What is needed for a group to be effective? (15 points). Is it important that each person plays a different role within the group? (10 points).

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

Part A - What is needed for a group to be effective (15 points):

For a group to be effective, several conditions must be in place.

Firstly, the group must have clear objectives and purpose. Without shared goals, members may pull in different directions, leading to inefficiency.

Secondly, strong leadership is needed to guide the group, set direction, and balance concern for people with concern for tasks.

Leadership provides motivation and resolves conflicts.

Thirdly, good communication ensures information is shared openly, problems are raised quickly, and collaboration is smooth. In procurement, this means buyers, finance, and operations align on sourcing decisions.

Fourthly, groups need defined roles and responsibilities. Clarity prevents duplication of work and ensures accountability. For example, one person may manage supplier contracts while another handles negotiations.

Finally, trust and cooperation are essential. When group members respect and support each other, they are more willing to share knowledge, take risks, and commit to decisions. Psychological safety is key to team performance.

Part B - Importance of different roles in a group (10 points):

It is important that each person plays a different role within the group. According to Belbin's Team Roles theory, groups are more effective when individuals contribute complementary strengths. Roles may include "Shapers" who drive action, "Plants" who bring creativity, "Implementers" who turn plans into reality, and "Monitor Evaluators" who provide critical analysis.

If everyone in the group plays the same role, important skills may be missing. For example, a procurement team made up entirely of "Shapers" may generate energy but lack careful analysis, leading to poor supplier selection. Conversely, a balanced team ensures creativity, organisation, and delivery are all present.

Conclusion:

For a group to be effective, it needs clear goals, leadership, communication, defined roles, and trust. It is also important that members bring different strengths and roles, as this diversity improves problem-solving and ensures the group performs to its full potential.

NEW QUESTION # 33

Describe the key principles of the Taylorism school of thought on Management (20 points)

Answer:

Explanation:

See the Explanation for Detailed Answer

Explanation:

The Taylorism school of thought, also known as Scientific Management, was developed by Frederick Winslow Taylor in the early 20th century. It aimed to improve efficiency and productivity by applying systematic, scientific methods to the management of work. Its key principles can be summarised as follows.

The first principle is the scientific study of work. Taylor rejected traditional "rule of thumb" methods, instead advocating time-and-motion studies to identify the most efficient way of completing tasks. This broke jobs into smaller, measurable steps.

Secondly, Taylor emphasised the division of labour and specialisation. Workers should focus on narrowly defined tasks, allowing them to become faster and more efficient, similar to parts in a machine.

Thirdly, he argued for scientific selection and training of workers. Instead of leaving workers to train themselves, managers should select the right person for the job and provide formal training in the "one best way" to complete tasks.

Fourthly, Taylor stressed managerial control and supervision. He believed management should plan, organise and set methods, while workers should focus on carrying them out. This created a strong separation between planning and execution.

Finally, Taylor promoted financial incentives as motivators. He assumed that workers are primarily motivated by pay, so piece-rate systems and performance-based rewards were used to encourage higher output.

Taylorism brought many benefits, such as increased productivity, efficiency, and predictability in mass production industries.

However, it also attracted criticism for treating workers like machines, reducing autonomy, and ignoring social and psychological needs. From a modern procurement perspective, its ideas are still visible in standardised processes such as purchase-to-pay systems, KPIs, and efficiency-driven shared services. However, organisations today often balance these principles with more human-centred approaches to motivation and teamwork.

In conclusion, the key principles of Taylorism were scientific analysis of work, specialisation, scientific selection and training, strict managerial control, and financial incentives. While its focus on efficiency shaped early management thinking, modern leaders must also consider motivation, empowerment, and adaptability to achieve sustainable success.

NEW QUESTION # 34

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