APPLIED GENERAL
APPLIED BUSINESS

1830/ ABS4 Managing and Leading People
Report on the Examination

1830
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General Comments

It was pleasing to see students performing particularly well on the 9-mark questions Question 8 and Question 9. Most students were able to use the information and apply their knowledge, then to analyse the topics. For the 20-mark question more students reached L3 by beginning to analyse the impact of empowerment or financial constraints on the proposed organisational change. Students who did well in the exam focused their responses on the terms in bold, eg centralised organisational structure and motivational needs.

The 3-mark questions did show some gaps in knowledge. As with June 2022 this was especially the case for the Johnson & Scholes cultural web. To achieve full marks there are three elements that students should respond to. Students should demonstrate knowledge of the relevant topic for 1 mark. This mark corresponds to the term in bold. Students should offer the explanation called for in the question for a 2nd mark. To obtain the 3rd mark students should place the explanation in the context required. Marks 2 and 3 are only awarded if the student achieves the 1st mark.

There did seem to be an increasing trend for students to quote from the Item, eg for Q11 "Hallie wants to create workforce for the future" and empowerment "will use the talents and skills of the workforce by creating teams". Sometimes students would form whole paragraphs quoting from the Item. However, the questions ask students to 'use' the Item and just quoting the item is not sufficient. So for eg for Q11 students need to say how empowerment may be a benefit or how financial constraints may be a disadvantage (L3), then analyse empowerment or financial constraints with the proposed organisational change (L4). This trend of quoting the Item was seen in other questions too.

It was also noticeable that some students were trying to answer questions from previous exam series, eg Q9 describing and analysing motivational theory, Q10 answering manager to leader and for Q11 whether organisational change would be successful, rather than whether empowerment or financial constraints will be more important.

Multiple choice questions

Question 1
It was pleasing to see a large number of students demonstrating a knowledge of ADKAR.

Question 2
Most students were able to show understanding of the roles of a leader. It is a different style of multiple-choice question with students asked to select 1 and 2, or 2 and 3 etc. in which students performed well.

Questions 3 and **4** were based around pairs of statements Some students struggled with force field analysis and also both internal and incremental change.

3-mark Questions

Question 5

There appeared to be a gap in the knowledge again for this question as a significant number of students did not demonstrate an understanding of the Johnson & Scholes cultural web. Students said it was "about the culture of the organisation", or "bring cultures together" but this is not enough on its own. Students need to demonstrate an understanding of the Johnson and Scholes cultural web eg how it can be a tool to understand organisational culture or elements such as rituals and routines, stories and myths, symbols, control systems, organisational structure, and power structure.

Some students did show an understanding of the Johnson & Scholes cultural web and were able to state a reason why the newly merged company might benefit from using this for 2 marks eg can help managers to analyse culture such as rituals and routines. A smaller number were able to put this into the context of two businesses that have recently merged eg the managers can identify where cultures are different and what needs to be changed.

Question 6

Students tended to answer this question well showing a good understanding of motivation in context. Students answered that employees would work harder, they would be motivated as they liked the increase in responsibility, and they would be recognised for their ability. Some students rewrote the question using the term 'skilled employees' and as such did not obtain the context mark. However, there were a number of students who answered the question with reference to empowerment or decentralisation, rather than the term in bold 'motivation'. A small number of students answered why this might improve the business performance levels, rather than employee motivation.

Question 7

Students understood business vision in terms of the desire to reach long term goals in the future. Most students also obtained the second mark explaining how this would inspire and motivate employees to reach these goals. A smaller number of students put the response in the context of a new owner to obtain the third mark.

9-mark Questions

Question 8

It was pleasing to see students demonstrating an understanding of moving to a centralised organisational structure. Most students reached L3 analysing why the move involved taking away the decision making from highly skilled workers, or why communication would be more difficult meaning complaints about machinery being ignored, would have led to a fall in units of production per employee per week and an increase in the number of the workforce leaving the company. Nearly all students were able to apply the performance data to obtain L2.

A few students provided a long description of what TS Ltd was like as a decentralised structure and why employees were motivated before. However, they did not then analyse why employees were not pleased now, so a better focus on the question asked could have improved their mark. A

small number of students described why managers not happy with centralised organisational structure but did not link this to organisational performance.

Question 9

For this question a large number of students reached L3. Students understood the motivational needs for the groups of employees and were then able to analyse why for the restaurant managers and the delivery drivers the pay increase would not meet their motivational needs. Most students described the motivational needs of the different groups of workers to obtain L2. They described how restaurant managers wanted to make more decisions and how delivery drivers had no job security but did not then go on to analyse these in terms of the pay increase for how restaurant managers were already highly paid and without a permanent contract the delivery drivers would not benefit from the pay increase if they had no hours of work. Very few students only obtained L1 whereby they understood motivation but demonstrated no application of the motivational needs of one or more groups of employees.

However there were a large number of students who described motivational theory. This could be used to support their response eg if students discussed Herzberg and job security, but it was not the focus of the question. The question asked for responses to analyse the motivational needs of groups of workers. Responses that concentrated on motivational theory but did not address the question on whether the pay rise meets motivational needs did not reach L3.

A small number of students answered "performance will drop" if motivational needs are not met, or what would motivate workers eg a bonus. These may be true, but they were not answering the question. Some students said why a pay rise would meet employee motivational needs, but this was not the question.

Question 10

Students found this question more difficult. A number of simply re-wrote the Item without addressing Emily's management roles. Students who reached L2 described Emily's current and/or future management roles. Her current management roles include monitoring, evaluating, and reporting, whereas her future management roles would include planning and organising resources. At L3 students who performed well analysed why these roles may become more/less important. For example, little planning is needed for a well-established product in a market with few changes. However, to meet changing food tastes and fashion Emily's management roles will need to move to planning and organising resources to introduce new plant-based alternative products.

Some students tried to answer a manager to leader question rather than the change in management roles. Some students answered that management roles will change, but then described all management roles, planning, organising, plus monitoring, evaluating, reporting, as her future without using the Item as their context.

20-mark Question

Question 11

Overall students performed well on Q11. Students were able to apply the Item to describe and explain empowerment and/or financial constraints in context. Students explained the benefits of empowerment in that empowering a highly skilled workforce will promote creativity and motivation, which will increase productivity and profit. Or given the financial pressures with a lack of profits and

orders they don't have the money to support the training required for AI etc. These explanations at L3 were not linked with the proposed organisational change.

Most students produced some analysis and reached L4. Some analysed that empowerment would allow employees to use skills that they haven't been able to use in the past. So, the change will be welcomed and prevent employees from leaving. However some employees would resist the change as they do not possess those skills, and the business does not have the cash to invest in training due to lack of profits and orders. Therefore the business would struggle to implement the change effectively.

It was pleasing to see a number of students demonstrate evaluative skills to reach L5. Although some answered whether change would be successfully implemented rather than the question set to evaluate whether empowerment or financial constraints will be the most important. However, some students only considered whether empowerment or financial constraints will be more important to obtain 17 or 18 marks. A few students did evaluate both to obtain 19 or 20 marks.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.