Peer Review questions

Topic 1. – Theoretical foundations

1. What is Motivation?

a) Motivation is what makes people want to change their current situation to a better one.
b) Motivation is an attitude that individuals have towards achievement and self-fulfilment.
c) Motivation is the desire of individuals to contribute to a purpose.
d) Whether something is labelled "motivation" or not depends on who you ask.
e) All of the above.

2. Why is it important to have a theory about the phenomenon "Motivation"

a) A theory about motivation allows to categorize observations.
b) A theory about motivation helps to predict future behaviour.
c) A theory about motivation helps to manipulate employees.
d) A theory about motivation is a story about the power relationships in hierarchies.
e) All of the above.

3. Basic assumptions about human nature in management theories …
a) have changed over time. Different ideas about human nature are informed by fundamental scientific paradigms, and over time, different aspects of human nature have been considered most relevant.
b) … influence theory building. Their analysis helps us to understand why different theories about leadership, motivation or management offer conflicting suggestions for management practice.
c) … have changed over time. Managers should study the most recent management theories, as these are based on the most comprehensive understanding of human nature. Those who do so will perform better than others.
d) … have a substantial impact on management practice. Managers' implicit ideas about human nature have a strong impact on their beliefs about best practices and leadership style. Good managers are aware of their implicit assumptions.

Topic 2. – HR Planning

Are the following statements true or false? Why?
1. For planning the quantitative human resources demand, analytical methods (time and motion studies) and statistical methods (based on empirical data) are better than summative methods, which predict HR demand through personal judgment and experience.
   ➔ False.
   All of those methods have their advantages and disadvantages. Summative methods also take into consideration other qualitative objectives but are based on experience and standard values. Analytical methods are time and cost consuming and they only focus on economic objectives, but they are exact. Statistical methods take uncertainty into account, but they need data.

2. Today, companies hire according to the principle of person-job fit; that is to say, a worker's skills profile meeting the job profile requirements is more important than person-team fit or person-organisation fit.
   ➔ False
     Best Fit includes both (a combination) person-job and person-organization fit. Bad person-organization fit, makes teamwork in organization harder (in case of bad person-workgroup fit) or leads to lower retention due to employee dissatisfaction (in case of bad-organization fit).
3. To plan qualitative staff requirements, an in-depth task analysis is needed to develop job and skill profiles and identify skill gaps in existing staff. These gaps should be filled by recruiting appropriately skilled staff.
   ➔ False.
     These gaps can be filled by training or promotion, not only recruiting.
4. Disruptive technological shifts (e.g. in AI) can significantly alter the required skills of workers. ICT skills and analytical skills are becoming increasingly important, while social skills are becoming less so.
   ➔ False
     While analytics skills are becoming even more important, so are the communication skills or working with other skills (Word Economic Forum). Leadership, empathy, teaching and mentoring as well as cybersecurity and programming and among top 25 core skills for workers in 2023.
5. Generative AI will complement human skills and experience rather than replacing humans in the workforce.
   ➔ True
     AI will most probably complement human skills.
     One can refer to the human agency scale: some skills can be fully delegated to AI, while for others AI would need human input or "cooperation" with a human being to produce optimal results. Moreover, as of now the low skilled workers are benefitting from AI the most, while high skilled workers do not benefit from AI. That would indicate that there are still some areas, where AI is not as useful/not as helpful to fully replace a human.

Topic 3. – HR Recruiting

Are the following statements true or false? Why?
1. The fairness of the recruitment process and how suitable the job is for the applicant have the greatest impact on job attraction, while the offered salary and future income potential are important, but less significant, factors in determining how attractive a job is to job seekers.
   ➔ True. While Job characteristics and organizational characteristics do have a strong impact on job-organization attraction, justice of the recruiting process and perceived fit have an even stronger influence. Study from 2005.
2. Employer brands have a strong influence on job attractiveness. Job advertisements should reflect these brands. However, sensitive language should be used, as the wording of job advertisements may trigger stereotypes in job seekers and impact their decision to apply for a job.
   ➔ True.

Employers who find talent do cite employer branding/image as their main success factor. Job seekers do need to be made familiar with said brand via job advertisements.

Second most vital reason for struggling with finding talent is employers reputation image is not being attractive enough. Using insensitive language does communicate "insensitive" culture in the company, making job seekers less likely to apply.

3. Methods of screening candidates (identifying hidden characteristics) are more effective than methods of signalling (relying on self-selection) in finding suitable candidates and reducing the asymmetry of information between employers and applicants.

➔ False.

Both have better suited use cases, one is not better than another. Screening is efficient if unskilled workers have little chance to stay undetected during probation. Signalling is effective if credentials are easy to gain for skilled workers and difficult for unskilled workers.

4. Explicit and implicit bias in recruitment is a serious issue. AI-based recruitment software can be used to avoid human bias in the recruitment process.

➔ False.

AI Models are often trained on biased data, making them produce biased results.

Topic 4 – Selection

1. The primary objective of the recruitment process is to predict the future behaviour and performance of applicants in order to make informed decisions regarding their suitability for a role. The validity of the predictive methods is less important as long as they are reliable.

➔ False.

High validity is one criterion for a good selection process. The correlation between the selection criteria and the expected performance supplies the recruiter with the information about the future behaviour of the candidate, allowing to make a better choice. The reliability of the selection methods also plays a big role; the combination of two factors is optimal.

2. Even if recruiters are aware of their cognitive biases, they cannot eliminate them completely. The most effective approach to mitigate the impact of human bias is to employ objective testing methods such as standardised personality assessments, simulation games and predictive analytics.

➔ True

Cognitive biases are pervasive and hard to eliminate completely. They commonly come up in recruiting (halo effect, confirmation bias, stereotypes, similar-to-me effect, automation bias, etc.). Objective and standardised assessments, such as psychological tests, simulations, and work samples are used to mitigate bias because they follow structured criteria and have higher validity than subjective methods like unstructured interviews. Although it should be mentioned that personality test have lower reliability, since they can be easily manipulated.

3. In contrast to personality assessments, ability and concentration tests have been shown to offer a more reliable predictor of future performance. They are also less susceptible to gender or race discrimination.

→ True
Personality tests have low validity, are vulnerable to manipulation, and may be biased. Ability test have higher validity, meaning that they are better predictors of future behaviour. They are also less prone to manipulation or discrimination. Even though the ability tests have a smaller possibility of being biased, they can still be object of stereotype threat.

4. Simulations and serious games are becoming increasingly prevalent in recruitment processes. However, candidates are quickly immersed in the game/simulation and therefore have to show their true selves. Furthermore, these methods tend to favour candidates who are familiar with the genre.
    → True
    The big advantage of using serious games in recruiting is getting to see the true self of candidates and getting a realising job preview of them. Since serous games are also directed at assessing candidate's KSAO, it would be logical to assume that the candidates already familiar with the format have a better chance at showcasing their skills and achieving a better score, as they are not simultaneously learning the format of the game.

5. Specific incentive systems (performance-related pay and probationary contracts) are not only efficient in attracting only qualified candidates but also result in comparatively lower wage costs for the company.
    → False
    Although incentive systems do help self-select appropriate candidates, they do not result in lower wage costs. On the contrary, an empiric study has shown, that using those incentive systems results in higher wages. The logical explanation for that would be the company attracting higher-qualified workers, who expect a higher compensation.

Topic 5 – Staff Assignment
1. Employees' job autonomy increases their sense of responsibility for tasks and results. The greater the job autonomy, the better the personal and work outcomes, such as motivation, job performance, and satisfaction. However, this relationship only applies to highly skilled workers with a high need for achievement.
    → False
    According to Hackman & Oldham Job Characteristics Model, the job autonomy does increase and trigger employee's experienced responsibility for outcomes, which in turn positively contributes to intrinsic work motivation, work performance and so on. However, this model doesn' t have a limitation of applying only to high skilled workers.

2. Advances in artificial technology have significantly increased the potential for automating tasks that require a high level of expertise. This also has a democratising effect, enabling lower-skilled workers to perform middle-class jobs.
    → True
    Mass-Expertise hypothesis: AI democratises access to expertise, meaning more workers can handle complex tasks with AI support, using AI for expert decision-making tasks.

3. Innovations in AI systems are transforming job profiles by automating routine cognitive and manual tasks, allowing workers to focus on higher-level

activities. Therefore, automation will enable workers to concentrate on creative and problem- solving activities, thereby increasing the perceived meaningfulness of their work.

   ➔ True if following the Human-Machine Symbiosis version of the future (Augmentation).

4. When it comes to decision-making, humans and machines have different strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, human-AI collaboration achieves the best results by realising human-machine synergies.

   ➔ True

   AI is better at calculating, curating and following the rules and instruction. It can however hallucinate (make up facts). Human are better at understanding, creating, judging and feeling. Combining those traits in a human-AI collaboration can deliver optimal results. There are different levels of this collaboration (human in the loop, human on the loop, human in command). AI can improve the result but performing the routine task.

5. Empirical evidence shows that extensive use of Gen AI tools enhances critical thinking and creativity (a phenomenon called cognitive offloading) in individuals and teams.

   ➔ False

   Skills and competencies are lost if not used regularly. Critical thinking and creativity can be increased by offloading routine tasks to AI, not by extensively using it for everything.

6. Teams that manage the five stages of group formation well, developing a strong culture and high cohesion, are particularly efficient at resolving complex problems.

   ➔ True

   Five – stage model: forming, storming, norming, performing, adjourning. Those stages ensure the norming of the team (settlement into cohesion and unity), then promoting good group performance and completion of tasks.

Topic 6. – Insentive and Compensation Systems

1. People's motivation increases with the intrinsic value of the outcome of the tasks they perform! The higher this value is, the more effort they put into performing a task, even if they feel the result depends mainly on other factors.
   One widely accepted explanation of motivation is the Expectancy theory. It argues that the strength of a tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of an expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome and the attractiveness of that outcome to the individual.

2. Performance-related pay, such as a salary based on measurable performance, motivates people to increase their efforts! However, performance-related remuneration systems - even if they are transparent - are not perceived as fair because experience and status are not considered.

3. Intrinsic motivation can be crowded out by extrinsic motivation. This means that people may stop doing something because they like doing it (intrinsic motivation) if offered money for the same behaviour (extrinsic motivation).

4. The gender pay gap exists, and the difference is due to the following reasons: Women are more likely to work part-time, have fewer years of work experience due to career breaks, choose occupations and industries with

lower salaries and are less likely to be in management positions. When these factors are taken into account, the gender pay gap disappears.
5. Fixed salaries are the most common form of remuneration in practice, although studies have shown that variable salaries (depending on performance or success) lead to higher company profits.

Topic 7 – HR Development

1. Digitalisation, automation & AI will affect every job in the near future. Hence, most importantly, HR primarily has to qualify employees in application skills for AI tools to realize the full potential of the technology.

2. The appraisal interview is mainly used to discuss with employees their performance over the past year and to point out their weaknesses and areas for development. Managers must therefore constantly monitor their employees' performance.
   ➔ False. Managers do not need to constantly monitor their employees to successfully do an appraisal interview. Appraisal interview usually addresses the target/objectives set beforehand. Those objectives can be evaluated on some performance metrics, which usually do not require constant monitoring of the employee. Also appraisal interview is not used to "point out weaknesses" (implies judgement), but to discuss previous performance and possible arias of development.

3. Career models motivate employees. The motivational effect of career ladders depends on the attractiveness of salaries at higher career levels, the extent to which salaries differ between career levels, and the generation as younger generations differ significantly in their career aspirations and their loyalty to the employers.
   ➔ True.
   Career ladders can be explained using tournament theory, which implies that the participation effort depends on the size of the prize (in this case – salary) and that the difference between ranks (salary difference between levels) has a positive effect on incentive. The working generations have significant differences in their working styles, which does have an effect on what motivates them.

4. People usually have difficulty with change. Therefore, only professional change management (designed in unfreezing - changing - refreezing processes) can help to manage change processes without loss of performance of employees.
   ➔ False. Even unfreezing-changing-freezing change management expects a drop in performance at the sensing anomalies (unfreezing) and providing a visionary (changing) stage.

5. Organisational culture consists of norms and values and is manifested in cultural artefacts (buildings, language, clothing, etc.) and rituals. However, most organisational culture is hidden and invisible in unconscious assumptions about space, time and human nature. This is why organisational cultures are most likely to be changed through storytelling.
   ➔ True.

According to the Shein's Layers of culture, the deeper hidden layers are the beliefs, shared assumptions and stores, which in turn influence values and norms, which then influence artifacts and symbols.

Topic 8 – Leadership

1. Charismatic leadership is associated with specific personal qualities and characteristics. It has been empirically proven that people with personalities that exhibit such traits and characteristics are more successful leaders than others.
   ➔ False.
   The association of leadership with specific traits have been largely explored in the "Trait approach"/Great man Theory. However, when trying to prove the theory empirically, contradictory results have been achieved. Moreover, the theorem has been criticized as gender biased and exclusionary of behaviour.

2. Leaders tend to invest their resources in those subordinates they expect to perform best and ignore those they expect to perform poorly. This creates a self-fulfilling prophecy.
   ➔ True
   The statement is supported by the interactive theories in combination with Mc Gregor Theory X and Y, which implies that leaders who prefer some employees over the other create in-group and out-groups dynamics. Subordinated with the in-group status tend to have higher performance rating, greater satisfaction and more citizenship behaviour.

3. The best strategy for leaders is to build on their strengths rather than dwell on their weaknesses. This leadership style is called "Positive Leadership".
   ➔ False
   Positive leadership is based on positive psychology. Meaning that its goal is to increase the satisfaction. It does so in creating sustainable relationships, conveying meaning in work, making accomplishments visible, and enabling positive emothion.

4. According to recent studies, companies from a wide range of industries benefit from a high level of cultural/ethnic diversity. Gender diversity, however, has no impact on financial performance. This is why companies have no incentive to increase the number of women in top leadership positions.

5. Leadership is nothing more than a myth that perpetuates power asymmetries and keeps employees in line.
   ➔ False
   Postmodern perspective discusses the issues of dominance, power or control in leadership, and addresses the old leadership myths, but it does not consider leadership to be a myth.

Topic 9 – Gender at Work

1. Girls and boys show already very early in their development different preferences and interests. This results in different educational choices. While girls prefer subjects in humanities and social sciences, boys prefer STEM subjects. The segregation in different schools then determines their career path and explains, why there are so few women in STEM.
   ➔ False

Example: interest of girls in STEM subgect drops significantly during primary and secondary eduction. That would indicate that in their early development their interests are the same to boys, and they change with exposure to societal expectation

2. Women - like men, only cheaper: Men are better negotiators than women, according to recent studies. For this reason, their salary expectations are more likely to be met, explaining parts of the gender pay gap.

3. Studies show that robot adoption (automation) leads to increasing wages in the affected industries. Additionally, wage differences between men and women, however, decrease with an increase in automation.
   ➔ False
   Increase in automation also triggers an increase in gender pay gap. russevich et al. (2019) find that women, on average, perform more routine or codifiable tasks than men across all sectors and occupations. They perform fewer tasks requiring analytical thinking or abstracting (e.g. information-processing skills), resulting in a significantly higher risk of exposure to automation than men. Hence, women face a higher automation risk than men.

4. According to European studies, women spend up to 2.6 times more time on care and household tasks than men. This decreases their workplace flexibility and increases career costs for family formation. Studies prove that incentivizing paternity leaves not only help to decrease maternal health costs of childbearing but also have positive long-term effects on the wage development of mothers.
   ➔ True
   Source UN Women. Fathers who have been on parental leave take on more childcare at home even after this period. In addition, positive effects on child development have also been demonstrated. Mothers whose partners have been on parental leave have fewer health and psychological problems, and - and this is very relevant from the point of view of equality in the labor market – they have higher wages after their own parental leave. More fathers on parental leave could therefore provide an important boost to greater equality at home and in the labor market.

5. Studies suggest that women prevent each other from advancing in their careers. This so-called Queen Bee Phenomenon contributes to gender discrimination in organizations and is a common phenomenon in organizations among successful women!

6. The glass ceiling and glass cliff phenomena are two sides of the same coin. Women are very often affected by implicit barriers to reaching higher career levels, while men are more often affected by the problem that they are assigned to leadership positions that are particularly risky or precarious.

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Question 1: Ideas about Human Nature

In the following, four different ideas about human nature and work motivation are proposed (a-d). To which basic idea of human nature and which scientific paradigm do these statements belong? Discuss the theoretical foundations of each statement and critically highlight their strengths and weaknesses.

a) Humans preferably work in teams, as solidarity and cooperation are easier achieved in smaller groups. Generally, interpersonal relationships have a positive effect on performance of workers. As managers, we therefore need to implement leadership and team building seminars.

This statement reflects the social man concept (social dimension) of human nature, which assumes that the social conditions and interpersonal relations are the most essential things in life for human beings. Work is not seen as an isolated, rational activity but as a social experience embedded in group dynamics. This paradigm is used as the ground to the HR Approach, which assumes that social relations and social conditions have a strong influence on job satisfaction and consequently performance. The theoretical foundations for this concept are the Hawthorne Experiments. The main findings of the Hawthorne experiment are, that workers' performance increased not because of physical conditions (like lighting) but due to attention, social interaction, and being valued, as well as the small groups hypothesis mentioned in the statement.

The strength of the paradigm is the recognition of the social and psychological needs of the workers, which also has a big effect on how motivation is seen. This paradigm lays the foundation for modern HR practices, such as participative leadership, communication systems, employee surveys, team building, organizational culture. It does however include some weaknesses. Firstly, it ignores the individual differences by assuming all employees prefer teamwork and social interaction. Secondly, it overemphasises harmony and doesn't take into account conflict, power dynamics, and economic interests in organizations. Thirdly, the experiment, the theory is based on, has some methodological problems (no control groups), putting into question the study's findings.

b) People want to do meaningful things, they want do have freedom to do the things how they want, and they want to be good in things. Thus, as managers we need to create a value driven culture and give freedom for self-organization.

The statement is based on the homo autonomous paradigm (political dimension). According to this perspective, individuals are motivated by meaning and purpose, autonomy and freedom to shape their work, mastery and self-development, self-realization and authenticity. Humans strive to become who they truly are and seek self-directed, meaningful work.

The theoretical foundation for the paradigm is connected to Frederic Laloux's "Reinventing Organizations" (2014), which conceptualizes postmodern organizations.

The strength of the paradigm is that it places high value on intrinsic motivation (which was not previously discussed), psychological well – being (since it supports autonomy, personal authenticity, psychological safety) and aligns with the knowledge we have about the modern worker. However, the paradigm cannot be applied to all industries, since Self-organization and radical autonomy may not work in highly regulated industries, safety-critical environments, routine or repetitive manufacturing settings. Moreover, it requires high maturity and skills from the worker which is not always the case. Additional drawback is expecting employees to "bring their whole selves to work" may blur boundaries between personal and professional life.

    c) People's needs are constantly changing as they strive for self-development. As managers we therefore need to implement appraisal and incentive systems, and manage by objectives.

This statement reflects the self-actualizing/ complex man paradigm (psychological dimension). The paradigm describes the worker as self-developing and self-actualizing person. They have evolving and dynamic needs, strive for self-development, seek autonomy, responsibility, and personal growth, and are motivated when work enables learning, challenge, and self-actualization. The self-actualizing man is motivated when there is a possibility for personal development.

The paradigm is strongly grounded in Abraham Maslow's need theory, which proposes a hierarchy from physiological needs up to self-actualization.
Key implications:

- Once basic needs are met, people seek higher-level psychological fulfillment.
- Work becomes a mean of self-expression and personal realization.

This explains why the statement emphasizes tools such as appraisals, incentives, and goal-setting. These support recognition, development, and progress.

The strength of this paradigm is that it recognises the individual differences (self-development/ self-fullfilment might look different for different workers in different brunches), it supports what we know about the modern worker, and encourages motivation through growth. Moreover the paradigm has empiriacal support.

Some weaknesses of the paradigm is that it assumes an overly idealistic view of human nature, as some employees prefer stability, routine, or clear instructions, contradicting the assumption that everyone strives for self-actualization. Moreover, it also assumes almoast unlimited organizational ressources for providing unlimited development opportunities.

    d) Happiness can only be reached through consumption. Therefore, monetary incentives are necessary for motivation. But since humans are lazy and are not able to discipline themselves to work, the need to be subdued to explicit rules. As managers, we have to construct such rules to help workers to become happy.

The statement refers to the Economic man paradigm. The paradigm assumes humans to be lazy and prefer leisure over work but still striving to achieve happiness

through consumption (and other assumptions specified in the statement). The view belongs to the rational dimension.

The theoretical foundation for this paradigm was layed out by Taylor's Scientific Management, which assumes horizontal division of labour, optimisation of work processes and working tools, separation of craft (manual) and clerical (mental) work, as well as specialisation in leadership (functional managers), the shift of control and responsibilities to management and the disempowerment of workers, piece-rate incentive systems and punishment to avoid soldiering & Shirking, selection of employees based on tests to identify strengths and professional labour conflict management.

The strength of the paradigm is that it allows to define a clear structure and predictability for the workers. In its time it also allowed for the efficiency and productivity gains through standardization and process optimization. The paradigm is a great fit for repetetive work.

There are however many weaknesses in this paradigm. Firstly it assumes an overly simplistic view of human nature by discregarding social and emotional dimensions (example: humans are only motivated by consumtion). Secondly, it disregards that highly standardized and controlled work can cause physocological strain, boredom, and low engagement. Thirdly, it's not fit for knowledge work, as modern knowledge worker usually requires autonomy, creativity and decision-making authority for their work.

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In the following, four different ideas about human nature and work motivation are proposed(a-d). To which basic idea of human nature and which scientific paradigm do these statements belong? Discuss the theoretical foundations of each statement and critically highlight their strengths and weaknesses.

   a) Good interpersonal relations can have positive effects on job satisfaction and thus on performance. As managers, we should therefore create teams that work well together.
-> Social man. Explain previously.

   b) Humans can organize themselves: while fixed job descriptions are redundant, clear role assignments are needed. Moreover, humans are individualists and critical thinkers, therefore we as managers have to create arenas for reflected discourse to make sure, that everyone is heard.

This statement describes the sense making man paradigm. The paradigm sees workers as reflective, rational human beeings. They construct meaning through communication, and need arenas for discourse to jointly interpret situations. Sense-making man assumes that people create their own interpretations, their perspectives differ, and organizations must enable dialogue and communication so individuals can align meanings. The paradigm

argues that rigid structures like fixed job descriptions are often counterproductive, but some shared frameworks (roles, norms, values) are needed for coordination.

The theoretical foundation for the paradigm is the Weick works. The core theoretical foundation is Weick's sensemaking theory.
Its key assumptions:

- People do not simply react to reality; they enact it through interpretation.
- Meaning is constructed through continuous communication, retrospective interpretation, and social interaction.
- Ambiguous environments require people to collectively make sense of what is happening ("equivocality reduction").
- Organizations are not machines; they are systems of shared meaning.

The strength of the paradaigm is that it addresses the complexity and ambiguity in modern organizations, recognizes humans as meaning-seeking beings, recognizes the complexities and differences between individual employees. The weaknesses of the paradigm is that it canstimulate "endless" discussions without decision-making. It also places high cognitive and emotional demands on employees (Not everyone wants to constantly reflect, interpret, or justify meanings) and requires a mature communication culture.

c) It is important to clearly define the task responsibility as well as the decision-making authority in a company. Since work is a burden for employees, we as managers have to create rules, standard operating procedures, and norms to control their work performance.
-> Economic man. Explained previously

d) Creating suited appraisal and incentive systems is essential for the motivation of employees. As humans have a need for achievement, they want to master the tasks they are given.

-> Self-actualizing complex man. Explained previously.