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Book/review:

REVIEW

Nasser, M.E. et al. (Ed) 1977. *Organizational Behaviour: Readings for Management*. McGraw-Hill, Johannesburg. IV, pp.250. Price R11,95 (hard cover) South Africa.

Organizational Behaviour: Readings for Management is a first product of four editors and 11 staff members of the School of Business Leadership at UNISA. The SBL serves the business environment's needs in providing high-level management training for working executives and businessmen in all walks of life in all parts of Southern Africa. Due to the wide practical work experience of the authors, these staff members are consequently in a position to put together a long awaited South African-orientated text which appears to have a multiple use. The variety of related topics, theoretically based arguments, practical applications and scientific approach bears witness to this.

The purpose of this book is to fill the gap on the subject of organizational behaviour in the South African context, particularly as viewed from "a totally-integrated management point of view." As stated in the foreword, this publication is characterised by the "diversity of the subjects — all integrated and yet all independent." This book is thus conceived as one which will serve the needs of students in management, executives, businessmen and policy makers in both White and Black Governments. To support this Prof. G. Marais, Director of SBL, states in his foreword: "Of particular importance to every South African manager is the subject of the Black worker. The integration of this special area puts the subject into its correct perspective and focuses on the fundamentals of managing these employees for better business results."

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1, The Human Variable, reviews the human being as an actor in a multidimensional field, subject to numerous variables. Chapter one reflects Venter's view that people are the "prime movers in organisations" and "advocates the evolution of a new concept underlying the philosophy of management and management development." The message by Nasser in chapter 2 is incorporated in its title "Needs — The key to Understanding Human Behaviour." Chapter 3 highlights the particular importance to the R.S.A.

scene, the inclusive pluralistic socio-cultural environment. Motsepe maintains that the private sector should incorporate the Black worker's interest in developing manpower policies. His article is titled: "Behavioural Aspects of Motivating the Black Industrial Worker."

Part 1 satisfactorily deals with the intended message that not only is there a technical system of physical equipment and resources that have to be managed, but equally important is the management of the socio-cultural system of people and their organization.

Part 2, The Organizational Entity, addresses a number of issues concerning the organization and the interaction of the human personality and the formal organization. The fourth chapter is written by the editor and rightly asks the question: Organizations — Quo Vadis? "Organizational Culture and Strategy" in chapter 5 by Morkel, examines some aspects of the relationship between the culture and the strategy of an organization. Next is MacMillan's article on "Organizational Politics — A Prerequisite Perspective for General Management." Here the writer warns against the naive attitudes often displayed by young graduates when first entering the world of business.

Part 2 is heavier than Part 1 in theoretical content, penetration and illustration.

Part 3, "The Management of the Human Resource", edited by Nasser, entails the main body of the text, and consists of seven chapters. The sub-theme of this part is embedded in the notion that the integration of the human and organizational entities in any business is a management process. It is synergistic in nature and its effectiveness concerns the generation of internally motivated situations in which employees can maximize rather than optimize their contributions in terms of organizational performance. In the words of the editor, "... the management process is a synthesizing one, by means of which a multitude of contributing processes is knitted together for the sole purpose of improving organizational effectiveness."

The seven chapters in Part 3 are mainly human resources management orientated and include the following topics:

- Chapter 7, Nasser: Organizational climate — a critical variable in effective manpower management.
- Chapter 8, Trevor-Robberts: The management of change.
- Chapter 9, Mokoatle: The place of Black labour in manpower policies.
- Chapter 10, Ace and Schmickl: The interventionist role in organizational development.

Chapter 11, Schmickl: Corporate manpower planning — a future perspective.

Chapter 12, Robinson: Bargaining and negotiation strategy.

Chapter 13, Mokoatle: The development and effective use of works and liaison committees.

Some readers may not agree with the particular placing of certain chapters, e.g. "The Management of change", Chapter 8 of Trevor-Roberts and Ace and Schmickl's chapter 10, "The interventionist role in organizational development". She could have fitted better into Part 2. This causes an uneven balance of Parts and judging from the lengths of individual articles there is a significant difference in pages e.g. chapters 1–3 range from 12 to 20 pages (according to the contents index), chapter 4–6 in Part 2, have 16–24 pages, but Part 3 have readings ranging from 8–30 pages. One does not want to judge quality in terms of length, but a subject matter like chapter 9 deserves and demands more discussion, particularly as it relates to manpower policies, migrant labour, Black values, Homeland policies and labour agreements, composition of Black labour force etc. which are unfortunately omitted. The heavy emphasis which is placed on economic development and system types appears not to support the general theme of Part 3 as stated.

An additional Part 4 could have provided a more meaningful division e.g. Industrial Relations, with chapters 12 and 13 and a possible other one dealing with the institutional framework in which our manpower policies are casted.

Lastly, a concluding chapter dealing with some future human resources management trends, problems and challenges may have just provided the necessary impetus to managements to get their strategic planning in gear and more balanced in terms of priorities.

The scientific penetration into the subject matters is good to outstanding and the style throughout varies considerably, but this is to be expected in the case of many authors. In general, they have all complied with theoretical correctness.

However, there are a few shortcomings that can be grouped as follows:

- a. Interpretation of Figures: e.g. Figure 6.1 — If arrows were numbered the flow and direction of influence, power and actions would be easier to follow.
— The outlining of a boundary for some Figures could improve appearance, structuring and interpretation e.g. pp. 101, 105, 127, 182 and 184.
- b. Technical preparation. This subsection can be improved substantially to improve the quality of the text e.g. paragraph numbering is not consistent, it switches from one side of one page to another pp. 159/60/61; numerous blank pages and

unnumbered pages, e.g. from foreword to contents; omission of a list of tables, figures, exhibits and page numbers in contents of introductions to different Parts; numbering and title of tables and their respective sources pp. 162, 233; distinction between normal print and words in italics pp. 136, 185; \$ and R symbols in the same paragraph p. 207; spelling mistakes e.g. p. 178 manpower *supplies* (supply), p. 188 salary-planning (salary planning), p. 226 ... various reasons communications systems (communication), mix of American and South African spelling of words e.g. main title of book, labour and behaviour but organization, p. 155 (ref. no. 7) *op sit.* (*op cit.*).

- c. Incompleteness e.g. no page references after *Ibid's* pp. 91, 110 (ref. 7 & 8) and 148 (ref. 2, 9 & 10), 174 (ref. 12, 14, 17 & 18), 236 (ref. 5 & 6); p. 155 (ref. 7). Rostow, W.W., ref. 8 (on same page) titleless reference; pp. 38 and 239 the date, 1975, is omitted from Nasser's reference; p. 250's title reference in contents is omitted.
- d. The text could further have been enriched with appropriate quotations as cited on pp. 193 & 223 and incorporated studies of current prominent international exponents of human resources development and manpower policies e.g. E. Ginzburg, F. Harbison, S.A. Leviton, G.L. Mangum, R. Marshall, G. Odiorne, E.W. Vetter and numerous South African writers and researchers.
- e. The title is a bit misleading as it does not deal with the "traditional" subject matters found in other leading organisational behavioural text books and a more appropriate title could have been: Human Resources Development — A new management perspective.

The inclusion of a definition and philosophy of human resources management/development and the identification of a central theme for the whole publication in a Preface, outlining more explicitly the aim and purpose, readership and uniqueness of this first edition would have enriched the creditability of this text substantially. In addition, specific questions formulated for review and exercise purposes after each chapter could be very helpful to students and business practitioners.

In the light of the above contributions — both the highlights and dim spots — there can be no doubt however, that this publication will fulfill a considerable need in South African learning institutions. I am convinced that at a time in the history of South Africa when ever-increasing attention is focussed on our labour and manpower policy situations, there is no text so opportune and welcome. I therefore have no doubt that it will be favourably received and enjoy a wide and general readership, despite its relatively high cost and market competition of similar South African books.

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