

# DSST Organizational Behavior Practice Exam (Sample)

## Study Guide



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**SAMPLE**

## **Questions**

- 1. Which organizational structure is most focused on customer needs?**
  - A. Functional structure**
  - B. Product-based structure**
  - C. Customer-based structure**
  - D. Matrix structure**
- 2. What is meant by 'extinction' in behavioral theory?**
  - A. Removing rewards to increase desired behaviors**
  - B. Allowing behaviors to disappear by withholding reinforcement**
  - C. Imposing severe consequences for poor performance**
  - D. Offering continuous positive feedback**
- 3. Situation-centered leadership emphasizes the impact of what on leader effectiveness?**
  - A. The leader's personality and skills**
  - B. Follower attitudes and beliefs**
  - C. Situational variables**
  - D. The organizational goals**
- 4. Which legal system relies on previous court rulings to resolve disputes?**
  - A. Civil law**
  - B. Common law**
  - C. Global law**
  - D. International law**
- 5. What tactic involves directly promoting oneself to influence how others perceive them?**
  - A. Other-enhancing tactics**
  - B. Self-enhancing tactics**
  - C. Audience extraction**
  - D. Human relations tactics**

- 6. What is affective commitment?**
- A. A bond formed strictly through financial incentives**
  - B. Emotional attachment and identification with the organization**
  - C. A commitment based solely on job security**
  - D. The period of time an employee plans to work at a company**
- 7. What is one potential downside of a highly formalized organization?**
- A. Reduced clarity in job roles**
  - B. Increased spontaneity in decision-making**
  - C. Decreased ability to respond to changes quickly**
  - D. Enhanced employee autonomy**
- 8. What does internal attribution entail?**
- A. Blaming external factors for one's behavior**
  - B. Ascribing behavior to personal attributes**
  - C. Following group norms in decision-making**
  - D. Using past experiences to inform future decisions**
- 9. What does downward communication refer to?**
- A. A) Messages from employees to management**
  - B. B) Communication from higher management to employees**
  - C. C) Informal discussions among colleagues**
  - D. D) Feedback from customers to the organization**
- 10. What is the concept of social identification in the context of charismatic leadership?**
- A. Ensuring sole focus on individual achievements**
  - B. Connecting subordinates' work to a larger social entity**
  - C. Creating barriers between subordinates and leaders**
  - D. Maintaining a distance from organizational goals**

## **Answers**

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1. C
2. B
3. C
4. B
5. B
6. B
7. C
8. B
9. B
10. B

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## **Explanations**

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**1. Which organizational structure is most focused on customer needs?**

- A. Functional structure**
- B. Product-based structure**
- C. Customer-based structure**
- D. Matrix structure**

The customer-based structure is designed specifically to align the organization's resources and capabilities with the needs of the customer. This approach fosters a culture that prioritizes customer satisfaction by organizing teams and resources around specific customer groups or segments. By tailoring processes and practices directly to customer requirements, this structure enhances responsiveness and adaptability to customer feedback and preferences. It enables organizations to provide better service and build stronger relationships with their customers. In contrast, the functional structure organizes teams based on specialized functions (like marketing, finance, and operations), which can sometimes lead to a focus on departmental goals rather than customer needs. The product-based structure centers around specific products or product lines, which might not address varying customer desires effectively if those needs span multiple products. The matrix structure combines elements of functional and product-based structures, allowing for flexibility, but it often complicates the focus on customer needs due to dual reporting lines and competing priorities. Thus, the customer-based structure stands out for its singular focus on understanding and responding to customer demands.

**2. What is meant by 'extinction' in behavioral theory?**

- A. Removing rewards to increase desired behaviors**
- B. Allowing behaviors to disappear by withholding reinforcement**
- C. Imposing severe consequences for poor performance**
- D. Offering continuous positive feedback**

In behavioral theory, 'extinction' specifically refers to the process of allowing certain behaviors to diminish or fade away by withholding reinforcement that normally follows those behaviors. When a behavior is no longer reinforced, the likelihood of that behavior occurring again in the future decreases over time. This principle relies on the understanding that behaviors are often learned based on the consequences that follow them; if a behavior is consistently not rewarded or reinforced, the individual is less inclined to engage in that behavior again. This concept is particularly important in organizational behavior, where it can be used to reduce negative behaviors by simply ceasing to reinforce them, rather than by punishing the behavior. For example, if an employee frequently interrupts others during meetings but receives attention or responses that reinforce that behavior, ignoring the interruptions (withholding that reinforcement) could ultimately lead to the behavior decreasing. In contrast, options involving imposing severe consequences or providing continuous positive feedback do not align with the definition of extinction, as they focus on either punishing unwanted behaviors or reinforcing desired behaviors instead. Removing rewards to increase desired behaviors speaks more to behavior modification strategies rather than extinction itself.

**3. Situation-centered leadership emphasizes the impact of what on leader effectiveness?**

- A. The leader's personality and skills**
- B. Follower attitudes and beliefs**
- C. Situational variables**
- D. The organizational goals**

Situation-centered leadership focuses on the understanding that the effectiveness of a leader is largely influenced by the context or situation in which they operate. This approach acknowledges that different circumstances may require different leadership styles or behaviors to achieve the best outcomes. Situational variables include factors such as the specific task at hand, the level of the team's maturity or development, the work environment, and the overall organizational culture. By evaluating these aspects, leaders can adapt their strategies and actions to align more effectively with the needs of their followers and the objectives of the organization. This is a shift from more traditional views that might prioritize the inherent traits of the leader or the characteristics of the followers. In situation-centered leadership, the context becomes a crucial element in determining how a leader can best facilitate team performance and navigate challenges.

**4. Which legal system relies on previous court rulings to resolve disputes?**

- A. Civil law**
- B. Common law**
- C. Global law**
- D. International law**

The legal system that relies on previous court rulings to resolve disputes is common law. Common law is primarily based on the principles established in judicial decisions from previous cases, which serve as precedents. This means that when a court faces a legal issue, it looks to past rulings to guide its interpretation and decision-making, thereby ensuring consistency and predictability in the law. Each legal principle or ruling becomes part of the legal framework that future cases can rely on, allowing the law to evolve and adapt over time while maintaining a strong connection to established case law. This process is essential for maintaining stability in the legal system, as it provides a standardized approach to resolving similar disputes. In contrast, civil law systems tend to rely more heavily on written laws and codes rather than judicial precedents, focusing on statutes enacted by legislative bodies. Global law and international law encompass a broader range of legal issues that may involve treaties or national laws but do not specifically emphasize the reliance on prior court decisions in the way that common law does.

**5. What tactic involves directly promoting oneself to influence how others perceive them?**

- A. Other-enhancing tactics**
- B. Self-enhancing tactics**
- C. Audience extraction**
- D. Human relations tactics**

The concept of self-enhancing tactics revolves around individuals actively presenting themselves in a favorable light to influence the perceptions of others. This can involve various strategies, including highlighting one's achievements, skills, or positive attributes to ensure that others view them positively. By engaging in self-enhancement, individuals can cultivate a stronger personal brand, gain recognition, and improve their opportunities in social and professional contexts. This tactic is especially important in environments where reputation and image significantly impact one's success or acceptance. In contrast, other-enhancing tactics focus on elevating others to create a favorable impression of oneself by association, rather than promoting oneself directly. Audience extraction doesn't directly relate to self-presentation; it often refers to gauging audience reactions or extracting information from them, and human relations tactics typically emphasize interpersonal connections and communication rather than self-promotion. Therefore, self-enhancing tactics is the most relevant answer, as it emphasizes the individual's efforts to manage their image actively.

**6. What is affective commitment?**

- A. A bond formed strictly through financial incentives**
- B. Emotional attachment and identification with the organization**
- C. A commitment based solely on job security**
- D. The period of time an employee plans to work at a company**

Affective commitment refers to the emotional attachment and identification an employee has with their organization. This type of commitment arises when individuals feel a genuine connection to their workplace, often stemming from shared values, goals, and an overall sense of belonging. When an employee has strong affective commitment, they are more likely to be motivated, engaged, and willing to go above and beyond in their roles, as they find personal meaning and satisfaction in their work and the success of the organization. This emotional bond differentiates affective commitment from other forms of commitment, such as continuance commitment, which is based on the perceived costs of leaving the organization, or normative commitment, which relates to feelings of obligation to stay. Affective commitment leads to positive outcomes, such as lower turnover rates and higher levels of employee loyalty, which are crucial for the long-term success of an organization.

**7. What is one potential downside of a highly formalized organization?**

- A. Reduced clarity in job roles**
- B. Increased spontaneity in decision-making**
- C. Decreased ability to respond to changes quickly**
- D. Enhanced employee autonomy**

A highly formalized organization is characterized by strict rules, procedures, and structures governing employee behavior and decision-making processes. One of the potential downsides of such a system is the decreased ability to respond to changes quickly. When an organization is heavily formalized, the rigidity of its processes can hinder flexibility and adaptability. Employees may find it challenging to make quick decisions or deviate from established protocols, even in dynamic environments that require rapid responses. In fast-paced markets or situations requiring immediate action, this lack of agility can be detrimental. Employees might have to navigate through multiple layers of approval and follow set procedures, which can slow down their response to emerging issues or opportunities. As a result, while formalization can bring consistency and predictability, it can also create barriers to quick adaptation and innovation. This contrast highlights the tension between the need for structured processes and the necessity for flexibility in an organization's operations.

**8. What does internal attribution entail?**

- A. Blaming external factors for one's behavior**
- B. Ascribing behavior to personal attributes**
- C. Following group norms in decision-making**
- D. Using past experiences to inform future decisions**

Internal attribution involves ascribing an individual's behavior to their personal attributes, such as their character, personality, or abilities. When someone analyzes a behavior or an outcome and concludes that it is primarily the result of internal factors, they are making an internal attribution. For example, if a student does well on a test and believes it is due to their intelligence and hard work, they are attributing their success internally. This concept contrasts with external attribution, which would involve citing environmental factors or situations, such as good luck or help from others, as the reasons behind an action or outcome. Understanding internal attribution is critical in organizational behavior because it influences how individuals perceive success and failure, which in turn affects motivation, self-esteem, and interpersonal dynamics within teams.

## 9. What does downward communication refer to?

- A. A) Messages from employees to management
- B. B) Communication from higher management to employees**
- C. C) Informal discussions among colleagues
- D. D) Feedback from customers to the organization

Downward communication refers specifically to the flow of information from higher levels of an organization to lower levels. This type of communication typically includes directives, policies, performance feedback, and other types of information that management needs to convey to employees to ensure that organizational goals are understood and met. In a workplace context, this can involve managers sharing important announcements, instructions regarding tasks, and expectations for employee performance. This form of communication is crucial for aligning the workforce with organizational objectives and ensuring that everyone is on the same page. It establishes a clear channel for leadership to provide instructions and communicate decisions to subordinates, which can help in fostering a structured environment. In contrast, other choices depict different communication flows that do not fit the definition of downward communication. For example, messages from employees to management represent upward communication, while informal discussions among colleagues constitute lateral communication. Additionally, feedback from customers to the organization is external communication, highlighting interactions between an organization and its external stakeholders.

## 10. What is the concept of social identification in the context of charismatic leadership?

- A. Ensuring sole focus on individual achievements
- B. Connecting subordinates' work to a larger social entity**
- C. Creating barriers between subordinates and leaders
- D. Maintaining a distance from organizational goals

The concept of social identification in the context of charismatic leadership is fundamentally about fostering a sense of belonging and connection among followers. Connecting subordinates' work to a larger social entity aligns with how charismatic leaders inspire their teams by emphasizing the importance of the organization's goals and values. This connection helps individuals see their personal contributions as integral to the success of the group, culture, or mission, which in turn enhances their commitment and motivation. Charismatic leaders often evoke strong emotional responses, and by bridging the individual's identity with that of the larger organization or social group, they cultivate a shared purpose. This sense of shared identity is crucial because it can elevate individual performance and align personal goals with collective objectives, thereby creating a unified and motivated workforce. By harnessing social identification, charismatic leaders can effectively drive engagement and loyalty among their followers, establishing a collaborative environment that leverages the strengths of the group as a whole.