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QUESTION 1: Can IT be considered as profession like other professions; law, medicine, engineering? [10]

To answer this question, you need to say what the characteristics of a profession are and then discuss how far information systems development shows these characteristics.

The introduction to this chapter lists four characteristics:

1. Substantial education and training are required in order to practice the profession;
2. The members of the profession themselves decide the nature of this training and, more generally, control entry to the profession the profession is organized into one or more professional bodies;
3. The profession lays down standards of conduct with which its members must comply, and where necessary, enforces these through disciplinary procedures

All of these characteristics apply to law and medicine. In both cases, to be registered as a member of the profession, you must pass a lengthy sequence of exams, either set by the professional bodies or set by institutions accredited by them. The professional bodies (the Law Society, the Bar Council, the General Medical Council, and the Royal Colleges) also lay down the level of practical experience required for registration and set and enforce codes of conduct. None of these characteristics apply to information systems development in general. There are very large numbers of people who develop information systems who have no formal education or training in the field; they do not belong to any professional body and are subject to no code of conduct. It cannot therefore be said that information systems development is a profession. However, those information systems developers who belong to professional bodies such as the BCS or the IEE (Institution of Electrical Engineers) can be regarded as constituting a profession, in that membership of those bodies does demonstrate the characteristics identified above, although the 'experience only' route would be regarded by many as jeopardizing the claim to professional status.

QUESTION 2: What is a Takeover? State few possible reasons behind a takeover [5]

It frequently happens in modern commerce and industry that one company takes over another; this is particularly frequent in the IT industry. It also happens when an organization outsources its IT activities (or any other activities).

In these circumstances, staff involved is usually transferred to the new employer. This could mean a major change in their employment conditions.

In particular, if IT activities are being outsourced from a government department to a private company, there are likely to be major changes affecting security of employment and pension rights.

Reasons:

- Expanding the customer base:

A provides services same as B, B to look for customers in different geographical area

- Expanding its range of offerings:

A offering HR packages, B offers payroll

- Acquiring new staff
- Economies of scale
- Vertical integration:

Strategy where a company expands its business operations into different steps on the same production path

- Eliminating a competitor

QUESTION 3: Imagine yourself working as IT professional in an organization. Explain Depth of Structure in that organization and also explain Centralization/Decentralization with your point of view. [5]

Organizations may be centralized or decentralized. In a centralized company, as much power as possible is kept at the top of the company, with delegation only when essential. In a decentralized company, as much power and control as possible is delegated to the lowest level. If we take a software company as an example, centralization might mean that there were company-wide rules that all programming should be done in C++ and that, whenever a database package was needed, Oracle should be used. Such a policy has the obvious advantages that programmers could be easily moved from one part of the company to another and that it would be possible to build up a close relationship with Oracle. On the other hand, it might mean that C++ and Oracle were used for projects that would have been much better done using Java and MySQL, or Visual Basic and Access.

Decentralization would allow the most suitable tools to be chosen for each project but might mean that the staff was very inflexible. It could also lead to a maintenance nightmare in the future, with maintenance staff needing to be familiar with large numbers of obsolete tools.

Drawing the correct balance between centralization and decentralization is important but difficult. Decentralization is commonly found in hi-tech companies, where there is plenty of talent at lower levels. Centralization is commoner in large manufacturing companies and other long-established organizations. The ideal might be described as **flexible centralization**, in which rules and practices are laid down centrally but it is accepted that reasonable arguments for modifying them in specific cases will be readily accepted. Unfortunately, putting this into practice often proves difficult.