Special Issue Call for Papers

Human Resource Management Review

Understanding Employee Voice

Guest Editors: Adrian Wilkinson (Griffith University), Michael Barry (Griffith University) and Elizabeth Morrison (NYU Stern School of Business).

Employee voice concerns the ways and means through which employees attempt to have a say and potentially influence organisational affairs about issues that affect their work and the interests of the organisation. Voice occurs through a variety of mechanisms; both formal and informal, direct and indirect, and union and non-union. The voice concept encompasses individual, discretionary employee behaviours that are aimed at enhancing work unit performance and improving organisational decision making, but also includes the ways in which employees challenge managerial behaviour, either individually or through collective behaviours and mechanisms. Employees also use voice as a mechanism of self-determination so as to identify themselves in ways that are set aside from the interests of the firm (Wilkinson, Donaghey, Dundon & Freeman, 2014).

Research on employee voice in the area of HRM draws from both OB and IR disciplines but research diverges across these disciplines (Barry and Wilkinson 2015). While there have been efforts to draw research together in what are described as integrative reviews (Morrison 2011, 2014; Klaas et al 2012; Mowbray et al 2015), the research on voice remains largely stuck in self-contained siloes (Kaufman 2014; Pohler and Luchak 2014; Wilkinson and Fay 2011). In OB research there is an underlying assumption that workers want to speak up, to provide ideas to management, and that management should value voice because of its business benefits. The focus is on the micro-level “antecedents” of voice, and voice is generally portrayed as an individual, discretionary, communicative, “prosocial behaviour” (Van Dyne and LePine, 1998; Morrison and Milliken 2000). There is also a smaller OB stream of “justice-oriented” voice that examines employee efforts to voice as a response to organisational failure or wrongdoing (Klaas et al 2012). In contrast IR research sees voice as the expression of worker interests that are separate and distinct from those of the firm. (Budd 2004, Kaufman 2014) Formal institutions, such as trade unions, collective bargaining, arbitration and grievance procedures, feature prominently in IR research, and are viewed as important in facilitating genuine employee voice.

For this issue we look at how the HRM literature draws from both these traditions. In the early 90s, the US human resource literature broadened the notion of voice away from a single channel of worker representation towards one that views it as capable of being articulated through a variety of mechanisms. According to McCabe and Lewin (1992) voice consists of two elements: first, the expression of complaints or grievances in a work context by employees although they see this as including devices such as tribunals and arbitration and secondly, the participation of employees in the decision-making processes of the organisation. More recently we see voice linked with efforts by employers to introduce high performance work practices (eg Harley, 2014).

A key aim of this issue is to explore how voice is conceptualised across disciplinary divides, and to highlight what can be gained from integrating different perspectives. Authors are urged to pose research that makes a significant contribution to the literature. Such research includes developing
and testing core elements of existing theories; integrating different theories and contributions to demonstrate possible ways that the disparate views on voice can be integrated and; developing findings using different samples, and seeking conclusions that break new ground and provide major and lasting impact.

While we invite prospective authors to focus on the questions they consider most relevant to our theme, the following are offered as illustrative questions that are consistent with the spirit of this special issue.

Can we draw from the various disciplines to create a more integrative model?

How do the different actors (workers and their representatives, managers, regulators) view voice?

What is the relationship between different types of voice and organisational performance?

What is the relationship between collective and individual/formal and informal voice?

Why do voice systems fail?

How do relations and interactions between co-workers affect voice?

How do different channels of voice interact and do multiple channels produce superior results?

Can an integrated view of voice provide greater insights as to why employees remain silent or speak up?

What are the individual and organizational antecedents and moderating variables of voice and silence?

The co-editors of the special issue encourage authors to contribute papers consistent with the themes outlined in this call for papers. The topics listed above are examples of possible research questions and should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Consistent with HRMR’s scope, conceptual and theoretical papers are especially welcomed. Conceptual papers developing and integrating existing work on voice will be given a preference. However, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of the special issue guest editors.

Deadlines:

The deadline for manuscripts is November 1, 2016. However, if you plan to submit a paper please send one of the editors a short abstract of your paper by April 15, 2016. If you have questions about a potential topic, please feel free to contact one of the guest editors at the email address noted above.

1st April 2016: Submit abstracts (maximum 1,000 words) as Microsoft Word files to one of the editors by email.

15th of June-15th of July, 2016: Invitations to submit full papers will be sent out.

1st of Mar. 2017: Authors will receive feedback.

1st of July 2017: Full papers after 1st revision will be due.

1st of Sept. 2017: Authors will receive feedback.

1st of Dec. 2017: Full papers after 2nd revision will be due.

2018: Online versions of accepted papers appear on the HRMR web site within three months of acceptance. It will take another 6-9 months before the Journal volume will be published.

Proposals and papers should be submitted according to the Journal’s guidelines and format (e.g. numbered headings, citations, references, figures, tables, etc.), and should be consistent with the format seen in recent articles published in HRMR: http://ees.elsevier.com/humres/

Reference List


Kaufman, B (2014) Theorising determinants of employee voice: an integrative model across disciplines and levels of analysis, Human Resource Management Journal,


