

Name: Ralph Tinotenda Zizi

Student Number: g14z5385

ORCID Identifier: 0000-0002-4637-4804

Degree: Master of Arts (Coursework and Dissertation)

Department of Sociology

Title: A critical analysis of employee voice at Rhodes University, Grahamstown

**In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts (Coursework and
Dissertation)**

Supervisor: Professor Gilton Klerck

Word Count: 26 100

Date of submission: 29 January 2020

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
CHAPTER ONE	6
INTRODUCTION	6
1.2 Goals of the Research	7
1.3 Dissertation Outline	7
CHAPTER TWO	9
EMPLOYEE VOICE AND DIVERSITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Lens of Analysis	10
2.3 Meaning and conceptualisation of employee voice	11
2.3.2 Employee voice in Human Resources Management	12
2.3.3 Employee voice in Employee Relations	13
2.3.4 Employee voice in Organisational Behaviour perspective	15
2.3.5 Justice-oriented voice	16
2.3.6 Limitations of the different perspectives of employee voice	17
2.4 An Integrated Approach	18
2.5 Homogeneity in Employee Voice	22
2.6 Voice and Diversity in the Workplace	22
2.7 Employee Voice in South Africa	24
2.7.2 Corporatization in the South African higher education sector	25
2.7.3 Diversity in South African higher education	25
2.8 Conclusion	28
CHAPTER THREE	30
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	30
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Methodology	30
3.3 Methods and techniques	30
3.4 Research Instrument	31
3.5 Sampling	31
3.6 Ethics	33
3.7 Conclusion	33
CHAPTER FOUR	34
EMPLOYEES' VOICE AT RHODES UNIVERSITY	34

4.1 Introduction	34
4.2 How Employees Voice	34
4.3 Why Employees Voice	35
4.4 Voice mechanisms at Rhodes University	37
4.4.2 Line managers/supervisors/heads of departments	38
4.4.2.2 Effectiveness of Line Managers/Supervisors/ Heads of Departments	39
4.4.3 Trade unions	40
4.4.3.2 Effectiveness of Trade Unions	43
4.4.4 Human Resources Management	45
4.4.4.2 Sexual harassment office	47
4.4.4.3 Equity and institutional culture office	47
4.4.4.4 Effectiveness of Human Resources Management	48
4.5 Formal and Informal Voice	49
4.6 Conclusion	51
CHAPTER FIVE	52
DIVERSITY AND THE ARTICULATION OF VOICE	52
5.1 Introduction	52
5.2 Language	52
5.3 Race	54
5.4 Gender	56
5.5 Job/occupation	58
5.5.2 Participation in decision making	58
5.5.3 Ability to influence changes to work	59
5.5.4 Influence on employee suggestions	60
5.6 Trade union membership	61
5.6.2 Participation in decision making	62
5.6.3 Amplification and strengthening of employee voice	62
5.7 Conclusion	64
CHAPTER SIX	66
CONCLUSION	66
Bibliography	71
Appendix A	77
Interview Schedule	77
Appendix B	78
Consent Form	78

ABSTRACT

The post-apartheid South African government has simultaneously increased the number of students enrolled and reduced the financial support it gives to the higher education sector by reducing its subsidies to universities. This has resulted in universities adopting corporate practices to make up for the reduction in government subsidies. These practices have also coincided with South African universities being urged by the government to have a more diverse workforce. The increased diversity of South African universities, while still not completely in accordance with wider demographics (especially in historically-White universities), are more diverse than they were during the apartheid era. These changes to the higher education sector have had a significant impact on employee-employer relations at universities across the country. It is from this perspective that this research will seek to analyse employee voice at Rhodes University. The research is aimed at studying the relationship between employees and employee voice mechanisms and studying the impact of diversity on the articulation of employee voice. This research made use of qualitative research methods, and in-depth interviews were conducted with a selection of employees at Rhodes University. This research discovered that some employees have greater access to employee voice mechanisms and have a stronger voice than others. Furthermore, this research shows that employee diversity influences how employees articulate their voice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God the almighty for granting me so many blessings in life and the opportunity to go after a Master's Degree. My gratitude also goes to my parents, Rogers and Caroline Zizi, who have sacrificed a lot for me to have the best education possible. They have gone above and beyond for me, and I would have never been able to complete this thesis without their continued support. Thank you, Mum and Dad.

I would also like to thank my partner, Tholang Nkhatho, who has been with me through the ups and downs that come with such an academic endeavour. Your words of encouragement and support have carried me through the most difficult of times, and for that, I will always be grateful. Thank you for being ever so present, you are such a blessing.

I further extend my gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Gilton Klerck, for his support throughout this journey. Your insights into the industrial relations of this country are unparalleled. It has been a pleasure to be your student, and this research gained immensely because of your knowledge and insights.

Lastly, I would like to extend my gratitude to the Sociology Department, special mention to Juanita and Sis Vuvu and the many friends and family members that wished me well and offered their support at various stages of this journey. I will forever be grateful to have a strong support system around me. May God bless you all.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Global demographics are pointing to a state of affairs where today's workforce is increasingly more diverse than it has ever been (Parsi, 2017:1). In South Africa, the educational landscape before 1994 was directed mainly by Apartheid policies that racially discriminated against employees (Assie-Lumumba, 2006:32). Because of this, the workforce at certain universities mostly consisted of white employees. The end of apartheid in 1994 saw the South African government prioritising the need for systematic restructuring of the higher education sector. As a result, Universities in South Africa faced pressures of transforming the composition of their staff (Department of Education, 1996:15). The result of this policy direction has been a more diverse workforce at universities. Presently, employees from various backgrounds are represented at most South African universities.

The end of the apartheid in 1994, also saw the massification of Universities in South Africa as a result of previously-disadvantaged groups being given greater access to higher education. In 2016, there were 1.2 million students enrolled in higher education institutions. This figure is more than double the figure that was recorded in 1994. In 1994, there were 495 356 students enrolled in higher education institutions. (DHET, 2018:9) However, the increasing number of students getting access to higher education coincided with a reduction in government subsidies. The South African government reduced its contribution to higher education by 9 %. In the year 2000, the government contribution to the higher education sector accounted for 49% and yet by the year 2012, this figure had gone down to 40% (PWC, 2015:1).

The reduction in funding influenced Universities across the country to adopt a governance style that mimics corporations. In this regard, Universities are focusing on practices that cut costs and seek profit-making opportunities (Dlamini, 2018: 1). Employees in the higher education sector have been greatly affected by these measures, and this has been illustrated by the prevalence of confrontations between employees and management of the various Universities across the country. An example of this is how, in 2017, the employees at Rhodes University led by the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) embarked on a three-day strike over wages (IOL Business Report, 2015:1). The University management had been resisting the workers' wage demands

for a 7.5% increase, insisting that the University was in a tough economic position due to the reduction of government's contribution to the University budget (IOL Business Report, 2015:1).

From the above discussion, the changes in the demographics of the university workforce and the subsequent corporatization of universities in South Africa post-1994 provide an important area of sociological research as these changes have effects on the operation of organisations. Considering this, the research will analyse employee voice at Rhodes University. Employee voice broadly refers to how and why employees raise concerns and demands with management and the extent to which employees can participate in the decision making of an organization (Dundon *et al.*, 2004:6).

Due to the nature subject matter under investigation, a social action and strategic choice theory was chosen for the theoretical framing of the research because it offers the best explanation for industrial relations, as it accounts for the structures present in organisations and the behavioural patterns of the individuals interacting with those structures (Klerck, 2008:42).

1.2 Goals of the Research

This research makes the argument that employee voice is diverse and differs based on an employee's perspective and the voice mechanisms available to employees. In light of this, the research sought to understand the relationship between employees and employee voice mechanisms as well as how employee diversity in terms of race, gender, language, job/occupation and trade union membership may influence employee's use of voice mechanisms and the articulation of employee voice. In short, this research will seek to answer two key questions:

- What is the relationship between employees and employee voice mechanisms?
- How does employee diversity impact employees' use of voice mechanisms and how does it impact how they articulate their voice?

1.3 Dissertation Outline

In order to achieve the research goals as mentioned above, this research is divided into six parts and is structured as follows.

Chapter two briefly outlines the analytical and theoretical framework used in this research. The chapter also contextualises employee voice in the higher education sector and provides an overview of the literature on employee voice.

Chapter three provides an explanation and justification of the research methods that were used to achieve the research goals. Chapter four provides an analysis of the data and focuses on the employee voice mechanisms present at Rhodes University. The chapter is broken down into sections that look at the voice mechanisms that employees use to voice, which are trade unions, line managers/heads of department/supervisors, and the human resources department.

Chapter five provides an analysis of the data and focuses on the impact of diversity on the articulation of voice. The chapter is divided into five parts, which are race, gender, language, job/occupation and trade union membership.

Chapter six is the concluding chapter. It summarises the main themes uncovered in the previous chapters. The chapter also highlights what can be deduced from the research findings.

CHAPTER TWO

EMPLOYEE VOICE AND DIVERSITY IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

2.1 Introduction

The overarching aim of this chapter is to contextualise employee voice in the higher education sector of South Africa. This research makes the argument that employee voice is diverse and differs in relation to an employee's perspective and the voice mechanisms present. In order to make this argument, the research adopts a pluralist perspective as the broad theoretical framework and the social action and strategic choice theory as the lens of analysis for this research because they provide the best explanation for understanding organisations. Employee voice as a concept is understood differently across the different disciplines; these disciplines are the Organisation Behaviour discipline (OB), the Human Resources Management (HRM) discipline and the Employment Relations (ER) discipline. This chapter argues that these disciplines individually have a narrow conception of employee voice, which prevents scholars from having a holistic understanding of how employees voice (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388). As a result, the case for an integrated approach to voice is advocated as it provides a holistic understanding of employee voice.

The chapter also makes the argument that most voice systems do not take into account individual differences and are designed for a homogeneous workforce that is usually exemplified by a white, heterosexual male employee (Hatipogle & Inelmen, 2018:973). Employees in the South African higher Education sector are, however, diverse. Employees are different in terms of race, gender, language, trade union membership and job/occupation. Thus, it is argued that these differences in employees may influence how employees voice and interact with voice mechanisms.

It is also argued in this chapter that the reduction of funding to the higher education sector by the South African government since the year 2000 has resulted in the adoption of corporatist practices that have weakened the voice of some employees as Universities have reduced the influence of employees' voice by mostly making decisions in a top-down manner that has resulted in a reduced shared governance role for employees (Dlamini, 2018:55). In other words,

it is argued that some employees have minimum to no influence in the decision-making process of the organization because of corporatization in the higher education sector (Dlamini, 2018:55).

2.2 Lens of Analysis

A theoretical framework guides the structure of analysis, and it acts to justify the questions, inferences and conclusions reached by the researcher (Klerck, 2008:26). In this research, the broad theoretical perspective that will be utilized is a pluralist perspective. A pluralist perspective was chosen for this research because it offers the best explanation for understanding an organisation. Pluralists believe that organizations mirror society in that there are different interest groups present in the organization (Klerck, 2008:26). Individuals create an organization, and these individuals have their own interests and goals. These individuals then go on to form groups in the workplace, and these then have their own interests and goals. As such, pluralists believe that organisations are always in a state of dynamic tension stemming from these conflicting interests at the group and individual level (Klerck, 2008:26). For pluralists, this creates an inherent conflict in an organization, and this tension needs to be managed through institutions and processes (Salamon, 1998:7). Considering this, trade unions are viewed as necessary vehicles for protecting and promoting employee interests (Klerck, 2008:26).

Under the broad theoretical perspective of pluralism, there are two main approaches to industrial relations. These approaches are the systems theories and social action theories. (Klerck, 2008:34). The systems theories approach focuses on the ways in which industrial relations are sustained and reproduced for a wider context (Klerck, 2008:26). In other words, the systems approach focuses on the regulation of industrial relations and this regulation is done via the processes, the various institutions and the procedures that are assumed to work to maintain stability naturally and are deemed to be compatible and well-integrated (Hyman,1975:11). The effect of this per systems theories approach is that conflict in organizations is largely self-correcting (Klerck, 2008:39). However, the problem with this approach can be said that it undermines and ignores the role of human agency. The systems theories approach overemphasis the role of processes and institutions and neglects human agency. Human beings play a part in maintaining, transforming and sustaining the system of industrial relations. (Klerck, 2008:35). In contrast to the systems theories, the social action theories emphasise the processes in which people construct social reality. Thus, under the social

action theories approach, people and behavioural variables are prioritised and viewed as playing an important role in industrial relations (Klerck, 2008:35). Henceforth, the norms of industrial relations are taken to be strongly influenced by the bargaining process, which in turn is determined by the strategies utilised by the parties in the bargaining process (Klerck, 2008:35).

The use of strategies by parties under the social action approach leads to the strategic choice model, which falls under the social action theories. The strategic choice concept is seen to add a more dynamic aspect to the systems theory in that it recognises the role of the institutional framework, but in addition to this, the role of interpersonal action in industrial relations is recognized and validated (Klerck, 2008:41). Thus, for strategic choice theorists, the value system and the behavioural patterns of parties heavily influence industrial relations. The structures that are present in industrial relations are thus malleable to the value system and behavioural patterns of the parties (Klerck, 2008:42). Considering this, it then follows that this research will thus analyse employee voice at Rhodes University using social action and strategic choice theory.

2.3 Meaning and conceptualisation of employee voice

The concept of employee voice and employees having a say can be traced to Hirschman's (1970) exit–voice–loyalty theory. The theory was aimed at explaining the actions of dissatisfied customers. Hirschman argued that dissatisfied customers had the choice to between exit and voice when they were dissatisfied. Hirschman theorized that customers were more likely to choose the voice option if they were loyal to the firm. He defined voice was initially defined as “any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs; intentionally expressing work-related ideas, information, and opinions” (Hirschman, 1970:3).

Hirschman's theory was extended by Farrel (1983), who added the dimension of neglect to the exit-voice-loyalty perspectives. Farrel's addition of neglect is explained as employee behaviour that is careless. In this sense, employees do not perform their responsibilities to the best of their ability (Farrel, 1983:598). Employees underperform, and this can be seen by negative behaviour such as being late, absenteeism and silent sabotage (Mowbray *et al.*, 2019: 6).

Hirschman's theory sets the groundwork for the early understanding of employee voice; his work on voice stands as a common conceptual grounding for voice despite it being centred on consumers. The influence of Hirschman's work can be seen in the different disciplines like organisational behaviour, human resources management and employee relations which

followed after his work. Thus, his work plays a fundamental role in the definition and what voice means in the different disciplines (Barry *et al.*, 2018:12). There are differences in how the concept of voice is understood in the employment relations (ER), human resources management (HRM) and the organizational behaviour stream (OB). On this issue, Kaufman (2015) and Pohler & Luchak (2014) agree that the research on employee voice is very much stuck in silos that are independent of each other and in themselves the research does not adopt a unified and broad approach that incorporates other disciplines.

2.3.2 Employee voice in Human Resources Management

Studies in the HRM and ER ‘disciplines’ view employee voice in an organization as a formal mechanical system that is constructed by the organization as a way for employees to communicate with management and have meaningful input in the organization (Mowbray *et al.*, 2019: 4). The underlying understanding is that employee voice may benefit both the employer and the employees. The issues that can be raised through employee voice can thus be related to the employer or employee.

The HRM conception of voice subscribes to the view that informing and allowing employees input into work and business decisions can facilitate better decisions and understanding as well as greater commitment (Boxall & Purcell, 2003:2). Employers have subsequently attempted to link voice with high-performance work practices (HPWS), and through HR systems, a greater commitment by employees can be established (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016:4). The reasoning behind the HRM perspective is that if high-performance work practices provide jobs that are enriching for the employees, they will most likely participate in all the aspects of their work and they will voice in ways that will enhance performance. Proponents of the HPWS such as Kochan & Osterman (1994:4) argue that it has the potential of benefiting workers or unions in the way that employees can play an active role in the adoption and implementation of these systems. However, critics such as Heffernan and Dundon argue that the supposed benefits of participation such as improved employee satisfaction and affective commitment are often misleading under HPWS as employees may not entirely feel this way (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016:4).

In this sense, Conceptions of voice within HRM and conceptions of voice within OB share similarities in that they are both driven by management perspectives of voice, and ultimately, employee input is only supported on the grounds that it leads to better organizational performance. However, this should not be viewed as completely one-sided as the HPWS model

does include practices such as employment security, performance-based wages and some levels of employee autonomy, all which are normally linked to the employee relations practices (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016:4). Similarly, to OB voice, the HRM perspective focuses on the direct and not representative voice.

The three main components of direct voice identified from an HR perspective are high autonomy jobs, the structuring of work into autonomous or semi-autonomous teams and the employees that have communication channels that allow them to add input in higher-level decision making (Harley, 2014:3). Despite the presence of these mechanisms, it is not clear the extent to which employees can actually influence decision making. The depth of their input is not highlighted, and as such, questions remain as to whether employees are simply informed about decisions that are made by management, or there is full consultation before the decision (Barry *et al.*, 2018:7). This issue of depth is a very critical issue as it unpacks how voice occurs over a wide number of substantive employment issues on a regular basis. Barry *et al.* (2018:7) state that the depth of voice shows how influential the employees' input is in decision making that relates to matters that affect the individual or the collective (Barry *et al.*, 2018:8). Without depth it is possible for there to be voice without muscle, meaning employees will have the ability to voice, but their voicing will not result in any meaningful changes at all (Kaufman & Taras, 2010:2). Marchington (2008:3) importantly notes that the test for deep voice might be in the number of channels in which employees can raise matters and the way those matters are resolved by line managers in a timely manner.

2.3.3 Employee voice in Employee Relations

The ER studies of voice are largely influenced by Freeman and Medoff's (1984) union-centred approach to voice, which views trade unions as a key institution of voice. This approach was developed on the basis of Hirschman's exit-voice-loyalty theory. The approach's logic is rooted in the belief that unions provide employees with a strong formal voice and the presence of such a voice mechanism will discourage employees from exiting the firm (Barry *et al.*, 2018:9).

The ER view of voice can be described as employee-centric. The employee relations point of view adopts the view that questions the reliability of the pro-social voice that is championed in the OB perspective (Barry *et al.*, 2018:9). The ER view generally views employees as having views and interests that are independent of the views and interests of the firm.

ER scholars view formal structures such as unions, works councils and grievance procedures as strong prerequisites for enhancing and promoting voice on employees' terms and not

management's (Barry *et al.*, 2018:9). ER scholars contend that employee-centric voice will effectively flourish in settings where there are structures and mechanisms that are guaranteed by law or strong labour market institutions that give employees formal rights to exercise voice, or indeed to co-determine decisions that involve the workplace (Barry *et al.*, 2014:13). From an ER/HRM point of view, the extant research examining employee voice is primarily focused on the definitions, structures and processes that also include the effectiveness of employee participation (Barry *et al.*, 2014:13).

The focus of the ER/HRM disciplines investigates how voice mechanisms are established, why they are established, and how they are implemented, as well as their outcomes (Barry *et al.*, 2014:13). The argument for this approach is that the scholars of this discipline believe that a voice system may not always operate exactly as designed; however, it will nevertheless represent the intent of its designers (Barry *et al.*, 2014:13). The problem with this argument, however, is that it overemphasises the role of voice mechanisms. A voice system which is set up within an organization to shape and channel employee participation has both institutional and human elements. The voice mechanisms are important in the functioning of employee voice, but so are the employees themselves. Their attitudes, perceptions and relations to these mechanisms are also of importance.

Wilkinson *et al.* (2018:710) developed a useful framework to examine a voice system. Their framework includes the elements of efficacy, level, range of issues and the form that the participation takes. The efficacy of voice refers to the extent to which employees are able to influence managerial decisions. That is, are employees simply informed of changes, or they are consulted before decisions are made or do they make the decisions? (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2018:712).

The notion of 'level' refers to the point/s in the organizational hierarchy at which employee voice is expressed. The 'range' of issues refers to the kind of issues that employees can influence; this can vary from trivial matters such as who gets to park where to operational concerns such as how to perform organizational tasks (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2018:712). The range of issues can even extend to more strategic concerns, such as which investment strategies should be pursued by the organization.

The notion of 'form' speaks to whether employees' voice is expressed "online" or "offline" (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2018:712). An online form of employee voice refers to employees making

decisions as part of their daily job responsibility. Offline employee voice refers to employees' expressing their concerns via a formal scheme (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2018:712).

This framework is very useful in analysing a voice system. However, it is not comprehensive. There are areas where it fails to cover employee voice adequately. For example, Wilkinson *et al.* (2018) acknowledged that the issue of informal voice is not addressed. Informal voice should be part of the analysis because it is prevalent and important in organisations. Informal voice provides opportunities for information to pass between managers and workers (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2018:712). In addition, informal voice also serves as an opportunity for consultation between workers and management. Informal voice is effectively an area that is not covered by the formal voice-centric ER discipline (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2018:712).

A general limitation in the research that has been done on employee voice is that there has been a focus on organisational levels and the role of managers. In other words, research on employee voice has focused on the structures of employee voice and their functioning without much regard for the relationships between individual employees and these employee voice structures or mechanisms. Effectively employee voice in most literature was being presented as a mechanical process that is dependent on the availability of voice mechanism. Because of this logic, the role of the manager is being presented as the key to understanding employing voice. Managerial systems are thus studied because they set the agenda and institutional structures which, in turn, can influence the ability of employees to voice or not to voice. However, such a focus is narrow because by focusing on structures only, the research neglects the role of human agency. Employees are different and have their own attitudes, perceptions which may influence the relationship with employee voice structures.

2.3.4 Employee voice in Organisational Behaviour perspective

In the organizational behaviour (OB) stream, employee voice is ultimately centred on the managerial perspective. That is to say; voice is viewed as a way to benefit the organization. The OB stream considers voice as a way to get informative and creative ideas from workers that help the organization (Mowbray *et al.*, 2019:4). Concerns and opinions that bring about positive changes are also prioritized by the OB scholars. The voice which is raised by the formal structures of an organization is typically discounted by the OB stream (Mowbray *et al.*, 2019:4). The voice from the formal structures is discounted whether the structures are designed for employer or employee interests. The OB stream distinguishes itself from the other employee voice perspectives by recognizing that employee voice does not occur through formal channels

or structures (Mowbray *et al.*, 2019: 4). Voice is constructed as a choice on the part of employees and is seen to be an individual and not collective action. Furthermore, it is considered to take place via verbal communication means such as that from an employee to their supervisor or manager (Barry *et al.*, 2018:4). In this sense, the OB perspective does not give much importance to formal voice structures.

Barry *et al.* (2018:4) explain that the research in OB makes a unitarist assumption of the interests of workers and managers in voicing. The assumption is that anything that benefits the organisation also benefits the employees; employees are not viewed to have interests that go against the organisation. In other words, the interests of the firm are taken to be identical to the interests of the workers. From this perspective, voice is seen as a way that management can capture value for the firm. The voice that employees are supposed to express is meant to add value to the firm and help the firm in its business (Barry *et al.*, 2018:4). Thus, research in the OB perspective is fundamentally concerned with what factors induce an employee to voice for the benefit of the organization. Thus, the conception of voice in the OB research is imagined to be a kind of “pro-social behaviour” that is undertaken by the employees for the benefit of the organization as a whole or their specific work department or division (Barry *et al.*, 2018:4).

The generally accepted definition of voice in the OB perspective has its roots in the work of Van Dyne and LePine (1998:12), who identify voice as “an extra role, discretionary, individual, communicative behaviour” (cited in Barry *et al.*, 2018:5). Additional understanding of voice was brought by Morrison (2011:6), who argues that the OB conception of voice does not include complaints. Morrison contends that a complaint in its essence does not benefit the organization and benefits employees, and as such it should not be included in what it means to voice (Morrison, 2011:6). This research, however, takes the position that employees are different, and, in their difference, their interests also differ. It is plausible that employee interests sometimes match that of the organization, but that is not always the case. Employee voice does include complaints that do not benefit the organization.

2.3.5 Justice-oriented voice

Klaas *et al.* (2012:6) introduce the notion of justice-oriented voice. This notion looks at the efforts that employees take to voice in response to organizational failure or the wrongdoings in an organization. However, this notion is not a part of OB research in which the pro-social strand perspective is the dominant view (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:9). Justice oriented voice is employee voice that comes about as a result of employee’s own belief that an act which has transpired in

the organisation is wrong (Barry *et al.*, 2018:9). In other words, employees do not just voice in the interests of the organisation or in their interests. Under justice-oriented voice, employee's voice may be a result of their moral sense of right and wrong (Barry *et al.*, 2018:9).

2.3.6 Limitations of the different perspectives of employee voice

The different disciplines have concepts which this research agrees with and disagrees with. The disciplines of employee voice are not compatible with each other because they have contrasting ideas. This makes it difficult for there to be a unified view of voice that accurately reflects both employers and employees. Barry and Wilkinson (2016:3) point out that there is a strong unitarist view in OB and HRM. This viewpoint reiterates the idea of what is good for the company is also good for the employees. Voicing, in this perspective, is aimed at directly benefiting the organization. However, where the OB discipline lacks is the way it does not question whether employees actually want to contribute to the improvement of the organization. The OB perspective makes very bold assumptions about the interests of the employees in that it assumes that employees and management want the same things.

In the HRM field, Marchington (2008:4) notes this problem by questioning if management actually wants employees to have the ability to voice in the HRM system. Scholars like Brinsfield (2014:128) have thus called for the OB scholars to “thoughtfully question the paradigmatic assumptions around voice which may constrain their thinking”. In this regard, scholars should question the idea that our understanding of employee voice is informed by the interests of management alone and not that of employees who may have different interests (Donaghey *et al.*, 2011:15).

Furthermore, the context around voice is not fully considered when the structural and systematic aspects of workplace voice are not well explored. In contrast to the OB perspective, the ER perspective on voice is often criticized for being heavily institutionalized and anchored in specific contextual settings. As such, the major assumption in the ER discipline is that, if an organization does not have an independent union, then there is no real voice in that organization. According to Cullinane *et al.*, (2014, cited in Marchington & Suter, 2013), there is a decline of unionization generally in the world and the effect of this has been the development of alternative methods of indirect, non-union employee representation as well as informal channels through which employees can voice their concerns. Thus, the fundamental weakness with the ER discipline is the heavy assumption of the superiority or predominance of union voice.

Barry *et al.* (2018:4) argue that the above-mentioned disciplines are inadequate when it comes to a comprehensive understanding of employee voice. Further, he argues that the conceptualization of voice must include individual antecedents, relational attributes of actors as well as other broader institutional factors that encourage or prevent voice across multiple levels such as a transnational, national, intermediary, sectoral, and organizational or the work unit (Barry *et al.*, 2018:15). It is from this viewpoint that scholars have sought to have an integrative approach to employee voice that will tackle the shortcomings in each individual disciplinary perspective.

2.4 An Integrated Approach

As mentioned above, the different approaches to employee voice – that is, HRM, ER and OB – come with different conceptualisations of voice. This, in itself, creates a problem in that the different perspectives create limits to our understanding of employee voice. As discussed above, each perspective has its own shortfall and thus using a single perspective would not cover all the aspects of employee voice. The research that was done by Cox *et al.* (2006:2) shows that using a singular perspective on employee voice limits our understanding. The research focused on the embeddedness of employee participation and involvement in UK organisations. The study only used formal direct and indirect voice mechanisms and completely ignored the informal voice that may transpire between managers and employees (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14). Thus, the reliance on one perspective has the problem of not showing the full picture in as far as employee voice is concerned (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14). This has thus highlighted the need for an integrated approach of employee voice that makes use of ER, HRM and OB perspectives.

Mowbray *et al.* (2018:14) provide a definition of voice that is premised on an integrative framework. The integrative definition of voice proposed uses the understanding that employee voice may be inspired by pro-social, justice, dissatisfaction or self-determination motives that may occur formally or informally (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14). Furthermore, the nature of the voice may be discretionary and can be considered in-role behaviour. That is to say, what employee voice about is up to the employee and the articulated voice can be within the expected role and job description of the employee (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14). The integrative approach's definition of employee voice is

speaking up with ideas, issues and concerns and opinions regarding employer or employee interests through either formal or informal mechanisms or channels

and where doing so may be considered an in role or extra-role behaviour (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14).

In a nod to the integrative approach, Wilkinson and Barry (2016:15) argue that certain disciplines such as OB have strong limitations in that they do not consider how organisation structures may affect employee voice. The OB perspective does this through a focus on voice as being discretionary and individualistic. ER is criticized for being narrow. The narrowness of the ER discipline can be seen by how the discipline mainly focuses on airing and redressing employee grievances. Our understanding of employee voice is impoverished by focusing on individual choices or voice structures exclusively.

Wilkinson *et al.* (2016:4) argue that voice should be examined at the societal level (macro), organisational (meso) and the individual level (micro). The macro-level is believed to consist of the regulatory framework which determines organisational policy. The meso level consists of the organisational structures that facilitate employee voice, whilst the micro-level refers to individual-level motivators and inhibitors to voice such as dispositions, attitudes and perceptions (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2016:19). Because of the weakness of the HRM/ ER and OB perspective discussed above, an integrated approach offers the best chance of understanding a systems and behavioural perspective to voice. This is very important in terms of this research, as mentioned before, this study aims to show that employee voice is diverse, and it differs based on an employee's perspective and the voice mechanisms available to an employee. In this regard, the framework that will be used in this research needs to look at voice from both a systems and behavioural perspective.

Integrating the HRM/ER and OB perspectives is not without its challenges as there are conflicting assumptions highlighted above. However, Mowbray *et al.*, (2015:384) make the argument that despite the conflicting assumptions there are similarities that suggest that an integrated conceptualisation is possible and is not difficult to achieve (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14). They examined OB literature relating to whether employee voice is an in-role or extra-role behaviour and found evidence in the form of several studies (Tangirala *et al.*, 2013; Van Dyne *et al.*, 2008) that proved that voice could be considered an in-role behaviour (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14). In other words, they found that employee voice is part of the activities, duties and responsibilities which employees are required to carry out to the best of their ability as part of their employment contract. This is similar to the HRM/ER perspectives

despite the argument by OB scholars like Morrison (2011), who stated that voice is an extrarole behaviour.

Mowbray *et al.* (2018:14) make the argument that while there is strong support by many OB scholars for the idea that voice is motivated by a pro-social desire to improve the organisation rather than a motivation triggered by dissatisfaction (Morrison, 2011:2), forward-thinking literature is pointing out that dissatisfaction may be the initial motivation that leads to prosocial behaviour. This claim is supported by the empirical voice study done by the OB scholars Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008:1), who proposed that employees may be motivated by a negative mood like depression to make proactive changes to their present situation. In this way, employees may voice in order to reduce their dissatisfaction with what they may perceive to be low personal control over the authority they have over work behaviours and influence on work outcomes (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388). Accordingly, employee's frustrations, anger or dissatisfaction may influence employees to engage in pro-social voice when they possess an overall positive attitude to the organization (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388). The implication of the notion that dissatisfaction may cause employees to engage in pro-social voice suggests that the OB and HRM/ER motives of voice are similar (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388). In other words, the perspectives are motivated to remove dissatisfaction and improve the organization. Furthermore, the notion highlights that determining what is pro-social voicing behaviour is subjective in nature and casts doubts on whether OB studies conducted in the past captured all the voicing behaviour within firms (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388).

In addition to the above-mentioned similarities, Mowbray *et al.* (2018:14) also point out that there has been an increase in the number of HRM/ER studies that incorporate informal voice in their empirical studies proving that voice may occur within formal and informal channels (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14). Some of these studies include Detert and Trevinos' (2010) qualitative study, which found that employees generally preferred to voice in informal settings over a formal one. In another study, Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2002) found that employees in the same organization might employ formal and informal voice differently, with more loyal employees preferring less formal methods to voice a grievance, while less loyal employees were more likely to use a formal voice mechanism. The Hespe and Wall (1976) study showed that there was a penchant by employees to use a progressive state of informal to formal means of participation in relation to the level of management at which the employee is trying to influence their decision making and the type of content involved. Similarly, Marchington and Suter (2013:12) found that while there was a preference by management and employees to use

informal employee involvement and participation (EIP) mechanisms, which voice is a component of, the formal and informal (EIP) systems were being used for varying issues and for different degrees of involvement. The above-mentioned studies (Hespe & Wall, 1976; Marchington & Suter, 2013) make the argument that the formal EIP is needed for informal EIP to operate effectively. In other words, the formal and informal voice operate sequentially or in parallel to each other. This demonstrates that there is a dependence between formal and informal EIP and that, formal structures play a role in eliciting the informal voice (Marchington & Suter, 2013:12).

In the study by Wilkinson *et al.* (2013), it is reported that informal channels were being predominantly used for both matters that had to do with the individual and issues concerning work processes and systems. The issues that were more of a concern to the collective were taken to the next step and formalized (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2013:25). Collectively these studies highlight that both formal and informal voice is often taking place concurrently and studies that view formal voice or informal voice in isolation may not provide a full perspective of how voice channels are being managed and being utilized within organizations (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:390).

From the above discussion, an argument for an integrated approach to employee voice can be made as individual perspectives have weaknesses which can be overcome by adapting and adopting the strengths of other perspectives. This research has cited three such areas where there are opportunities for the OB and HRM/ER perspectives to expand their conceptions and notions on voice. These areas mentioned related to the breath of voice as being an in-role or extra-role behaviour, the relationship between formal and informal voice and the motivation behind employee voice. It is from this background that the definition of employee voice in this research became to be defined as:

Speaking up with ideas, issues, concerns and opinions regarding employer or employee interests, through either formal or informal mechanisms or channels, and where doing so may be considered an in-role or extra-role behaviour (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14).

The integrated approach thus is possibly the best way to have a holistic understanding of employee voice and in this research. The integrated approach makes a compelling case as best placed to view employee voice from both a systems and behavioural perspective in the argument advanced in this research.

2.5 Homogeneity in Employee Voice

The different approaches to employee voice do, however, face one common criticism. This criticism is that employee voice is focused on the idea of the standard employee (Greene, 2015: 2). This standard worker is often a white, heterosexual male. The problem with this is that the workplace is no longer only represented by a white, heterosexual male. The organizations in South Africa have gone through changes which have seen a diverse workforce which is encompassed by different cultures (Greene, 2015: 2). Thus, there is a gap in the literature of employee voice as it assumes that all the employees are similar and that they all have the same motivation to voice or not to voice. This is not accurate as diverse groups may be motivated by different factors to voice out their concerns or contribute to the positive development of the workplace.

Furthermore, individual staff may also have different access to employee voice. The argument advanced is that workers are diverse, and their opportunity or tendency to voice may be shaped by their gender or race. Syed (2014: 34) argues that the prevalent voice arrangements are not adequate to cater for diverse employees. The prevalent voice arrangements that were being referred to are trade unions or employee committees. Bell *et al.* (2011:4), in a study focusing on LGBTQIA persons, found that these people often do not make use of employee voice mechanisms and opportunities in the workplace to protect themselves from mistreatment or because they believe that voicing out is futile (Bell *et al.*, 2011:4). The conclusion that can thus be drawn from this is that diversity is an important consideration and influence in the articulation of voice in the workplace. Some employees are effectively side-lined from being able to articulate voice due to their identity, which in this study will mean race, gender, language, job / occupation or trade union membership.

2.6 Voice and Diversity in the Workplace

Diversity in terms of ethnicity, race and gender is influential in the mix of HRM systems used in organizations. Global demographics are pointing out to a state of affairs where today's workforce is increasingly more diverse than it has ever been (Parsi, 2017:1). It is widely accepted that whilst diversity may be a source of creativity and innovation, it also results in clashes between groups of employees. This is a result of the diverse work-related attitudes, behaviours and needs (Parsi, 2017:1). An example of this was illustrated by how at the University of South Africa (UNISA) employees felt that their workplace was toxic (Dell, 2018: 1). Black staff members reported that they were harassed and excluded from improvement

programmes. Those black employees also complained that black employees who were appointed at lower ranks were discriminated and treated differently from employees that occupied more senior levels and were mostly white (Dell, 2018: 1). On the other hand, white staff members complained that they were bullied, ignored and were often accused of being racist if they commented on their black colleagues' competency. In addition to this, white staff members complained that they were not being promoted or being given other jobs at the institution (Dell, 2018: 1).

Hatipoglu & Inelmen (2018:973) argue that the most common voice systems used are designed for a homogenous workforce that does not take into account individual differences. Given the diverse nature of the workplace today, it is thus reasonable to expect that employees respond differently to the employee voice mechanisms that are presented to them in an organization (Hatipogle & Inelmen, 2018:973).

Morrison (2014:175) says that employees have a choice in whether they make use of employee voice opportunities. Some employees are said to refrain from expressing their ideas and opinions intentionally, whilst others do so. Furthermore, it can be the case that certain groups of employees are muted by others, so their voices are never heard (Hatipogle & Inelmen, 2018:973).

Employee voice opportunities are the mechanisms or the various ways that are available to employees and are meant to address employee dissatisfaction and encourage pro-social behaviour and positive perceptions of justice through formal and informal channels (Hatipogle & Inelmen, 2018:977). These opportunities make use of multiple mechanisms and are said to have the potential to improve employee and organisational performance. However, per the main argument in this research, employee voice is diverse and differs based on an employee's perspective and the voice mechanisms available to employees. In other words, employee voice is likely to be different for high-level employees like professors. Professors may have a particular view of employee voice that is different from low-level employees like caterers and secretaries. Views on employee voice and the strength of employee's voice might also be influenced by their race, gender, language and membership to a trade union. A range of factors goes into determining the relationship between employee diversity and voice. Thus, it is important for research on employee voice to be dynamic in its approach by affirming the relationship between employee diversity and employee voice. It is from this background that this research will seek to answer two key questions:

- What is the relationship between employees and employee voice mechanisms?
- How does employee diversity impact employees' use of voice mechanisms and how does it impact how they articulate their voice?

By combining the elements of ER/HRM with OB, the integrative approach as a concept of voice can be understood from a wider angle that will result in a deeper and more accurate understanding of employee voice (Hatipogle & Inelmen, 2018:977). From this wide-angle, the voice mechanisms available to employees can include a range of practices that foster the mutual sharing of concerns, information and knowledge as well as employee contributions to decision making on workplace issues. Under this broad definition, formalized practices of employee voice can consist of grievance processes, self-managed teams and empowerment. The informal practices could be face-to-face discussions and one-on-one meetings and open-door policies (Hatipogle & Inelmen, 2018:978).

2.7 Employee Voice in South Africa

South Africa's legislation is built around the pluralistic perspective and, as such, the legislation favours collective bargaining and institutionalizing conflict. South Africa has a long history of collective bargaining and mediation going back as far as the late 1920s (Cillie, 2018:1). Despite this history, South Africa shows little success of workplace relations living up to the expectations set by the Labour Relations Act which are "to promote orderly collective bargaining, employee participation in decision making at the workplace and effective resolution of labour disputes" (Cillie, 2018:1).

Cillie (2018:1) and all the ER scholars in South Africa argue that South African labour relations are characterized by high levels of conflict between management and employees. The World Economic Forum ranked South Africa 137th out of 137 countries in the world in terms of employee-employer relations. The sheer number of strikes in South Africa also point to very poor employer-employee relations. *The Times Live*, for example, noted that in 2017 there were 132 work stoppages in South Africa as a result of strike action (The Times Live, 2018:1). Such a number points out that the overall labour relations system is not working optimally for all employees and in the case of the South African higher education sector, the corporatization of universities has contributed to increased tensions between employees and management, as well as amongst the diverse employees in the organisation.

2.7.2 Corporatization in the South African higher education sector

After the end of the apartheid in 1994, there has been a huge demand for access to universities in South Africa as a result of previously-disadvantaged groups being allowed to go to any institution. In 2016, there were 1.2 million students enrolled in higher education institutions. This figure is more than double the figure that was recorded in 1994 when there were 495 356 students enrolled at higher education institutions (DHET, 2018:9). However, the increasing number of students getting access to high education coincided with reductions in government subsidies to higher education. The South African government reduced its contribution to higher education by 9% from the year 2000 (PWC, 2015:1). In the year 2000, the government's contribution to the higher education sector accounted for 49% of higher education institutions and yet by the year 2012, this figure had gone down to 40% (PWC, 2015:1).

This led to universities redesigning their structure, policies and strategies in line with what some authors have described as 'corporate universities'. In essence, this involves a public institution being run more like a private corporation (Dlamini, 2018: 1). The impact of this was that universities all over the country had fee increases and some universities, like the University of Cape Town, turned to the outsourcing of services in order to overcome the problem of financial insecurities (Dlamini, 2018:1).

The effect of corporatization and a drop in the percentage of the government's contribution to the higher education sector has been felt the most by employees in higher education (Dlamini 2018:1). This has been illustrated by the prevalence of confrontations between employees and management of the various universities in the country. An example of this is how, in 2017, the employees at Rhodes University led by the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) embarked on a threeday strike over wages (IOL Business Report, 2015:1). The university management had been resisting the workers' demands for a 7.5% wage increase, insisting that the university was in a tough position due to the reduction of government's contribution to the university budget (IOL Business Report, 2015:1). Against this background, the need for a study of changes in employee voice in the higher education sector is clearly evident.

2.7.3 Diversity in South African higher education

Prior to 1994, the higher education sector of South Africa comprised of 26 public universities, 15 polytechnic institutions, 120 colleges of education, 24 nursing colleges and 11 agricultural colleges which provided different levels of quality education. These higher education

institutions did not have the same access to adequate infrastructure, state investment and funding (Davids, 2016: 2). State investment and funding was mainly directed to the institutions that catered for the white population in South Africa. The move to constitutional democracy in 1994 saw an end of this disjointed system of higher education. The Department of higher education in 1997 embarked on a new system which was aimed at integrating the entire education system into a single national coordinated system that would show diversity in its organizational form and the institutional landscape (Davids, 2016: 2). In addition to this, the Department of Higher education sought to achieve social justice in the higher education sector.

In 2014, the Higher Education South Africa (HESA) acknowledged that the post-apartheid higher educational institutional landscape had not adequately resolved the past inequalities. In particular, these past inequalities related to the educational, material and financial elements of the white-advantaged and the black-disadvantaged institutions (HESA, 2014; 10). Overall, they acknowledged that they had failed in achieving social justice in the higher education sector. In a nod to this failure, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in a green paper in 2012 said that the South African university system is steeped in inequality that is a product of apartheid education policies and the effects of those policies still affect the higher education sector (DHET; 2012: 11). The paper goes on to say that the historically black universities in South Africa continue to face severe financial, human and infrastructure resource constraints (DHET; 2012: 11).

Following the above discussion, diversity has played an important role in the development of the higher education institutional landscape. In particular, the racial aspect of diversity is synonymous with the history of the higher education institutional landscape. This prominent role in the macro institutional landscape thus leads one to ask: to what extent does diversity affect the micro-institutional landscape? This study of employee voice at a higher institution of education in South Africa includes a focus on the possible impact of diversity on employee voice. The addition of diversity as a factor should result in a better and more accurate understanding of employee voice.

Peters (2007: 160) argued that the university sector in South Africa has transformed from a universal-welfare entitlement into a human-capital investment, which has prompted the higher education sector to take up new forms of corporate managerialism that are in line with neoliberal practices and not social equity and social justice. These practices include new forms of delegated authority and more bureaucratic forms of university governance that weaken

employee voice under the guise of reducing the alleged financial risks to universities (Davids, 2016: 4).

The above-mentioned factors of severe financial, human and infrastructure resource constraints have put pressures on university staff and students. Furthermore, they pose a risk to the articulation of employee voice as a move away from the goals of social justice, and social equity may result in the weakening of existing democratic voice mechanisms made available to employees. In the history of South African higher education, black people have often been marginalized in terms of the education they can receive, and the staff positions they occupy. Thus, one can infer that there may be racial tensions at previously white universities as the university workplace becomes racially diverse in terms of staff composition post-Apartheid. These racial tensions may affect how employees voice. Because of this, some scholars make the point that higher education should be viewed as a social institution, and the neoliberal approach of corporatisation should be resisted. This means that the higher Education sector should be viewed in the context of the people that are involved in it, the racial history of South Africa resulted in the exclusion of black people and coloured people from holding senior positions at previously white universities. One can infer that the operation of universities from a corporate perspective affects the employees occupying lower positions, who are mostly black and coloured, these employees suffer the most in terms of having their voice reduced as part of the drive to make universities financially stable. Giroux (2002:425) states that:

corporate culture functions largely to either ignore or cancel out social injustices in the existing social order by overriding the democratic impulses and practices of civil society through an emphasis on the unbridled working of the market relations.

Given that race played a pivotal role in the higher education sector in South Africa, the move for universities to adopt corporate culture practices may have the effect of weakening employees' voice. In particular, low-level employees may be affected the most as universities may prioritize the needs and the voice of key employees like lecturers and professors under the ideals of corporatization. However, this is problematic as the employees that occupy lower positions and higher positions at previously white universities are mostly black (Wild, 2017:2). Corporatization will thus have a direct consequence of affecting employees' voice based on their job/occupation, but the job/occupation of employees at universities still has a racial colour bar with black and coloured employees occupying most of the low-level jobs and white employees occupying the high-level jobs (Wild, 2017:2).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter seeks to explore the current state of research on employee voice. As mentioned above, employee voice has been traditionally looked at from different disciplines, and this has resulted in our understanding of employee voice being limited and be constrained to individual disciplines. This chapter has identified key weakness with each of the traditional perspectives of employee voice, which are the HRM, ER and OB. From these key weaknesses, the calls for an integrated approach to voice have shown to be valid and necessary. The integrative approach's strength is in that it offers a wider and more comprehensive understanding of voice (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388).

Following the logic of the integrated approach, the study of employee voice must consider the macro, meso and micro conditions. In this study, the macro and meso conditions to be looked at are the employee relations framework of South Africa, which is built around a pluralist framework. The dominant mechanism for the articulation of voice is through the use of trade unions in South Africa. However, not all employees are part of trade unions, and membership is voluntary. Thus, despite the macro framework of employee relations in South Africa being designed to promote trade unions, not all workers are part of trade unions. There is diversity in terms of trade union membership, race, language gender and job/occupation and as such, an integrative approach to employee voice offers the best chance of explaining the relationship between diversity and employee voice.

The massification of universities has seen universities across South Africa adopting corporate practices in the management of staff (Dlamini, 2018:55). These corporate practices are a threat to university employees across the country as they can impact employees' ability to voice. Under a corporate model, university administrators make decisions based on economic primacy. This means that university administrators will focus on running the university in the most cost-effective way (Dlamini, 2018:55). The effect of that is to replace human initiative with measurable processes in which tasks are reduced to limited tasks in which the individual has little or no control. In this manner, employees at universities may find themselves not being able to influence any kind of changes to their work because their tasks are broken down into finite parts (Dlamini, 2018:55). Employees will also most likely be cut off from the decision making in the organization as the corporate model takes a top-down approach in decision making (Dlamini, 2018:55). In this regard, the management of a university will inform employees of the changes that will be taking place without much consideration of the employee's perspective (Dlamini, 2018:55). These decisions will be aimed at cutting costs and

improving efficiency, but by so doing, there is reduced shared governance by all the employees in the organization, and subsequently, there will be weakened employee voice.

A good example of the effect of a corporate model on employee voice can be seen in how most universities in South Africa are outsourcing their cleaning, gardening, and security and catering services (Fengu, 2019:1). By outsourcing services, universities are able to cut costs, this was illustrated by a report from the University of Cape Town for 2014 which stated that The University saved up to R60 million by outsourcing some of its services (UCT News,2015:1). However, often the downside of outsourcing is that the workers from an outsourced company are in some instances not able to voice to the Universities that they will be rendering their services to as they will not be an employee of that University but rather an employee of the outsourcing company. The effect is that outsourced workers are often not entitled to the same rights as workers directly hired by the university and their voice is often ignored or has little influence (Blackall & Busby, 2019:2).

In addition to the effect of corporatisation, South Africa's racial past has long dominated employee relations in the country. As mentioned earlier, the state neglected black employees and prioritized white employees. This neglect can also be seen in how historically-black higher education institutions received less funding and support than historically-white higher education institutions. Furthermore, black employees were viewed as inferior, and management positions were often reserved for white employees. It then follows that the move towards democracy post-1994 saw the integration of diverse racial group in all levels of an organization. However, this diversity may cause tensions in organizations and possibly influence how employee voice, this was the case at UNISA where black employees felt they were treated differently to white employees and white employees felt that they would be branded as racist for critiquing the competencies of black employees (Dell ,2018: 1). Thus, it can be inferred that black employees and white employees at UNISA viewed voice differently and part of their view of voice was influenced by their race.

The literature on employee voice supports the idea that recognizes that not all employees are the same. As such, some employees are presented with more voice opportunities than others. Thus, this chapter sought to give the context to the argument that employee voice is diverse, and it differs based on an employee's perspective and the voice mechanisms available to an employee

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research aimed at understanding and analysing employee voice at Rhodes University. In order to achieve this, the research focused on two key questions. The first being, how employee diversity affects views on voice and the second being how employee diversity influences how employees use voice mechanisms and how they articulate their voice.

In order to facilitate this, interviews were conducted which aimed at analysing the mechanisms which are available to employees for them to articulate their voice. Furthermore, the interviews looked at diversity in terms of race, language, gender, job/occupation and trade union membership as possible influences on employee voice. Since the research was aimed at understanding and analysing employee voice, it relied on the use of quantitative research methods. This section of the research thus explains and justifies the use of the research methods that were used to achieve the research goals. This section thus outlines the data collection methods, the rationale behind the sampling population and the consideration of the ethics.

3.2 Methodology

As mentioned above, the research will make use of a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is an appropriate methodology as it is “a process that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting” (Miles, 1984:25).

3.3 Methods and techniques

The research method that was used was an interview. An Interview is “a discussion with someone in which you try to get information from them. That information may be facts, opinions or attitudes or a combination of these” (Thomas, 2013:194). In this research, the type of interview that was utilized was an in-depth interview.

In-depth interviews are a “qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program, or situation” (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). In-depth interviews are useful when detailed information about a person’s thoughts and behaviours are to be explored in

depth. In this research, In-depth interviews were used to understand the contours of employee voice and the possible diverse influences of voice which were understood to be race, language, job/occupation, gender and trade union membership.

The primary advantage of in-depth interviews is that “they provide lots of detailed information” (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3). They also provide a more relaxed atmosphere in which to collect information. In-depth interviews also provide the advantage that it allows the researcher to get clear responses by adding follow up questions in situations where the response that is given by employees is not so clear (Boyce & Neale, 2006:3).

Interviews are structured differently; some interviews are fixed, whilst others are free and openended. This research will make use of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are open and less structured. In this format, the interviewer asked the participants, all the questions, however, the order and the wording of the questions differed considerably. The use of this method was beneficial because of its ability to create a conversational environment and openness. The open environment was beneficial as it helped participants to raise issues and views that the researcher was not aware of.

3.4 Research Instrument

A research instrument is a general term that researchers use for a measurement device, for example, a survey, test or a questionnaire. Instruments fall into two broad categories, “researcher-completed and subject-completed, distinguished by those instruments that researchers administer versus those that are completed by participants” (Thomas, 2013:195). Researchers chose which type of instrument, or instruments, to use based on the research question.

This research made use of an interview schedule/ guide or guideline. The interview schedule is a list of topics and sub-topics which are going to be discussed. These issues do not have to be in the form of questions; rather, they act as an aide for the important points for discussion (Thomas, 2013:198). These issues lead to possible questions which in turn lead to follow up questions (Thomas, 2013:198).

3.5 Sampling

Qualitative analyses typically require a smaller sample size for the quantitative analyses. Qualitative sample sizes should be large enough to obtain feedback for most or all perceptions and attitudes (Kumar, 2011:208). There are two types of sampling designs (Kumar, 2011:208).

The two sampling designs are random/probability sampling and non-random/ nonprobability sampling. This research was based on a non-random / non- probability sampling design. The sampling method that was used was a stratified sampling method. Stratified sampling refers to when the population is stratified into groups called strata, and then sampling is performed within each stratum” (Miles, 1984:84). The proposed research will stratify the sample into two groups, academic employees and non-academic employees. Inside each group, there were employees of different job/occupation, race gender, and trade union membership. The stratified sampling method was favourable due to the nature of the research, which recognised the diversity of employees, and as such, the stratified sample method was compatible with the nature of the research.

The sample frame was all the academic and non-academic employees at Rhodes University that are male, female, unionized and non-unionized. The unit of analysis is the major entity that is being analysed in a study (Kumar, 2011:62). The analysis unit were the employees that responded to the guide/schedule. These were selected according to their gender, race, language, position and their involvement or non-involvement with a union organisation.

Pseudonyms were used in this research to protect the identities of the employees that participated in the research. Table 1.0 and 2.0 give information about the above-mentioned participants in this study.

Table 1: Academic employees

Name	Gender	Position	Race	Union Membership	Date of Interview
Dumisani	Male	Junior lecturer	Black	NTEU	16/09/2019
Debra	Female	Senior lecturer	White	None	17/09/2019
Zeus	Male	Senior professor	White	NTEU	18/09/2019
Nolwabo	Female	Lecturer	Black	NTEU	19/09/2019

Table 2: Non-Academic employees

Name	Gender	Position	Race	Union Membership	Date of Interview
Thabo	Male	Student affairs officer	Black	None	17/09/2019
Rachel	Female	Hall administrator	Coloured	NEHAWU	18/09/2019
Anele	Female	Housekeeper	Black	NEHAWU	16/09/2019
Zintle	Female	Secretary	Black	NEHAWU	18/09/2019
Beaulynn	Female	Department administrator	Coloured	None	18/09/2019
Mokati	Male	Cook	Black	NEHAWU	19/09/2019
Sindi	Female	Head caterer	Black	NEHAWU	23/09/2019
Ntebo	Female	Cook	Black	NEHAWU	23/09/2019

3.6 Ethics

The relationship and intimacy that is established between the researchers and participants in qualitative studies can raise a range of different ethical concerns. Some of these concerns are “respect for privacy, the establishment of honest and open interactions, and avoiding misrepresentations. This research made use of informed consent” (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012:5). The principle of informed consent stresses the researcher’s responsibility to completely inform participants of different aspects of the research in a manner and language that they will completely comprehend (Aluwihare-Samaranayake, 2012:5). The research will also respect the anonymity of participants if they chose to be anonymous contributors.

3.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the qualitative research method of in-depth interviews is favourable in this interview as it offers the best chance to understand employee voice at Rhodes University. The in-depth interviews and a stratified sample helped greatly in providing a broad and in-depth understanding of employee voice at Rhodes University.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPLOYEES' VOICE AT RHODES UNIVERSITY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the employee voice mechanisms present at Rhodes University. The examination of these voice mechanisms is important as they play a vital role in aiding employee voice. As discussed earlier, employees are different, and because of their differences, employees interact differently to the voice mechanisms present at Rhodes University. The presence of voice mechanisms at an organization does not directly correlate to equal access or equal use by employees. This chapter will highlight how employees voice, why they voice, analyse the voice mechanisms available to employees and analyse how employees interact with these voice mechanisms. This chapter is important because it provides a deep understanding of employee voice by looking at the mechanisms present, how they work and the employee's relationship with these voice mechanisms.

4.2 How Employees Voice

The research sought, amongst other things, to find out how and why employees voice at Rhodes University. Across the board, employees recognize three main ways of voicing out. These mechanisms include speaking to your supervisor/Head of Department, going to the Human Resources Department and approaching the trade unions. There is recognition of the University hierarchy and employees generally do emphasise that the first mechanism which they will employ in the general sense is their direct supervisor /Head of Department. However, an exception to this behaviour applies to employees who hold prestigious and powerful positions such as professors. These employees have more access compared to other employees in the sense that if they are not happy about something, they can choose to simply approach the key decision-makers in the University with their issue rather than take the route of approaching the Head of Department. This sentiment was echoed by Zeus, who stated that:

People that are at a professorial level like me have got much more access to more informal mechanisms. If I have got a big issue because I am a full professor, I can go and speak to quite senior people in management and say can we fix this out. So that's part of it, whereas a secretary or an administrator has a lower grade, they are much more

limited to their supervisor or trade union. So, there's space for an individual resolution at my position (Zeus, 18/09/2019).

This is in contrast to other employees like Rachel, an administrator in the university residence system. Rachel mentioned that “my first port of call on any issue is my line manager” (Rachel, 18/09/2019). This is a fundamental difference in terms of how employees voice as there are varying levels of access to voice mechanism. Employees like Rachel thus feel that there is a clear hierarchy and their first stop should be their supervisor/Head of Department and then after that initial attempt, then and only then can they make use of other voice mechanisms (Rachel, 18/09/2019). The reason for this behaviour was explained by some employees who suggested that they generally do not go over their supervisor/line manager/Head of Department because they do not want their supervisor/line manager/Head of Department to think that they do not recognise their authority (Anele, 04/08/2019).

From the above discussion, the differences in access to voice mechanisms between high-level employees and low-level employees confirm that employees are not similar. The data suggests that employee positions on the organizational structure play a role in determining which voice mechanisms employees have access to and are most likely to use. This point confirms the weakness of voice studies which assume that all employees are the same (Greene, 2015: 2) and validates the discussion in Section 2.5, which makes the point that individual staff members may have different access to employee voice. The findings of this section do point out that at Rhodes University voice mechanisms such as trade unions, Human Resources Management and supervisors/ Heads of Department are the main ways that employees use to voice. However, access to these mechanisms is not uniform for all employee. In particular, employees occupying high positions like Professors, tend to have more access to key decision-makers of the University, such as the Vice-Chancellor and the Human Resources Management (Zeus, 18/09/2019).

4.3 Why Employees Voice

In terms of the reason why employees voice, this study found that the majority of employees voice out as a result of either individual interests, ethical-professional reasons or considerations of student interests. An example of this can be shown in how Thabo stated that he voiced out when he noticed that there “were colleagues that were misappropriating funds” in his department (Thabo, 17/09/2019). He mentions that the misappropriation of funds did not seat well with him ethically, and because of that, he voiced out the issue to his line manager (Thabo,

17/09/2019). In another example that can demonstrate the reasons why employees voice out, Sindi mentioned that she made a suggestion to her line manager regarding the meals that students were going to eat because she felt that the current meals that students were having “were not good enough” (Sindi, 23/09/2019). Her motivation for voicing out was her concern for the welfare of students. Some of the employees also mentioned that:

I made a suggestion to the course-coordinator about the course weighting because I saw that some of the students had failed horribly in one of the assignments and I sympathised with them (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019).

We are not happy with the salary we are receiving. Most of us are struggling, and that’s why we go to the unions (Mokati, 19/09/2019).

From the above mentioned, one can conclude that the differences in the motivation behind employee voices illustrate that employees are different. Because of these differences, what triggers employees to voice is not the same for all employees. Some employees are more likely to voice out because of financial need, while others voice out due to their compassion for their students.

The relevance of these findings to the body of literature on employee voice is that the data shows that employee voice is diverse (as discussed in Section 2.4). In this regard, the nature of voice can be to the benefit of the organisation or the employee, and it can be justice-oriented or an in-role or extra-role behaviour (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14). Employees like Mokati were motivated to voice out of concern for their own interests, they were not happy with the remuneration they were receiving, and they thus voiced out to trade unions. This is an example of dissatisfaction influencing employees to voice out their interests (Mokati, 19/09/2019). The example of Nolwabo voicing out due to her compassion for students can be taken to be an example of an in-role behaviour that is pro-social because it benefits the pass rates of the organisation (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019). However, having compassion for students can also be interpreted to be extra-role behaviour that is aimed at benefiting the students more than the organisation. From this perspective, Employees do not solely voice out to the benefit of the organisation as purported by the HRM perspective nor do they solely voice out because their interests are the same as the organisation as argued by the OB perspective (Barry *et al.*, 2018:9).

Employees are different, and as illustrated by the findings of this research, some employees voiced out due to their concern about the student’s well-being. Such actions can be interpreted to benefit Rhodes University’s interests, and as such, the motive for voicing out can be

understood in terms of the OB perspective. As mentioned above, Thabo voiced out when he saw funds being misappropriated (Thabo, 17/09/2019). This voicing can be understood in terms of justice-oriented voice where the employee's voice is an expression of wrongdoings and not necessarily self-interest. This is yet, another variation in the motive behind employee voice and further highlights that employees are different.

The various motives for voicing established in this study make a compelling case for scholars to view voice in a broad sense. The disciplines of ER, HRM and OB understanding of the reasons why employees voice are inadequate and narrow as shown by the findings of this study (Barry *et al.*, 2018:15). The reasons why employees voice are broad and an integrative approach to voice that borrows from the individual disciplines of voice offers a better understanding of why employee voice (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14). From this study, one can effectively make the case that the differences in the motives behind employees voicing out are evidence that employees are different. As such, employees motive for voicing span from dissatisfaction, the interest of the organisation or the need to do the right thing as captured by an integrated approach to employee voice (Mowbray *et al.*, 2018:14).

4.4 Voice mechanisms at Rhodes University

As mentioned before, the South African Industrial relations system is built around a pluralistic concept that favours institutionalizing conflict (Cillie, 2018:1). With that in mind, organizations like Rhodes University have sought to address conflict by having mechanisms that deal with issues that may cause conflict between employees and management or conflict amongst employees. These issues range from wages, time off, work hours, duties and responsibility, harassment, health, safety, discrimination amongst others.

It was, however, noted that despite the presence of voice mechanisms dealing with the vast issues that may result in conflict in the organization. Employees do not necessarily raise all their issues the same, as access to these mechanisms varies for different employees and the relationships that employees have with these voice mechanisms also vary. Because of this, it was observed that employees make use of some voice mechanisms more than others when different mechanisms cover the same issues. The most frequently voice mechanisms utilised being either the trade unions or the direct line manager. All the employees that participated in the interviews mentioned that with most issues, they go to either their line manager or the trade unions (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). The frequent use of these mechanisms may be attributed to the powerful presence of trade unions at Rhodes University, and the overall labour relations of

South Africa built around pluralist principles and the realization that conflict is present in organizations and as such, line managers/supervisors or heads of departments act as a voice mechanism for employees. However, it is noted in the interviews that, the voice mechanisms do not behave the same; some are more effective than others (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019).

4.4.2 Line managers/supervisors/heads of departments

From the interviews, what was learnt from the employees is that the Head of Department or line managers/ supervisor as a voice mechanism deal with the day to day issues that employees in that department experience. These issues can relate to how a task should be done, personal issues that may be affecting the employee, suggestions, grievances and concerns. Generally, line managers or Heads of Departments handle or deal with any all issues that concern the employees that are their direct subordinates (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019). However, the University constitution sets the parameters and to which the line managers operate in. Effectively, this means that in as much as line managers are tasked with handling all issues relating to employees, they must do this in relation to their rank. The University confers powers according to its hierarchy. As such, employees raise issues with their line managers, however, these line managers will, in turn, go to their superior with an issue if they are not empowered to resolve it as per their job description (Zeus, 18/09/2019).

Mokati, an employee who works as a cook in one of the dining halls on campus says that he consults his line manager, the head caterer, whenever he does not understand the task that he is supposed to do (Mokati, 19/09/2019). Mokati gives an example of a time he clarified if he was on duty to clear the tables or he had to help the other kitchen staff members with preparing meals for the students in their dining hall (Mokati, 19/09/2019). With this particular issue, it was specific to the department and within the ambit of the line manager who is supposed to supervise employees so that the operations of the dining hall run efficiently. This was similar to Rachel, who mentions that her line manager, who is the hall warden was very understanding when she had personal issues which she was dealing with (Rachel, 18/09/2019). Rachel mentioned that “I had to go for counselling and was also hospitalized on numerous occasions” (Rachel, 18/09/2019). She mentioned that because the Warden was aware of her personal issues, He was lenient with her workload and relaxed her deadlines, duties and work hours (Rachel, 18/09/2019).

The severity of the issue determines whether line managers can deal with an issue. Anele mentions that she and her colleagues that are cleaning staff members have been informing their line manager about how they are unhappy about the remuneration they get for work they do during holidays and festivals such as national arts festival (Anele,16/09/2019). She emphasised that they have been complaining for years to their supervisor; however, the supervisor says, “I will take the issue up with the manager” (Anele, 16/09/2019). According to her, the supervisor takes the issue up with the manager and the manager, in turn, informs the supervisor that they will take the issue up with Human Resources, however, year after year, they never get back feedback on this issue, they are simply told the issue is being taken up to top management (Anele,16/09/2019). This is a clear example of the hierarchy that exists within the university and how power dynamics govern the issues that can be decided by line managers. In this example, allowances fall above the jurisdiction of the supervisors and line managers in the residential operations department. Thus, line managers and supervisors are eligible to hear all issues that concern employees; however, the authority to come up with resolutions is strictly guided and guaranteed by the University’s Constitution.

4.4.2.2 Effectiveness of Line Managers/Supervisors/ Heads of Departments

As mentioned earlier, employees are not the same, and as such, line managers/supervisors/ Heads of Departments do not behave the same, as a voice mechanism. It is thus reasonable to infer that their individual traits play a role in the effectiveness of them being voice mechanism to employees. From the interviews, it was observed that the relationship between the Line manager and the employees plays a role in the effectiveness of the line manager as a voice mechanism. Some employees indicate that their line Manager/supervisor is not reactive to issues, nor are they effective. Thabo mentioned:

In the past, I would not have said anything to my line manager after she had ignored two of my complaints that I had made against a colleague underperforming. She just told me that it’s the end of the year and there is no point in dealing with the issue. From there on, I just did not raise a lot of issues at all, but these days she does try to follow up and I now more issues with her, our work relationship is better now (Thabo, 17/09/2019).

From Thabo’s experience, the line manager’s actions made Thabo not trust the line manager’s effectiveness, and he subsequently decided to not voice out on all issues. When the line manager followed up on issues, this reassured Thabo, and he felt comfortable in raising issues

with his line Manager again. Most employees in this study, however, expressed a different view from Thabo in that, they never had problems with their line managers and viewed their line managers as efficient. Some of the responses were:

I have a great relationship with my supervisor; he always follows up on issues and gives me feedback. Where he can resolve something, he will. Where he cannot, he will let me know and explain why he cannot remedy. He fought for me to get a better grade when I went up to him and complained that other hall administrators had a higher grade me. He fixed it, and he is efficient (Rachel, 18/09/2019).

My line manager is efficient in the sense that, he listens to subordinates and he genuinely welcomes everyone to speak to him if they have concerns and issues...he did get Human Resources to pay for a course that would help me perform my job easier at a time the University was not really prioritizing expenditure (Zintle, 18/09/2019).

I would say, my Head of Department is very efficient, in this department we never had second-year tutors, but after my colleagues and I raised that we want the department to have tutors for second-year students, he made it happen (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019).

From the above responses, one can see that line managers as a voice mechanism are very efficient. However, it can also be noted that the relationship that employees have with their Line Managers can affect the functioning of this voice mechanism. The position of line manager/ supervisor / Head of Department is a voice mechanism; however, the holder of that position is human, and because of that, the functioning and effectiveness of that mechanism are malleable to the behaviour of the holder of that voice mechanism.

4.4.3 Trade unions

From the interviews conducted, trade unions are, for the most part, understood by employees as a protective mechanism. The trade union is seen as an “institution that guarantees and enforces employee rights” (Zeus, 18/09/2019). As such, employees identify issues such as unfair dismissals, unfair treatment, wage increases and job conditions to be within the ambit of trade unions (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). Employees believe they can approach the trade unions with any issue that their line manager/supervisor or Head of Department fail to deal with adequately or to the employees’ satisfaction (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). Trade unions thus are

usually second-choice voice mechanisms that employees make use after going through the line manager/supervisor/head of department (Dumisani, 16/09/2019).

It was noted, however, in this study, that non-academic employees make use of trade unions more than academic staff. Nolwabo pointed this by saying that academics are generally respected at this institution and as a result, “the Human Resources Department and other voice mechanisms take special note of academic staff concerns and opinions and see to it that they resolve these issues without involving trade unions” (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019). This detachment by academic staff can be supported by how most of the academic staff employees were not aware of the current trade union activities. Most academics highlighted that they rarely had an issue which they took up with the trade unions (Debra, 17/09/2019).

Mokati, a cook, mentioned that “many of the trade unions activities these days revolve around getting a wage increase and fighting for allowances such as transport allowance” that would cushion employees against the harsh economic conditions (Mokati,19/09/2019). He contends that he and other support staff members feel that Rhodes University underpays them because they are not valued by the University and support staff can easily be replaced considering the unemployment in Grahamstown. Thus, he and his colleagues approach trade unions with the issue of wage increases and allowances (Mokati, 19/09/2019).

The issue of unfair dismissals and unfair treatment is an issue which is very crucial to employees. Employees revealed that they turn to trade unions for protection against unfair practices or unfair rulings. A common reason that was raised by the employees for being part of a trade union was the need to have protection at the workplace (Ntebo, 23/09/2019). Trade unions are there to protect employee interests. As such, employees constantly approach trade unions with incidents of mistreatment and unfair practices. Thabo mentions that he is part of a trade union because, “should anything unfair happen to me, like a false accusation or an unfair dismissal, I would go to the trade union” (Thabo, 17/09/2019). Thabo believes they can best represent him legally and provide him with protection from such treatment. Thabo and most of the employees believe they would be able to challenge any unfair dismissal or unfair treatment with the support of a trade union (Thabo, 17/09/2019). Academic staff members that participated in this study recognized this benefit, and it formed a core reason for their membership with a trade union.

In another example of the protective role that trade unions play, Zeus mentions that the trade unions at Rhodes Unions, that is NEHAWU and NTEU had challenged Rhodes University at

the CCMA on numerous occasions when the University management sought to erode employee rights (Zeus, 18/09/2019). In one incident, the trade unions, successfully took Rhodes University to the CCMA after “The Human Resources Director of the University had deemed a strike by employees as illegal” (Zeus, 18/09/2019). The decision by the Human Resources Director had been unfair and wrong, and thus the Trade Unions stepped in to protect the employee’s right to strike.

Trade unions also deal with issues that relate to employee welfare. The trade unions at Rhodes University have fought for black employees at Rhodes University to be upskilled and to be offered opportunities to advance in their careers. Sindi who works as the head caterer in one of the dining halls at Rhodes University, mentions that she and others in her position have been bringing up the issue of promotions and upskilling opportunities to NEHAWU because they feel that they are “stuck in their position, and they do not have prospects to advance” (Sindi, 23/09/2019). She mentioned that, whenever they raise such issues with their supervisor, these issues are never attended to by higher management despite their supervisor raising it up with them (Sindi, 23/09/2019).

A possible reason for the prioritization of academic staff over non-academic staff may be attributed to the corporatization of the higher education sector, as discussed in section 2.7. The high use of trade unions by non-academic employees is perhaps indicative of the effects of corporatisation that non-academic employees are experiencing. As argued previously, corporatisation has the effect of weakening the voice of low-level employees (Wild, 2017:2). In this study, the non-academic employees at Rhodes University are suffering as a result of management being driven by economic interests and the need to be cost-effective (Dlamini, 2018:55). As a result, the concerns of non-academic employees like promotions and upskilling opportunities are not prioritised and are often ignored by higher management, as mentioned by some of the employees (Sindi, 23/09/2019).

The high use of trade unions by non-academic employees is also indicative of the difference between academic and non-academic employees. It can be inferred that non-academic employees make use of trade unions more often because of how corporatisation has sought to weaken their voice (Dlamini, 2018:55). Trade unions are powerful in that they collectivise and unify employee voice and unite their concerns. This is an important resource for employees in light of corporate practices, where university administrators often make decisions in a topdown manner and will overlook the concerns of non-academic employees like transport allowance

and low wages (Mokati, 19/09/2019). Whereas academic employees on the hand may not frequent trade unions as much as non-academic employees due to the University being sensitive to the needs and concerns of academic employees (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019). The prioritisation of academic employees can be considered to be in line with corporate practices.

Academic employees perform a direct and fundamental role in the functioning of the University's mandate, and as such, it would make sense for the University administrators to underpay and ignore non-academic employee concerns and focus on academic employees concerns as a cost-effective method (Dlamini, 2018:55). In this manner, a clear picture can be seen in how employees are not the same and the strength of employee voice is not the same. Some employees' voice is prioritised over the other and corporatisation plays a part in that.

4.4.3.2 Effectiveness of Trade Unions

As mentioned earlier, trade unions are one of the most used voice mechanisms at Rhodes University. However, they are mostly being used for wage-related issues. Employees generally prefer to raise wage issues with trade unions and not their line managers /supervisors /Head of Departments. Most of the employees mentioned:

With wage issues, it's better to approach trade unions as they have the power to push management for better wages (Anele, 16/09/2019).

The trade unions have been very effective in getting Rhodes University to negotiate wages for the workers and defending employee rights. Rhodes University recently lost about 10 cases at the CCMA against the trade unions on a variety of issues ... However, they have been unable to engage on other issues other than wage increases. There hasn't been much success on the end of outsourcing, universal insurance and others (Zeus, 18/09/2019).

From the above, it can be noted that trade unions are generally effective in raising employee issues. They have been successful in negotiating a wage increment for employees. Some employees noted that despite the wage increases, they expected more from them, but they generally acknowledge that the trade unions are effective in raising demands. In terms of protection, all the employees that participated in the study alluded to that, they feel protected by the trade unions from unfair treatment, and their rights are guaranteed. An example of this was mentioned by one of the participants, "the trade union successfully challenged Rhodes

University when they deemed one of the strikes by the trade unions as illegal” (Zeus, 18/09/2019).

From the aforementioned, it can be noted that trade unions are generally effective in voicing employee interests. However, their effectiveness is often impeded by universities resorting to corporate practices, and decisions are driven largely by ‘economic fundamentals’. In this sense, trade unions often face strong resistance from university management when they are trying to represent the interests of the employees. Universities do not want to pay employees large wages, and they are reluctant to improve employee job conditions because of the need to be cost-effective (Dlamini, 2018:55).

A point of interest to note about the effectiveness of the trade unions is that, despite its effectiveness, “academics do not really go to trade unions” (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). Trade unions at Rhodes University appear to be more popular and heavily utilised by non-academic employees and less so by academic employees. In addition to the prioritization of academic employees over non-academic employees by management as discussed previously, this study speculates that another reason for academics not making use of trade unions might be an issue of solidarity. An employee pointed out that:

Most of the non-academic employees are black and coloured, whilst academic staff members are more mixed, black, white, coloured, European, etc.... (Dumisani, 16/09/2019).

Non-academic employees arguably have more solidarity with each other because a huge majority of these employees are black, and often there is a lot of shared experiences and culture. In this sense, the existence of a common identity amongst non-academic employees may have perhaps forged a strong solidarity bond. This strong solidarity bond might influence non-academic employees to value the trade union as a voice mechanism more than their academic employee counterparts due to its ability to unite their common interests that may furthermore be highlighted by a similar lived experience. Academic employees on the hand can be said to have a weaker solidarity bond due to their multi-racial and cultural membership, which may then translate to very different lived experiences and a difference in priorities and concerns by employees in this group. As such, their utilisation of trade unions may be influenced by this lack of solidarity despite the voice mechanism’s effectiveness. Thus, from this narrative, the impact of employee diversity can be viewed in relation to the utilisation of employee voice

mechanisms. In this discussion, it was observed that non-academic employees are more likely to use Trade unions than non-academic employees.

4.4.4 Human Resources Management

The Human Resources Management of the University is tasked with overseeing all workplace issues (Zeus, 18/09/2019). Management represents the interests and goals of the organisation and strives to ensure that the goals of the organization are met. Human Resources Management effectively oversees all the operations of the University (Zeus, 18/09/2019). An example of this is the hiring of employees, their dismissals, responsibilities and their remuneration. The consensus amongst employees with regards to Human Resources Management as a voice mechanism was that management was slow to react or very passive when it involves voicing issues regarding money. This was eloquently put:

They do not like to pay us if there is an issue that requires money, they are hardly interested unless you force them, however with some non-monetary issues like unfair treatment or harassment they are a bit responsive (Zintle,18/09/2019).

It was, however, noted that support staff and non-academic staff use of the Human Resources Management Department as a voice mechanism was often indirect. Some employees mentioned:

If I am not happy with my boss about something that he is doing, I go to the Trade Unions, and they bring my boss and his boss, and we discuss the issue (Sindi,23/09/2019).

You can go to the Human Resources Department if you have an issue that your supervisor cannot deal with, but most of us are part of Trade Unions, and we just go to them, and they will take care of the issue with management (Ntebo, 23/09/2019).

This was in stark contrast to academic employees who stated that:

if you have an issue, you can either go to your Head of Department and if you are not happy, The Human Resources Department is there if you know your rights...but the trade unions are also there (Dumisani, 16/09/2019).

If I have got a big issue because I am a full professor, I can go and speak to quite senior people and say can we fix this? ... It's different for a secretary or an administrator who have different grades, and they are much more limited (Zeus, 18/09/2019).

From the above mentioned, one can make the argument that the Human Resources Management Department as a voice mechanism is generally more accessible for senior employees (Zeus, 18/09/2019). In this study, those senior employees are mostly academic staff members. Other employees that occupy non-academic staff status might feel inferior and low on the organisational chart, and as a result, they do not directly approach the Human Resources Department. Instead, non-academic employees make use of Trade Unions more to voice for them (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019). Another possible interpretation for this might be that non-academic staff members may not be as well informed on their rights as their academic staff counterparts and as such, with the knowledge that academic staff members have, they will feel confident to approach the Human Resources Department with their issues (Dumisani, 16/09/2019).

The attitudes of the Human Resources Department with regards to issues involving money can possibly be explained by the wider funding issues constraining the higher education sector (Dlamini, 2018:1). The South African government has been pushing universities to admit more students and yet there has been a reduction in the overall funding being given to universities by the government (Pwc, 2015:1). This has probably influenced Human Resources Departments to be more economical with their resources and be reluctant to engage employees on issues that may require additional funding or upset their tightly managed budgets (Dlamini, 2018: 1). This form of governance is in line with corporate attitudes where financial considerations take centre stage, and the Human Resources Department is focused on minimizing labour costs whilst attempting to increase productivity (Goodman, 1984:82). Thus, it then follows that nonmonetary issues are given priority over the monetary issues.

The University's Constitution also empowers several bodies within the University to deal with specific issues. These bodies are under the broader umbrella of the Human Resources Department and they tackle specific issues in the workplace (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). These issues can range from, sexual harassment, gender, equity and institutional culture and safety and health; however, these bodies report to the Human Resources Department (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). The bodies identified in this study are the Sexual harassment office and the Equity and Institutional Culture office. These bodies serve to add to the number of ways that employees can voice on specific issues at Rhodes University.

4.4.4.2 Sexual harassment office

The sexual harassment officer deals with all issues of sexual harassment at the University. This means that a line manager can hear a complaint from an employee about sexual harassment that may be happening in the department (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). This might on the face of it be an issue concerning two employees in the same department and as such, an issue that the supervisor/line manager/ Head of Department is meant to deal with, however, this not the case. In an instance of sexual harassment, the supervisor/line manager/ Head of Department does not have the authority to resolve this issue. Rather, the issue must be taken to the sexual harassment officer who in turn will then lead the proceedings that will result in a resolution (Dumisani, 16/09/2019).

4.4.4.3 Equity and institutional culture office

The Equity and Institutional Culture Office's main objective is to drive the transformation of the institution towards being an institution whose staff and students' practices are demonstrably informed by a deep appreciation of equality, equity and human rights. The office operates in liaison with various offices and divisions of the University including the faculty Deans, Heads of Departments, The Registrar's Division, The Research Office, The Human Resources Division, the Student Representative Council and the Student Affairs Directorate (Zeus, 18/09/2019).

These bodies, however, are not held in high esteem by all employees as voice mechanism. Some employees mentioned:

Realistically, you can either go to the trade unions or your line manager if the issue does not get resolved there aren't a lot of other avenues ... Those other offices work, I think, but I don't think they are as powerful as a Head of Department or going to a trade union (Thabo, 17/09/2019).

This is in contrast to employees like Debra, who mentioned that:

The University has several channels in which a person can express their views and concerns. It is a very democratic space, and you can approach your Head of Department, Human Resources Department, trade unions, or if it is something to do with Harassment, there is a harassment officer. There have been calls to change the institutional culture here; for that, there is the Equity and Institutional Culture office (Debra, 17/09/2019).

From the above mentioned, it can be noted that employee views on the bodies that serve to supplement voice are not uniform. A possible reason for this may be attributed to how informed employees are (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). It can be inferred that the higher up employees are on the University's hierarchy, the more informed will they be on the overall functioning of the University and its bodies. It thus follows that academic employees are more likely to have confidence in the University structures like the Equity and Institutional culture and the Sexual Harassment office. Accordingly, employee's perceptions of these bodies influence how often they make use of them. With the majority of employees occupying lower grades, these bodies are not utilized on the same proportions as trade unions and line managers/supervisors/ Head of Departments.

Consequently, this study makes the argument that employee voice and the voice mechanisms available to employees in the workplace are subject to employee's diversity. Employees are different, and this study suggests that academic employees may be more knowledgeable on their rights than non-academic employees, and because of that, academic employees make use of the Human Resources Department more than non-academic employees (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). In addition to this, academic employees enjoyed more access to the Human Resources Department due to their seniority on the organisations hierarchy, and as such, their relationship with voice mechanisms differed to that of non-academic employees and thus emphasised the argument that employees are not homogeneous as alluded to in section 2.5 (Greene, 2015: 2).

4.4.4.4 Effectiveness of Human Resources Management

In terms of the effectiveness of Human Resources Management, most of the employees expressed mixed emotions in terms of the effectiveness of Human Resources Management. The general sentiment was that Human Resources Management gets some things done, whilst also failing to do others. The voice mechanism's effectiveness does get impacted by financial constraints. Most of the employee did allude to this by insisting that:

Management is only efficient on some issues, but for the most part, they do not like changes. They have been resisting to give us an allowance boost for transportation (Ntebo, 23/09/2019).

We are not happy with the wage increase, they only gave us 6 %, it's something, but we would have wanted more (Mokati, 19/09/2019).

As mentioned earlier, the higher education sector has been facing challenges in terms of funding after the South African Government reduced its subsidies to Universities (Dlamini, 2018: 1). This has most likely constrained management ability to satisfy employee needs, whilst also satisfying its production and service needs. The implication of this has been that; the Rhodes Human Resources Management has adopted a system of corporate governance that emphasises short term results and encourages a view of labour as a cost to be managed and minimized (Dlamini, 2018: 1). With this in mind, it is understandable why employees have mixed emotions with regards to the effectiveness of Human Resources Management.

However, it is worth noting that, despite Rhodes University facing financial problems, Human Resources Management appears to favour academic employees. Zeus mentioned that “Human Resources Management attempted to give academic employees only a wage increase” (Zeus, 18/09/2019). From this treatment, an argument can be made for how employees are treated differently. By attempting to give a wage increase for a group of employees in an organization, this confirms how not all employees are viewed the same. Some employees are valued more than others, and, in this context, academic employees are prioritized over non-academic employees. It can be inferred from this, that the effectiveness of Human Resources Management as a voice mechanism might also be determined by whether an employee is an academic employee or non-academic employee.

4.5 Formal and Informal Voice

In this study, it was observed that employees make use of both formal and informal voice. Employees make use of both formal and informal voice mechanisms, depending on various factors that can include the sensitivity of the issue and nature of the relationship between the employees involved.

I make use of both formal and informal channels. Sometimes I email him using the University email address, and sometimes I speak to him in person if he is available or I send him a WhatsApp text. When I want to leave work early, I can WhatsApp him, and when I need official time off, I email him and fill out the official leave form (Rachel, 18/09/2019).

I use both formal and informal channels, and it depends on the issue. For example, I discovered that one of my colleagues was incorrectly recording financial statements. I suspected they were pocketing some small amounts, so I went to them informally and privately that I know what they are up to and they need to stop. When I discovered it a

few months later, I formally told our Line Manager and filed an official complaint with him (Thabo, 17/09/2019).

From the above mentioned, we can see that the use of informal voice happens between employers and employees and management. In the case of the employee to employee informal voice, employees like Thabo used it to warn their colleague of their wrongdoing. Thabo said he went to his colleague initially in private because he did not want the colleague to get in trouble or lose their job (Thabo, 17/09/2019). The implication here is that the use of informal voice is different from the use of formal voice in terms of power dynamics. Formal voice is more binding and taken more seriously than informal voice, hence why Thabo later went to his Line Manager and voiced out formally (Thabo, 17/09/2019).

In another example, Zeus commented that senior employees like Professors and Heads of Department make use of informal voice to approach senior management figures with their issues and concerns (Zeus, 18/09/2019). This is very important as it also proves that employee voice does not simply exist in the formal context and under specifically designed voice mechanisms such as trade unions (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2018:712). The use of informal voice shown in the data validates scholars like Marchington and Suter (2013:12) who argued that formal and informal voice operate sequentially or in parallel to each other as discussed in section 2.4.

The use of informal voice by senior academics to approach senior members of management with their grievances, however, also highlights the difference in employee's ability to voice (Zeus, 18/09/2019). One can speculate that the reason why senior employees make use of informal voice to voice directly to senior management figures is that, in terms of hierarchy, senior academics and senior management figures are roughly in the same bracket on the organisational hierarchy. Therefore, these employees will most likely be comfortable in voicing informally and passing important information informally (Zeus, 18/09/2019). Whereas, employees lower on the organization hierarchy, might feel that they do not have such a relationship with senior management figures and as such, they will resort to formal ways of voicing to these figures. Albeit, they will still use informal voice to communicate with their line managers, for example, or other employees that are close to them in terms of the organizational hierarchy.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter shows that employees are different, and because of their differences, they have different relationships with employee voice mechanisms. This chapter has identified that employees at Rhodes University use line managers/ supervisors/ Heads of Departments, trade unions and the Human Resources Department as the main ways they articulate their voice. However, these voice mechanisms operate differently to each other and employees interact differently with these mechanisms.

This chapter notes that the relationship between employees and their line managers/ supervisors/ Heads of Department may play a role in how employees voice. A positive relationship encourages employees to articulate their voice more, whilst a poor relationship between the employee and the line managers/ supervisors/ heads of department may influence employees to voice less frequently. Trade unions, on the other hand, are largely functional and effective in representing employee interests. However, the use of these voice mechanism is also influenced by the position which an employee occupies. It was noted that non-academic employees use Trade Unions more often than academic employees, and this points out how academic employee and non-academic employees are treated differently. In this study, academic employees were found to be prioritised by the Human Resources Department and as a result, they do not frequent trade unions as much to have their concerns heard and attended to by the Human Resources Department. The voice of academic employees is powerful, and as a result, academic employees do not make use of trade unions as much as non-academic employees who are not prioritised by the Human Resources Department and often have to use Trade Unions to unify and strengthen their voice in order to have their interests and concerns attended to by the University administrators.

From the above-mentioned, it is clear that employees are different, and the voice mechanisms that organisations avail to employees function differently for different employees. Due to this, employees have different relationships with these voice mechanisms. However, due to the fact that Rhodes University has a diverse workforce in terms of language, race, gender, job/ occupation and trade union membership the articulation of voice by employees may be influenced by this diversity because workplace relations are often influenced by wider processes of social relations. These processes include how people of different races and gender interact and co-exist in society. Diversity is thus important because it can influence how employees' access and make use of voice mechanisms. Accordingly, diversity in employees was analysed to provide a holistic understanding of employee voice.

CHAPTER FIVE

DIVERSITY AND THE ARTICULATION OF VOICE

5.1 Introduction

As discussed in section 2.6, global demographics are pointing to a state of affairs where today's workforce is increasingly more diverse than it has ever been (Parsi, 2017:1). Rhodes University is an example of that, as this research observed diversity in terms of the employees employed by the organisation. In line with the argument that employee diversity may have an influence on the articulation of voice by employees, it is important to look at some of these factors under diversity that possibly have an influence on employee voice. For the purposes of this research, language, race, gender, job/occupation and trade union membership were identified as possible influences on employee voice. These influences are present at most workplaces, and the purpose of this chapter is to show, to what extent these influences have an impact on employee voice.

From the interviews, the significance of these factors in the influencing of employee voice varies. The influence of job/occupation, for example, is easily identifiable and overtly significant. The same cannot, however, be said about the influence of race, gender and language, the influence of these factors is harder to dictate and is often covert and subtle. From these results, this chapter provides justification for why employee voice should be understood from a wide lens that does not simply analyse the structures of voice. The argument which thus emerges in this chapter is that diversity is an important consideration because it influences employees' behaviour towards employee voice mechanism. Employees may be encouraged or discouraged to make use of voice mechanisms because of their gender and race. Furthermore, diversity is important as it can play a role in influencing the sort of issues that employees raise with their voice mechanisms. Lastly, diversity in terms of trade union membership and job/occupation plays a role in strengthening voice and increasing access to voice mechanisms respectively.

5.2 Language

From the data collected, language does not seem to play a significant big role in the articulation of employee voice. Most employees generally pointed out that they do not have a problem with regards to being understood when they voice. Some of these employees mentioned:

There are no language problems here, and we often use both isiXhosa and English (Mokati, 19/09/2019).

We always communicate in English and everyone seems to be comfortable with it; we do not have a language barrier problem at Rhodes University (Beaulynn, 18/09/2019).

From the above quotes, one can see that most employees do not have a problem with language as an influence of voice. The reason for that is, despite Rhodes University being an organization with employees that speak different languages, the University is an English medium University, meaning, English is the official language of the University. Because of this, most employees use English as a means of communication and most employees articulate themselves well in English, and they are understood perfectly well when they voice to their managers or supervisors.

The research, however, did find that not all employees are fluent in English and because of this, they are often misunderstood, and this can have a minor influence on voice. An employee mentioned that she has “an accent that most people struggle to understand” (Debra, 17/09/2019). As a result, she feels that people do not take her seriously when she voices out. She thus feels that because of her accent, she is not very comfortable expressing herself in English, she thus finds herself only voicing out less and preferring to communicate via email in place of in-person conversations (Debra,17/09/2019). From the above quotes, it can be viewed that language to a greater extent, does not play a significant role in the articulation of voice. However, it is worth noting the views of employees like Debra, who are not fluent in English. Language certainly plays a significant role in how they articulate. One can infer that employees like Debra exist throughout organizations. Not all the employees at a workplace will be fluent in the medium of communication and because of this, how they articulate their voice gets affected. In the case of Debra, her not being fluent in the medium language resulted in her choosing certain voice mechanisms over others (Debra, 17/09/2019).

The above findings generally point to the idea that language, in some instances, can influence employee voice. However, its significance is negligible as organisations may have a medium language of communication like Rhodes University, which reduces the impact of language preferences by a diverse workforce.

5.3 Race

Race discussions are often complex, and people's experiences regarding race-related issues often reflect the complexity of race dynamics. At Rhodes University, employees are drawn from different racial groups which are mostly black, white and coloured. The participants in the research showed this complexity by way of there being diverging opinions on the role that race plays with the articulation of voice. Some employees agreed that voice does play a role in the articulation of voice. Whilst some employees expressed the view that they cannot say that it plays a part since they had not experienced any incident that had racial undertones to it. What was clear in this research, however, was that racial influence on employee voice is very covert and subtle.

A participant in this research perfectly summarised this sentiment by saying that "race is very subliminal, people will never be overtly racist or discriminative towards you but there will be racial tensions and undertones" (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). He gave an example of how he feels that there are micro-aggressive comments or behaviours that may be racially motivated. In his department there was once a discussion about transformation and the need to remove colonial artwork from the department, a white line manager voiced out that the artwork was of historical importance and as such "it's not a big deal to have them around as they are harmless" (Dumisani,16/09/2019).

Comments such as these can be perceived by a black employee as racially insensitive, and they may be construed by black employees as indicators of how the white line manager has his own racial prejudices. In relation to employee voice, Dumisani did point out that, he does not voice out any race-related issue to his line manager because he thinks the line manager is insensitive to racial dynamics (Dumisani,16/09/2019). From Dumisani's experience, one can see how race plays a part in the articulation of voice. It can be inferred that line managers/supervisors/ Heads of Departments that are from the same race as their subordinates are likely to have subordinates that articulate their voice without being mindful of racial connotations. It thus follows that; employees may approach line managers/supervisors/ Heads of Departments and voice more freely without being conscious of their race.

In another incident that portrayed the influence of race, Nolwabo, a professor expressed that she feels the influence of race on the articulation of voice can be seen in how senior female black professors like herself feel that in spaces like the senate where the majority of the people there are white males, she finds herself conscious of the fact that she is a black female professor

and she is not well represented (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019). Because of that, she does find that she finds herself watching what she says because she does not want to be labelled as being overly sensitive if she brings up stereotypical black issues like transformation and decolonising the University (Nolwabo,19/09/2019). She feels that because she feels conscious about being in a place where she is racially underrepresented, sometimes she does not voice out an opinion contrary to the majority because she “does not want to stick out” (Nolwabo,19/09/2019).

The racial differences in employees play a part in how employees perceive how their race plays a part in the articulation of voice. It was noted in this study that white employees often did not have experience with race being a factor in the articulation of their voice. Some of these employees mentioned:

I don't think race is a factor, I personally have never experienced race affecting how I raise issues, but I think there are some employees who might have experienced it (Zeus, 18/09/2019).

For me, I do not think that's it is race-related. I think people react to me differently because I am not from South Africa (Debra, 17/09/2019).

From the above quotes, one may attribute the difference in how different racial groups perceive race as a factor that affects voice to the history of South Africa. South Africa has a history of racial segregation and treating people differently based on their Race. This researcher believes that the reason for the difference in how black employees are most likely to agree to the notion that race say plays a role in how they articulate their voice and how white employees might not have experienced the influence of their voice is rooted in this history of South Africa. Despite the end of Apartheid, the effects of being treated differently are most likely to be felt by black employees at institutions that were mainly for people belonging to the white racial group.

The Apartheid history of South might also be a possible reason why there are no overt instances of racially motivated influences on the articulation of voice. Employees are aware that conduct which discriminates or treats employees differently on racial lines is illegal and will result in them facing penalties. However, this does not mean that race as influence does not exist. Rather, as was found in this research, it is likely that the effects of Apartheid in South Africa continue to exist in forms of subtle acts of racial undertones that are often hard to objectively point out but are nonetheless felt by employees, especially employees belonging to the black racial group.

Thus, this research takes the position that race has an influence on employee voice, albeit a subtle and covert influence. Due to this subtle influence, employees are mindful of each other's race and thus, what employees voice and what they do not voice about is sometimes influenced by the above mentioned racial tensions which may prompt employees to voice out or not voice out at all on particular issues like transformation and decolonisation for example (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019).

5.4 Gender

Gender is a biological makeup that distinguishes employees, Rhodes University is an institution which advocates for the fair and equal treatment of all employees regardless of their gender. This study found that most employees feel that gender does not play a role in the articulation of their voice. In support of this point, one employee mentioned that “we are all equal here, both males and females, no one is superior to the other (Ntebo, 23/09/2019)”.

The researcher believes that the reason for this sentiment by employees is that Rhodes University has very strong core principles that emphasise the equal treatment of all employees. The University structures and employees also emphasis heavily that employees should be treated equally. With that, one can believe that the University structures and mechanisms such as the gender equality office play a role at making sure that the workplace is clear of discriminatory practices that may promote or inhibit employee voice based on gender. Considering this, a female employee stated that “my supervisor has a bias towards male employees (Sindi, 23/09/2019)”. She explained that she feels that “he is biased because he hates that females always carry bags and, in his head, because he thinks they are stealing (Sindi, 23/09/2019)”. She added that she thinks her supervisor would only hire male employees if it was up to him. However, she did qualify that despite her supervisor's bias, she feels that this does not impact on how she articulates voice, she believes that “he listens to everyone” and that he is democratic (Sindi, 23/09/2019). From the above, it is most likely that the structures present at Rhodes University play a role in deterring the unequal treatment of employees based on gender and prevent employee voice from being influenced based on one's gender. However, from the above experience, the supervisor's bias towards males can be thought of as proof that the presence of structures and policies geared at gender equality does not guarantee the absence of attitudes and biases towards one gender.

The gender relations experienced at the workplace stem from the wider societal attitudes and perceptions and as such, gender biases exist, and they have the potential to influence employee

voice. However, this influence may be subtle and hard to dictate because of the presence of structures and policies that make it clear that discrimination based on gender is not allowed at the workplace. A few employees voiced out that they do feel that their gender sometimes is a factor in how they articulate their voice. One male employee pointed out that he feels that his gender sometimes influences how he articulates voice. He stated that:

It becomes a factor depending on the topic at hand and the presence of female colleagues. In general, I am outspoken, and during meetings, I often have a lot to say, but when it comes to issues that have a gender dimension, I have to trade carefully because it's so easy to get branded sexist if you have an unpopular opinion. So sometimes, I tend to just keep my thoughts and opinions to myself on these issues (Thabo, 17/09/2019).

From the above quote, we can see that gender can have an influence on the articulation of voice. An argument can perhaps be made that despite the presence of structures aimed at promoting voice, human relations should also be considered as they also play a role in the articulation of voice. Thabo added that he feels that “Rhodes University is an environment is where you have to say the popular opinions around gender” (Thabo, 17/09/2019). As a male, he feels that the consequences of voicing out an unpopular opinion are that, his female colleagues will most like ostracize him and this would create problems for his career (Thabo, 17/09/2019).

In another example, a female stated that she feels that gender does play a part in how she articulates her voice. The employee stated that:

I feel that as a female in academia, I have to constantly prove that I deserve to be respected and show that I am just as capable as my male colleagues. There aren't a lot of women in my position, and so I feel I have to prove that I am not just there for representation. I sometimes feel that I am not taken seriously and that some male colleagues are taken more seriously than me, and these colleagues are sometimes condescending to me ...Generally, I also don't go to the Head of Department with a lot of complaints unless it is a major issue, I don't go because I don't want the male colleagues in my department to think that I am not up to the job and I am soft (Debra, 17/09/2019).

From the above account, one can see that the influence of gender is there; however, it is hard to verify objectively. The experience of the employee can be viewed to be subjective and as such, hard to prove. Such is the nature of gender as an influence on voice. From the individual's

perspective, it is very much a significant factor. However, the problem is in objectively proving that the male colleagues do indeed think that she is not capable of doing her job because she is a woman. However, what is certain is that how some employee's articulate voice is influenced by their gender. Debra is one example, she only raises major issues with her Head of Department because she does not want her male colleagues to think she does not have the right aptitude for her job because she is a woman (Debra, 17/09/2019).

From the above discussed, the researcher believes that gender does influence voice in some circumstances; however, it is often hard to objectively prove the influence of gender as some employees' experiences are often subjective and the influence would have been subtle. The researcher believes that the structures in place to promote employee voice prevent employees from being overtly discriminated based on their gender. Thus, overtly employee gender does not affect employee voice because Rhodes University is designed around democratic and nondiscriminative principles. However, gender still influences how employees voice, albeit, this influence is subtle and often hard to objectively prove.

5.5 Job/occupation

This study found that employee voice is also influenced by the job which an employee holds. There is a correlation between an employee's job and their participation in the decision making of the organisation and their ability to influence changes to their work. The trend that was observed was that the higher the employee's job is on the organisation's hierarchy, the more an employee will be involved in the decision making of the University. Employee's that also occupy higher positions have a greater ability to influence changes to their work than employees lower on the organisation's hierarchy.

5.5.2 Participation in decision making

When it comes to the consultation of employees by management, the results vary depending on the post of the employees involved. Low-level employees such as housekeepers, cleaners, administrators, secretaries and caterers are not consulted when management makes changes to their work situation. An employee in the student affairs department, for example, said that, when management wanted to restructure his department, he was not consulted. In place of that consultation, management formed a committee that did not involve current employees in the division, but that committee was "merely meant to legitimise the changes that management had already settled on" (Thabo, 17/09/2019).

Experiences for low-level employees are different from that of employees that occupy middle to higher positions such as lecturers, professors and hall wardens. Employees in these positions express the view that they are consulted when management plans change to their work situation. Full Professors, for example, sit on the Senate and several high decision-making committees and as such, they are consulted and given an option to make inputs on their work situation. Issues such as benefits, and remuneration packages are some of the issues that these employees are consulted about. Zeus gave an example of when “academics were approached by management with a proposal for a back-pay wage increase (Zeus, 18/09/2019)”.

All the employees that participated in the research did confirm that they do have mechanisms to voice out in spite of the position of their job. However, it was clear to the researcher that not all employees enjoy the same access to these voice mechanisms. Senior lecturers and senior professors, for example, feel that they have more voice mechanisms that are available to them because of their position. Zeus stated that because he is full professor, he has the power and he can “directly approach senior and key people in management (Zeus, 18/09/2019)”. Thabo, on the other hand, said he feels that “there are not enough voice mechanisms available”, he can either go to the trade unions or approach his line manager (Thabo, 17/09/2019)”. From the above discussed, the job/occupation an employee directly affects that employee’s ability to participate in the decision making of the organisation, and subsequently, this is an influence on employee voice.

5.5.3 Ability to influence changes to work

The extent to which employees can influence changes to their work varied per position. Some employees felt that they do not have much room in influencing the changes to their work, whilst some employees felt that they had much room to influence changes to their work. The data suggested that academic employees’ ability to influence changes to their work is much more than that of non-academic employees. A participant mentioned that:

Academics have more autonomy in terms of our work, and it’s very flexible, to some extent, you can feel like you are your own boss. In my department, there is room to come up with your own ways to teach and assess students in the way you see fit (Dumisani, 16/09/2019).

He also mentioned that as a lecturer you could also indirectly influence the decisions that relate to the work situation when all the staff members in the department sit at a strategic meeting at the end of the year that deals with his department’s goals and operations for the coming

academic year. At this platform, he believes that he can further influence changes to his work (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). From this, one can see that academic employees have power in terms of their work situation, and their voice is strong enough to influence changes to their work. One can infer that academic employees are held in high regard and are prioritised.

As mentioned above, academic and non-academic do not have the same ability to influence changes to their work. This was affirmed by one of the non-academic employees who mentioned that:

I have minimal control over the changes in my work. As a housekeeper, I must make sure that residences are clean and that I report any faults I find. My job description is very clear about my duties and what I must do. They will not let me make any changes to how I work, the work hours and everything is all set-in-stone (Anele, 16/09/2019).

This point was also affirmed by another employee who works as a cook who stated that “we do not get to change anything even if you say something, you just do the job as you are told (Mokati, 19/09/2019)”. From the data, it is clear that academic employees have more of a say in their work and their ability to influence changes in their work is high than that of academic employees. A possible explanation for this, could be that, academic employees are prioritized more than non-academic employees since the core business of the University is education and as such academic employees perform a central and key role in the functioning of the University. Another possible explanation is that perhaps because academic employees are highly skilled employees, they are afforded more autonomy and are held in higher regard to their nonacademic employee counterparts who are not as highly skilled.

5.5.4 Influence on employee suggestions

Most of the employees confirmed that they do make suggestions in the workplace; however, the utilization of their suggestions varies depending on the suggestion. Beaulynn, an administrator, gave an example of how she once suggested to her supervisor asking for the department to enrol her in a programme that would help her carry out additional duties (Beaulynn, 18/09/2019). Her suggestion was implemented, and within a short period of time, she was enrolled in the programme that she had requested at no cost. Sindi, a head caterer also gave another example of how she “suggested a new milk supplier” to her line manager after their usual supplier was having problems meeting their requirements (Sindi, 23/09/2019).

As mentioned earlier, not all suggestions are utilized. Anele, a housekeeper, attested to this by saying that in her department, they are always making suggestions regarding their work conditions; however, their suggestions are never utilized. The example that she gives is that she has gone to her supervisor, suggesting that she gets a higher grade because of the amount of work she does. She says her supervisor always raises the issue with higher authorities, but they always get told that:

The University does not have enough funds and resources to allow for a grade improvement for her position (Anele, 16/09/2019).

My supervisor does not make use of suggestions that me or my colleagues make regarding the completion of tasks because he wants everything to be done his way only (Ntebo, 23/09/2019).

From the above, one can conclude that job occupation does not influence the utilization of suggestions. It would seem likely that employee suggestions are utilized for the most part based on their merit, however, to a smaller extent, the supervisor's personality type also plays a role in the implementation of the suggestion. If a supervisor is strict and specific about how a task should be done, employees are not left with a lot of alternatives.

In conclusion, the data suggest job/occupation to a greater extent plays a role in influencing employee voice. The higher the employee's job is on the organisation's hierarchy, the more an employee will be involved in the decision making, and the more they will be able to influence changes to their work. However, from the data, it seems that job/occupation does not influence the utilization of employee's suggestions.

5.6 Trade union membership

Rhodes University has a strong trade union presence; most employees at Rhodes University are members of a trade union. The two most prominent trade unions are NTEU and NEHAWU. This study found that trade union membership enhances employee's voice.

Employees that are members of trade unions have their voice enhanced by way of having a strong organization speaking on their behalf and protecting their interests. The backing of a trade union enhances the individual voice of an employee on issues such as wage negotiations, working conditions for employees and dispute resolutions. Furthermore, employees that are

trade union members also benefit in the form of having an extra mechanism to voice, and they also have increased chances of being part of the decision-making process of the organisation.

5.6.2 Participation in decision making

Most of the employees that are part of a trade union feel consulted and involved in the decision making of the trade union. The agreed decisions by the trade union are ultimately presented to the University Human Resources Management on behalf of the employees. Some of the employees stated that:

I always get the emails on what is happening, they also ask what issues we would like to raise, and if we have any complaints (Rachel, 18/09/2019).

NEHAWU always consults us and comes back with feedback on negotiations, for example, we were consulted on whether we should accept a 4% wage increase instead of a 7% wage increase (Anele, 16/09/2019).

The few employees that were part of trade unions that felt that they were not involved in the decision-making process admitted that they were not involved due to their own circumstances. This point was supported by one of the employees who stated that:

I am not aware of what has happening lately because I have not been attending meetings or looking at emails and participating in the online polls that are used to make decisions (Thabo,17/09/2019).

From the above, one can see that employees that are part of trade unions are given a platform to raise their concerns and bargain with the University. The trade union as a body has the power to challenge the Human Resources Department on issues and because, as a body, it is very democratic, employees that are part of the trade union get a chance to participate in these decisions via their trade union membership. This ability to participate via trade unions is particularly useful for non-academic employees that have a weaker voice because of the positions they occupy on the organisation's hierarchy as discussed in section 4.6. Trade union members thus have their voices enhanced by their active participation in the decision making.

5.6.3 Amplification and strengthening of employee voice

The individual voice of employees is amplified by being part of a trade union. Some of the employees alluded to this:

Trade unions can bargain for employees with stakeholders on an equal footing. As an individual, you cannot just go to management and demand a pay increase, for example (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019).

I am happy that the Trade Unions here are very strong and NTEU, for example, is not afraid to defend employees' rights. NTEU, for example, took the Rhodes management and won ten issues in a row (Zeus, 18/09/2019).

I feel protected in the workplace and in a scenario of unfair treatment or unfair dismissal, the trade union will be able to fight for the employees whereas if you are not part of a union, you will be by yourself (Anele, 16/09/2019).

From the above quotes from employees, it can be noted that employees who are part of a trade union benefit in terms of having a unified voice speaking for them. An employee's individual voice is merged with other trade union members and thus amplified. In terms of disputes that may arise between the employee and employer, members of trade unions benefit by having the backing of a trade union in the disputes and such, the power disparity between the employee and employer is reduced, and an employee's voice or demands are amplified.

A few participants, however, did say they were not part of a trade union. These employees gave the impression that they did not see any real advantages to them being members.

I have never had an issue where I thought I would need a trade union and perhaps that's why I have never seriously considered joining (Thabo, 17/09/2019).

I am not really affected by not being a member because whatever gains the union make; they also get to be given to non-union members. I don't really have time to engage with trade union activities, but maybe I will join one since they already deduct a fee from my salary despite me being not a member (Debra, 17/09/2019).

The difference in opinion by the few employees that are not part of a trade union can be attributed to individual differences. Employees are not the same on account of their personalities and individual values. As such, the opinion of the majority does confirm that being a part of a trade union does amplify the voice of the employees. This study thus takes the position that trade union membership influences employee voice by way of giving members the ability to participate more in the decision making of the organisation as well as amplifying and strengthening their voice on issues.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter illustrates that diversity is an important consideration of employee voice because it influences how employees' approach and deal with issues in the workplace. Diversity plays a role in shaping how employees make use and access employee voice mechanisms. The reason for this is that workplace relations do not operate outside the wider processes of social relations. For example, racial and gender discrimination exists in the workplace place, and it affects how employees make use and have access to voice mechanism.

Race and gender were shown to be subtle and covert influences on the articulation of voice. The majority of the participants in this study alluded to the fact that they experience racial tensions and subtle gender biases. These racial and gender effects are hard to pinpoint because they are subjective in nature; however, employees do allude that their effects are real. The data collected showed that employees are conscious of their race and gender, and this influences how employees voice in some instances. With race as an influence of employee voice, some Black employees alluded to the fact that they avoided voicing issues that might have a racial connotation or a racial dynamic to their Heads of Department or colleagues who are White.

Diversity is thus, important because it influences employees' behaviour towards employee voice mechanisms. Employees may make use or not make use of a voice mechanisms because of their gender or their race. Diversity is also important because it influences the type of issues that employees raise with their voice mechanisms. Employees are selective and conscious of the racial and gender connotations around issues that they voice to their line manager/ supervisors/ Heads of Departments that are of a different race or gender. As such, at any time in an organisation, some employees may feel confident to voice on issues that may have a gender or racial connotation, whilst other employees may not voice out due to that same racial and gender connotation.

Other influences on employee voice that were analysed showed that job/occupation and trade union membership have a significant influence on employee voice. Employees that occupy higher positions on the organisations' hierarchy were found to have a stronger employee voice compared to employees lower on the organisation hierarchy and such, these employees are more involved in the decision making of the organisation, and they have a greater ability to influence changes to their work. Trade union membership on the hand was found to have the advantage of strengthening the employee's voice and increasing the ways in which employees participate in the decision making of the organisation.

Thus, employee diversity has a significant influence on employee voice as it influences how employees behave and react to voice mechanisms. Diversity in terms of trade union membership and job/occupation also plays a significant role in strengthening and increasing access to voice mechanisms respectively.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This research makes the argument that employee voice is diverse and differs based on an employee's perspective and the voice mechanisms available to employees. In light of this, the research sought to understand the relationship between employees and voice mechanisms as well as how employee diversity influences employees' use of voice mechanisms and the articulation of employee voice.

With regards to the relationship between employees and voice mechanisms, this research found that employees are different, and because of their differences, they have different relationships with employee voice mechanisms. Employees at Rhodes University use line managers/ supervisors/ heads of departments, trade unions and the human resources department as the main ways they articulate their voice. However, these voice mechanisms operate differently to each other and employees interact differently with these mechanisms. It was noted that the relationship between employees and their line managers/ supervisors/ Heads of Department might play a role in how employees voice. A positive relationship encourages employees to articulate their voice, whilst a poor relationship between the employee and the line managers/ supervisors/ Heads of Department may influence employees to voice less frequently.

Employees were found to have a different relationship with trade unions. Non-academic employees at Rhodes University use trade unions more often than academic employees, and this points out to how academic employee and non-academic employees have a different status in the organisation. Academic employees were found to be prioritised by the human resources department and as a result, they did not frequent trade unions as much to have their concerns heard and attended to by the human resources department. Effectively, what this means is that the voice of academic employees is more powerful compared to non-academic employees and as a result, academic employees do not rely on trade unions as much as non-academic employees, who are not prioritised by the Human Resources Department. Due to this, nonacademic employees often have to use trade unions to unify and strengthen their voice in order to have their interests and concerns attended to by the Human Resources Department.

In relation to how employee diversity influences employees' use of voice mechanisms and the articulation of employee voice, this research found that that diversity is an important consideration with regard to employee voice. Race and gender were shown to be subtle and covert influences on the articulation of voice. The majority of the participants in this study alluded to the fact that they experience racial tensions and subtle gender biases. These racial and gender effects are hard to pinpoint because they are subjective in nature. However, employees do allude that their effects are real. The data collected showed that diversity matters, and employees are conscious of their race and gender, and this influences employee's voice in some instances.

Diversity matters in the workplace because it influences how employees' approach and deal with issues in the workplace. Diversity plays a role in shaping how employees make use and access employee voice mechanisms. The reason for this is that workplace relations do not operate outside the wider processes of social relations. In this regard, racial and gender discrimination exists in the workplace place, and it affects how employees make use and have access to voice mechanism.

Employees are conscious of their race, and they are aware of the audience that will receive their voice. As discussed, line managers/supervisors/ Heads of Departments are voice mechanisms, as such employees are mindful of the race of the people occupying these mechanisms. This is particularly significant in instances, where the line managers/supervisors/ Heads of Department is of a different race to their subordinates. Some of the employees mentioned that they do not voice out issues that might have a racial connotation to their supervisor (Dumisani, 16/09/2019). This is significant because it highlights the effect of race on employee voice.

In another example, a black employee mentioned that she is very cognizant of her race in decision making bodies like the Senate, which comprises a majority of colleagues that are mostly white and male. This has the effect of influencing how she articulates her voice in the Senate. She is mindful of not voicing out on stereotypical issues that may be considered black issues such as transformation and decolonization because she does not want to be considered overly-sensitive (Nolwabo, 19/09/2019). The conclusion that can be drawn from this is that racial relations are present in the workplace, and they matter because they affect how employees have access and use of voice mechanisms. It can be inferred that line managers/supervisors/ Heads of Departments that are from the same race as their subordinates are likely to have subordinates that articulate their voice without being mindful of racial

connotations. In this regard, employees will approach line managers/supervisors/ Heads of Departments and voice more freely without being conscious of their race.

In the case of gender, gender plays a role in how employees' access and make use of voice mechanisms. The study highlighted that the impact of gender is very influential in how some employees articulate their voice. Some male employees alluded to the fact, that when it comes to issues that have a gender connotation, they are very conscious of their gender and what they say because they do not want to voice unpopular opinions and risk being labelled sexist. The effect is that some employees may not articulate their true views and opinions to voice mechanisms due to the impact of wider societal gender relations.

In addition to this, general gender discriminative stereotypes that view women as inferior and unequal to men also play a role in how employees' access and make use of voice mechanisms. This study found that some women only approach their Heads of Departments with issues that they consider to be very big issues because they do not want to be viewed as incompetent (Debra, 17/09/2019). This behaviour comes about as a reaction to gender discriminative attitudes that employees perceive and as a result, some female employees' may rarely make use of voice mechanisms because of gender relations and attitudes that stem from the society at large and filter into the workplace. This is very important as it shows that gender does affect how employees make use of voice mechanisms.

Diversity is thus, very important in terms of employee voice as it influences employees' behaviour towards employee voice mechanisms. Employees may make use or not make use of a voice mechanisms because of their gender and their race. Diversity is also important as it influences the type of issues that employees raise with their voice mechanisms. Employees are selective and conscious of the racial and gender connotations around issues that they voice to their line manager/ supervisors/ Heads of Departments that are of a different race or gender. As such, at any time in the organisation, some employees may feel confident to voice on issues that may have a gender or racial connotation, whilst other employees may not voice out due to that same racial and gender connotation.

Other influences on employee voice that were analysed showed that job/occupation and trade union membership have a significant influence on employee voice. Employees that occupy higher positions in the organisation's hierarchy were found to have a stronger employee voice compared to employees lower in the organisation hierarchy. With the former, employees are more involved in the decision making of the organisation, and they have a greater ability to

influence changes to their work. Being part of a trade union was found to impact employee voice by strengthening employees' voice and increasing the ways in which employees participate in the decision making of the organisation.

The conclusion thus drawn from the research is that employee voice is diverse, and it differs based on an employee's perspective and the voice mechanisms available to employees. Furthermore, diversity is an important consideration for employee voice because it influences employee's behaviour towards voice mechanisms and diversity in terms of trade union membership and job/occupation plays a role in strengthening employee voice and increasing access to voice mechanisms respectively. The relevance of these findings in the broader literature on employee voice is that employee voice needs to be studied from a broad perspective that examines both the structures of employee voice and the effects of diversity among employees. The integrated approach advocated by scholars like Mowbray *et al.* (2015:388) offers a good platform for future research on employee voice to take into account both structures of voice and employee diversity in order to offer a more comprehensive understanding of voice, which is not provided for by the individual perspectives of HRM, ER and OB (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:388).

The findings of this research show the need for an integrated approach as participants showed that the reasons behind employees voicing are diverse. Employees are different, and because of this their motives for voicing are diverse. In this study, employees at Rhodes University voiced out as a result of dissatisfaction, the interest of the organisation (pro-social voice) or the need to do the right thing (justice-oriented voice). Examples of these include a student affairs officer voicing out about misappropriated funds because it was ethically wrong, a lecture voicing out because of compassion for her students' welfare and a cook voicing out due to dissatisfaction with wages.

In addition to the motives behind employee voice, this research also found that informal voice is utilised in the organisation as much as formal voice. This conclusion is significant as it confirms that viewing formal or informal voice in isolation does not provide a full perspective of how voice channels are being managed and being utilized within organizations (Mowbray *et al.*, 2015:390). Thus, the results of this research add to the validity of calls by scholars to have an integrated framework to understand employee voice better.

Following the logic of the integrated approach, the macro-factors surrounding employee voice in the higher education sector shows that the massification has seen universities across South

Africa adopting corporate practices in the management of staff (Dlamini, 2018:55). These corporate practices were found to be a threat to university employees across the country due to their impact on employee voice (Dlamini, 2018:55). In this study, it was noted that the Human Resources Department was most likely prioritizing academic employees over non-academic employees under corporate practices that emphasis cost-effective measures and a top-down approach to decision making in the organisation. This prioritization of academic employees was viewed to be evidence that employees are not the same in organisations, and as such, employee voice is different for employees. In this regard, the research found that non-academic employees negotiate with management on labour relations matters through their trade unions. The majority of non-academic employees in this research complained that they were often not consulted by the Human Resources Department in many decisions and that their ability to influence changes to their work was minimum to none at all. Academic employees, on the other hand, felt that they generally could influence decisions regarding their work, and they had plenty of avenues to voice and were consulted regularly. Thus, these findings suggest that corporatisation has the effect of weakening the voice of employees in the lower levels of organisations. The concerns and interests of low-level employees are often overlooked by organisations in a bid to be cost-effective and increase efficiency in the decision-making process by organisations.

Bibliography

Assie-Lumumba, N. (2006). Higher education in Africa: Crisis, reform and transformation. *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, Vol. 3(3), pp. 1-29.

Aluwihare-Samaranayake, D. (2012). Ethics in Qualitative Research: A View of the Participants' and Researchers' World from a Critical Standpoint. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, Vol.11, pp.1-15.

Barry, M., Wilkinson, A. & Morrison, E. Towards an integration of research on employee voice. *Human Resources Management Review*, Vol. 30(1), pp. 1-25.

Bell, M., Özbilgin, M., Beauregard, T. & Sürgevil, O. (2011). Voice, silence, and diversity in 21st century organizations: Strategies for inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender employees. *Human Resource Management*, Vol. 50 (1), pp. 131-146.

Blackall, M. and Busby, M. (2019). *Universities under fire for outsourcing low-paid campus jobs*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/oct/27/universities-underfire-for-outsourcing-low-paid-campus-jobs>. [Accessed 15 November 2019].

Botha, M. (2015). *Employee participation and voice in companies: A legal perspective*. Available at: <https://repository.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/14902>. [Accessed 25 June 2019].

Boxall, P. and Purcell, J. (2011). *Strategy and Human Resource Management*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Boyce, C. and Neale, P. (2006). Conducting In-Depth Interview: A Guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input. *Pathfinder International Tool Series, Monitoring and Evaluation-2*. Available at: http://www.pathfind.org/site/DocServer/m_e_tool_series_indepth_interviews.pdf?docID=6301. [Accessed 15 June 2018].

Bhorat, H., Naidoo, K. & Yu, D. (2014). *Trade unions in an emerging economy: The case of South Africa*. Development Policy Research Unit Working Paper 2. Available at: http://www.dpru.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/36/DPRU%20WP201402.pdf. [Accessed 1 June 2019].

Cleary, K. (2019). New workers union launches at Rhodes University. *Grocott's Mail*. 1 May.

Cox, A., Marchington, M. and Suter, J. (2009). Employee involvement and participation: developing the concept of institutional embeddedness using WERS2004. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol.20, pp. 2150–2168.

Cullinane, N., Donaghey, J., Dundon, T., Hickland, E., & Dobbins, T. (2014). Regulating for mutual gains? Non-union employee representation and the Information and Consultation Directive. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 25 (6), pp. 810828.

Davids, N. (2016). On extending the truncated parameters of transformation in higher education in South Africa into a language of democratic engagement and justice. *Transformation in higher education*. Available at: <https://thejournal.org.za/index.php/thejournal/article/view/7>. [Accessed 26 August 2019].

Dell, S. (2018). *Report on university racial tension sparks furious debate*. Available at: <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20181130053433491>. [Accessed 25 July 2019].

Department of Education. (1996). *Green Paper on higher education transformation*. Available at: <https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/Documents/Legislation/Green%20Papers/Green%20Paper%20on%20Higher%20Education%20Transformation.pdf?ver=2008-03-05-104602000>. [Accessed 15 June 2019].

Department of Higher Education and Training. (2018). *Statistics on post-school education and training in South Africa*. Available at: Http://www.dhet.gov.za/Research%20Coordination%20Monitoring%20and%20Evaluation/6_DHET%20Stats%20Report_04%20April%202018.pdf. [Accessed 15 June 2019].

Detert, J. and Treviño, L. (2010). Speaking up to higher-ups: how supervisors and skip-level leaders influence employee voice. *Organization Science*, Vol. 21, pp. 249–270.

Dlamini, R. (2018). Corporatisation of universities deepens inequalities by ignoring social injustices and restricting access to higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 32 (5), pp. 31-42.

Donaghey, J., Cullinane, N., Dundon, T. and Wilkinson, A. (2011). Reconceptualizing employee silence problems and prognosis. *Work, Employment & Society*, Vol. 25, pp. 51–67.

Dundon, T., Wilkinson, A., Marchington, M. & Ackers, P. (2004). The meanings and purpose of employee voice. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 15 (6), pp. 1149-1170.

Farrell, D. (1983). Exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect as responses to job dissatisfaction: a multidimensional scaling study. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 26, pp. 596–607.

Freeman, R. & Medoff, J. (1984). *What do unions do?* New York: Basic Books.

Giroux, H. (2002). Neoliberalism, corporate culture, and the promise of higher education: The University as a democratic public sphere. *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 72, (4), pp. 425-464.

Gollan, P. and Xu, Y. (2015). Re-engagement with the employee participation debate: Beyond the case of contested and captured terrain. *Work, Employment & Society*, Vol. 29 (2), pp. 1-13.

Harley, B. (2014). High Performance work systems and employee voice. In A. Wilkinson, J. Donaghey, T. Dundon, & R. Freeman (eds.) *Handbook of Research on Employee Voice*, pp. 82- 96. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Hatipoglu, B. and Inelmen, K. (2018). Demographic diversity in the workplace and its impact on employee voice: The role of trust in the employer. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 29 (5), pp. 970-994.

Hespe, G. and Wall, T. (1976). The demand for participation among employees. *Human Relations*, Vol. 29, pp. 411–428.

Heffernan, M. and Dundon, T. (2016). Cross-level effects of High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS) on employee well-being: the mediating role of organisational justice. *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol.26 (2), pp. 211-23.

Hirschman, A. (1970). *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hyman, R. (1975). *Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction*. London: MacMillan.

Hyman, R. (1989). *The political economy of industrial relations*. London: MacMillan.

IOL Business Report. (2015). *NEHAWU threatens strike at Rhodes over wages*. Available at: <https://www.iol.co.za/business-report/careers/nehawu-threatens-strike-at-rhodes-overwages-8723783>. [Accessed 7 June 2019].

Kaufman, B. & Taras, D. (2010). Employee participation through non-union forms of employee representation. In A. Wilkinson, P. Gollan, M. Marchington, & D. Lewin (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Participation in Organizations*, pp. 258–285. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kaufman, B. (2015). Theorising determinants of employee voice: An integrative model across disciplines and levels of analysis. *Human Resource Management Journal*, Vol. 25 (1) pp. 1940.

Kochan, T. & Osterman, P. (1994). *The mutual gains enterprise: forging a winning partnership among labour, management, and government*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Klerck, G. (2008). *Introduction to Industrial Relations*. Grahamstown: Rhodes University.

Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology. A step by step guide for beginners*. London: Sage Publications.

Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Marchington, M. (2007). Employee voice systems. In: P. Boxall, J. Purcell & P. Wright (eds.) *Oxford handbook of human resource management*, pp. 231–250. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marchington, M. (2015). The role of institutional and intermediary forces in shaping patterns of employee involvement and participation (EIP) in Anglo-American countries. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 26 (20), pp. 2594-2616.

Marchington, M., & Suter, J. (2013). Where informality really matters: Patterns of employee involvement and participation (EIP) in a non-union firm. *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society*, Vol. 52, pp. 284-313.

Maree, J. (2017). From a culture of silence to a culture of insurgence. *Advances in Industrial and Labor Relations*, Vol. 23, pp. 137-192.

Miles, H. (1984). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A sourcebook of New Methods*. California: Sage Publications.

Moeidh, A., Shah, F. & Al-Matari, E. (2015). The relationship between prosocial voice and the patient safety culture in the Saudi public hospitals. *Asian Social Science*, Vol. 11 (16), pp. 111.

Morrison, E. (2011). Employee voice behaviour: Integration and directions for future research. *The Academy of Management Annals*, Vol. 5 (1), pp. 373-412.

Morrison, E. (2014). Employee voice and silence. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 1, pp. 173–197.

Mowbray, P., Wilkinson, A. & Tse, H. (2015). An integrative review of employee voice: Identifying a common conceptualization and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 17 (3), pp. 382-400.

Olson-Buchanan, J. and Boswell, W. (2002). The role of employee loyalty and formality in voicing discontent. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 87, pp. 1167–1174.

Parsi, N. (2017). Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Gets Innovative. Available at: <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0217/pages/disrupting-diversity-in-the-workplace.aspx>. [Accessed 17 June 2019].

Pohler, D., & Luchak, A. (2014). Balancing efficiency, equity and voice: The impact of unions and high involvement work practices on work outcomes. *Industrial & Labour Relations Review*, Vol. 67 (4), pp. 1063-1095.

PWC. (2015). *Funding of public higher education institutions in South Africa*. Available at: <https://www.pwc.co.za/en/publications/funding-public-higher-education-institutions-sa.html>. [Accessed 17 June 2019].

Rhodes University. (2019). *Support staff unions*. Available at: <https://www.ru.ac.za/humanresources/supportstaff/unions/nehawu/> [Accessed 17 June 2019].

Salamon, M. (1998). *Industrial relations: Theory and practice*. (third edition). London: Prentice-Hall.

Syed, J. (2014). Diversity management and missing voices. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295869099_Diversity_management_and_missing_voices. [Accessed 7 April 2019].

Tangirala, S. and Ramanujam, R. (2008). Exploring nonlinearity in employee voice: the effects of personal control and organizational identification. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 51, pp. 1189–1203.

Tangirala, S., Kamdar, D., Venkataramani, V. and Parke, M. (2013). Doing right versus getting ahead: the effects of duty and achievement orientations on employees' voice. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 98, pp. 1040–1050.

Thomas, G. (2013). *How to do your Research Project. A Guide for students in education and applied social sciences*. London: Sage Publications.

UCT News. (2015). *Outsourcing is most efficient, cost effective option for UCT support services*. Available at: <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2015-10-06-outsourcing-is-mostefficient-cost-effective-option-for-uct-support-services>. [Accessed 19 October 2019].

Van Dyne, L. and LePine, J. (1998). Helping and voice extra-role behaviours: evidence of construct and predictive validity. *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 41, pp. 108–119.

Wild, S. (2017). Black academics soon to outnumber white researchers in South Africa. Available at: <https://www.nature.com/news/black-academics-soon-to-outnumber-whiteresearchers-in-south-africa-1.23030>. [Accessed 7 June 2019].

Wilkinson, A., Dundon, T., Marchington, M. & Ackers, P., (2004). Changing patterns of employee voice: Case studies from the UK and Republic of Ireland. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, Vol. 46 (3), pp. 298-322.

Wilkinson, A., Dundon, T. & Barry, M. (2016). Voices from across the divide: An industrial relations perspective on employee voice. *German Journal of Human Resource Management*: Vol.30 (4), pp. 338–344.

Wilkinson, A., Gollan, P.J., Kalfa, S. & Xu, Y. (2018). Voices unheard: Employee voice in the new century. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 29 (5), pp. 711724.

Appendix A

Interview Schedule

Objective 1: To find out the relationship between employees and employee voice mechanism

1. What do you understand by employee voice?
2. What are the voice mechanisms available to employees?
3. What issues are covered by these mechanisms?
4. Which ones do you find effective?
5. In your opinion which ones are the most ineffective?

Objective 2: how employee diversity in terms of race, gender, language, job/occupation and trade union membership may influence employee's use of voice mechanisms and the articulation of employee voice.

Language

6. Do you think your race or the language you speak plays a part in how you articulate your voice?
7. How does your language or race influence your voice?
8. When speaking to a supervisor or manager who shares the same race or speaks the same language as you, do you feel better understood?
9. When speaking to a supervisor or manager who does not share the same language or race as you, do you feel more/less understood?
10. Why do you feel more/less understood?

Job/ Occupation

11. Are you consulted when management makes changes to your work situation?
12. Do you feel that because of your job occupation you do not have opportunities or mechanisms to voice out?

13. To what extent can you influence changes to your work?
14. Do you ever make suggestions in the workplace? If not, why not?
15. Do you feel your suggestions are utilized?
16. Do you feel that your gender plays a role in how you articulate your voice?
17. How does gender play a role in this articulation of voice?

Gender

18. Which gender do you think has more of say in the articulation of voice?
19. Which gender has the least influence in terms of employee voice?

Trade Union membership

20. Are you a member of a trade union at Rhodes University?
21. How do you feel about the unions at Rhodes University?
22. Do you feel that being a part of trade union gives you more of a voice than your non-union counterparts?
23. If you have a problem are you more likely to go to your union representative or your supervisor/manager?
24. Do you feel informed, consulted or not involved in decision making as a union member / as a non-union member?
25. What hinders employees from being more involved in the institution decision making?
26. What causes employees to be more involved in the institution decision making?

Appendix B

Consent Form

To whom it may concern

This letter confirms that I have agreed to be interviewed for purpose of research on the topic: “A critical analysis of employee voice at Rhodes University, Grahamstown”. Any information that I will give through this interview will be dealt with in the highest

confidential manner. Furthermore, no mention of my identity should be included within this research.

Respondent's Signature

.....