Fostering Entrepreneurial Behaviour among Work Team Members: Role of High Performance Human Resource Practices

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Abstract

Employee Entrepreneurial Behaviour (EEB) is defined as "the extent to which individual workers proactively engage in the creation, introduction, and application of opportunities at work, marked by taking business-related risks.[…]" (Jong, Parker, Wennekers, & Wu, 2015, p. 982). This concept has roots in the discourse on corporate entrepreneurship (Antoncic & Hisrich, 2003) and entrepreneurial orientation (Covin & Lumpkin, 2011), which takes the organization as the unit of analysis. Scholars have argued that if the corporate vision is to be effectively translated into employee behaviour; a disaggregation of this discourse to the micro level is required (Hayton, Hornsby, & Bloodgood, 2013; Ireland, Covin, & Kuratko, 2009; Macchitella, 2014), thus leading to the emergence of EEB.

Modern organisations are structured around teams (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). Scholars in team science suggest that teams function by means of Team Based Knowledge Work (TBKW) (Erhardt, Martin-Rios, & Way, 2009). In addition, organizational success is increasingly reliant on how well the teams within it are functioning. However, scholars have pointed out that a deeper understanding of individual competencies in the team context is a gap that needs urgent attention (Erhardt, 2011 ; Neubert, Mainert, Kretzschmar, & Greiff, 2015; Weiss, Hoegl, & Gibbert, 2011). We argue that EEB is an individual level competence construct that can address this gap. We focused our attention on EEB as increasingly organizational success is represented through responsiveness, innovativeness and entrepreneurship, among others.

Given that EEB is an important micro level strategic goal, in the present study, we seek to establish whether certain HR practices can reliably predict EEB. Within the HR system literature, we focus on High Performance Human Resource Practices (HPHRPs) because the High Performance paradigm as represented through this concept, converges with the idea of high performing teams, thus creating a scope for integrating the literature. HPHRPs are defined as "coherent practices that enhance the skills of the workforce, participation in decision making, and motivation to put forth discretionary effort" (Sun, Aryee, & Law, 2007: 558). However, social systems are rarely closed systems (Parsons, 1951) and rarely simple and/or direct causal recipes without confounding mechanisms. Therefore, we have further investigated the adjoining and moderating variables that might have some bearing on Employee Entrepreneurial Behaviour.

Literature shows that conceptualization of the HPHRPs measure has been a theoretical and methodological challenge (Barry Gerhart, 2012). To resolve it, therefore, a pilot study was conducted with 50 individuals. Subsequently, we collected data from 88 teams consisting of 373 individuals. We followed a multi-source approach to data collection. Implications, limitations and directions for future research are discussed.

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Acronyms in use

CSE	Core Self Evaluation
DB	Diversity Belief
EEB	Employee Entrepreneurial Behavior
HPHRP	High Performance Human Resource Practices
LMX	Leader Member Exchange
SDRB	Social Desirability Response Bias
TF	Task Formalisation
TR	Task Routinisation