

Attitudes towards Workplace Change in the Australian Higher Education Sector: a tale of divergence and a case for reform

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Abstract

This paper reports on the findings of a survey that explored staff perceptions of change management in Australian universities with a view to gauging the effectiveness of workplace change provisions in Higher Education enterprise agreements. The survey examined academic and general staff perceptions of the effectiveness of change management methods, the effectiveness of employee involvement in workplace change and the fairness of workplace change. The findings of the research demonstrate a clear divergence in the perceptions of management and union representatives on workplace change and highlight the limitations of existing processes to meet the expectations and demands of these key sector participants. The paper concludes that the desire by management for a greater ability to facilitate workplace change and by unions to foster a greater sense of employee involvement demonstrate the need for reform of the workplace change provisions within the Australian Higher Education Sector.

Introduction

This paper explores staff attitudes to three aspects of the change management process in Australian universities. Through an attitudinal survey of 580 staff from the 37 public universities in Australia, the paper reports on the extent to which respondents believe that change is managed effectively; that employees are involved in the change process; and that the change process is perceived to be fair. The underlying themes explored in this paper through a review of Australian industrial relations scholarship, are: the need for active involvement of employees within processes relating to the management of workplace change (Davis and Lansbury, 1989) and the maintenance of workplace justice (Cobb, Folger, & Wooten, 1995).

The research presented is undertaken in the Australian Higher Education sector and forms part of a doctoral thesis undertaken at Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia. It explores the relationship between employee involvement and the management of workplace change within an organisational justice context in the Australian Higher Education sector. This paper builds on an earlier longitudinal study of the provisions for employee involvement within the change management clauses of workplace enterprise bargaining agreements (EBAs) across three cycles of negotiations covering a period of approximately 10 years from 1996-2006 (Weller and Van Gramberg, 2006). In that study the change management clauses of all 37 EBAs were

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examined. It was found that there had been a decline in the (espoused) degree of employee involvement in the management of workplace change and also a shift in the form of employee involvement from a primarily bi-partite approach (management and union) to an increasingly tri-partite approach (management, staff and union) reflecting the increased participation of non-unionised employees. The findings suggested that change management in the Australian Higher Education sector appeared to be becoming more managerially driven over the 10 year span and less likely to involve close participation of employees.

As the previous study restricted itself to observations made of workplace policy provisions, it could only surmise the possible shifts in actual employee involvement in workplace change arising from the introduction of the Higher Education Workplace Reform Requirements (HEWRR) in 2005 by the Commonwealth Government. These reforms have, amongst other things, required universities to ensure that EBAs make provision for management and staff interaction (as opposed to management and union interaction) as an alternative to staff electing to have their interests represented by their union (DEST, 2005). This paper moves the study from workplace provisions to workplace perceptions of actual practice in three key areas: the perceived effectiveness of the change process, the perceived extent of employee involvement and the perceived fairness of the change.

First, effectiveness of change can be measured through: the ability to present reasons for the change; the ability to argue that the change is necessary; the ability to describe the nature of the change; the ability to document the change process; the ability to achieve the goals of the change; the ability to actually implement the change itself; the ability to review the change process; and lastly the ability to build consensus around the change (Victor & Franckeiss, 2002). Second, successful organisational change is often associated with the involvement of employees in the change process (Palmer & Dunford 2002). This paper focuses on the measurement of the degree of employee involvement in the process. The survey adopted the scale of employee involvement developed by the International Research Group (IDE, 1976). This scale, which has since been utilised across a number of international research projects, provides a seven point measure of employee involvement comprising: no involvement; provision of information; provision of information before a final decision; the right to comment; obligatory consultation; joint decision making; and complete involvement. Finally, fairness has been long considered an important dimension of successful change management (Cobb, Folger, & Wooten, 1995). Fairness can be examined according to the principles of organisational justice (procedural, distributive and interactional). These measures of organisational fairness are considered further below.

Change management and employment involvement

The notion of seeking effective change management through the use of employee involvement is well reported in the international literature of the last 50 years (Coch and French, 1948; Beer and Nohira, 2000). Similarly, the issue of employee involvement and the forms it takes represents a diverse field of study and commentators have debated the spectrum of employee involvement from participative management through to industrial democracy (Teicher, 1992; Black and Gregerson, 1997). In other words, there is an accepted theory that the extent to which employees are offered meaningful participation is directly linked with the success of the organisational change program (Dunphy & Stace 1988).

The focus of this paper is to explore the perceptions of participants of the workplace change processes within the Australian Higher Education Sector and the extent to which this contrasts with the provisions articulated in the EBAs. Underpinning perceptions of fairness are the behaviours relating to whether an action is fair or not. For instance, Greenberg (1990, 399), a key organisational justice theorist commented:

“In view of the widespread recognition of the importance of fairness as an issue in organisations, it is understandable that theories of [organisational] justice have been applied to understanding behaviours in organisations”.

Similarly, Hosmer and Kiewitz (2005:67) described the relationship between justice and fairness as being one where:

“Organisational justice is a behavioural concept that refers to the perception of fairness of the past treatment of the employees within an organisation held by the employees of that organisation”.

Organisational justice has a number of dimensions that include distributive justice, or the perceived fairness of the outcome; procedural justice, or the perceived fairness of the process; and interactional justice, or the nature of the interactions of the decision makers during a process (Cobb, Folger, & Wooten, 1995). In considering whether distributive justice is reflected in a workplace decision (such as a type of workplace change) employees weigh up a range of factors in order to construct a judgement on whether the outcome was fair. These factors include whether the final outcome was based on merit; whether the decision impacted equally on all participants within the organisation; whether the needs of the organisation were considered in the process; whether the needs of the participants were considered in the process; and whether compensation was provided in regards to adverse decisions (Cobb, Folger, & Wooten, 1995).

Employees' sense of fairness is also a function of being afforded procedural justice. Here, the perceived fairness of the procedures used in the decision making process can encompass factors such as: whether decisions were made consistently; whether the decision making processes were impartial; whether decisions were made on accurate information; whether there were opportunities provided to employees to have input into the decision making process; whether there was compatibility of the decision making process with organisational ethics and values; and whether there were appropriate mechanisms to appeal the decision (Paterson, Green, & Carey, 2002).

Finally, employees also judge the extent to which they have been afforded interactional justice as a component of fairness. The fairness of the interpersonal treatment experienced by participants in a decision making process entails factors such as: whether participants felt there was honesty in the process; whether staff were treated courteously during the process; whether staff had their rights respected in the process; whether the process was devoid of prejudice; whether decisions were appropriately justified; and whether decisions were communicated transparently (Paterson, Green, & Carey, 2002).

The earlier longitudinal study found that there were provisions for employee involvement in the management of workplace change in all the agreements (Weller and Van Gramberg, 2006). Further it re-enforced the underlying philosophy of the sector that the involvement of

those affected by change was a requirement in facilitating effective change. The responses to this attitudinal survey will allow for an assessment of the extent to which the participants in workplace change believe that the change management processes facilitate either effective workplace change or foster effective employee involvement.

Research methodology and survey population

The research methodology consisted of an attitudinal survey administered to management and union representatives (academic and general staff) within Australian publicly funded universities. The survey was administered in September 2006 to a sample group of 580 staff across the 37 public universities. The sample group was made up of two sub-samples: 228 staff employed as senior executives within the universities and 352 staff employed as union branch executive members within the universities. The contact details for the sample were obtained from the websites of the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee in the case of the management group and the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) for the union group. Both these websites list University Executive and Branch Executive members publicly.

The attitudinal survey was seen as providing the most effective way of obtaining an overview of the perceptions of those in working in the sector, and in particular, those most likely to be involved in the change management process. It is however accepted that they are, in turn, not entirely representative of line managers or operational staff. The next stage of this research will be to undertake focus group interviews to obtain illustrative details of the change management process and the nature of employee involvement.

The questionnaire was developed using a combination of existing scales across three key areas: change management (Victor and Franckeiss, 2002), employee involvement (International Research Group, 1976) and organisational justice (Cobb, Folger and Wooten, 1995 and Paterson, Green and Carey, 2002). Following a pilot of the survey senior executives and union branch executive members from Victoria University some minor changes were made and the survey was dispatched via mail using a hardcopy survey with a reply-paid envelope. A supporting letter was included, signed by both the Vice-Chancellor and NTEU President of Victoria University encouraging recipients to complete and respond to the survey. This bipartite approach was undertaken in order to demonstrate that the research was primarily concerned in findings that would be of assistance to both management and union representatives.

Following the dispatch by mail a total of 134 surveys (23%) were returned within four weeks. An email reminder was sent encouraging the return of the survey and indicating the initial response rate received. The benefits of this 'multi-modal' approach to survey distribution, that is a combination of mail and email, is supported by Woong Yun and Trumbo (2000) who conclude their findings "...we believe that the differences detected in the response groups indicate that using multi-mode survey techniques improve the representativeness of the sample, without biasing other results". Finally, 170 responses were received representing a response rate of 29%. This comprised a total of 55 management responses (from 228 sent out) representing a response rate of 24% and a total of 115 union responses (from 352) representing a response rate of 33%. The response rate by employment type was similar with 58% academic and 42% general staff responding across the total sample. In the case of

management respondents this was 56% academic compared to 44% general and in the case of union respondents this was 58% academic compared to 42% general.

Response rates were broken down into university groupings operating within the Australian Higher Education Sector. The Group of Eight features the eight oldest universities in Australia established before the 1950s and with a research intensive focus. The Innovative Research Universities are the seven universities that were established during the 1960s and 1970s and have a targeted research focus to their activities. The Australian Technology Network features five universities that were established during the 1980s that had come out of backgrounds as institutes of technology. The New generation Universities features ten universities that were established during the 1990s and generally were the product of amalgamations of former colleges of advanced education. The Regional Universities feature seven universities that were established between the 1950s and the 1990s and are based in regional or rural centres (Australian Education Network, 2007).

The response by sector type ranged from 27% for the Group of Eight Universities to 34% for the Regional Universities. Correspondingly, the lowest response rate from union representatives came from within the Group of Eight Universities (25%) and the highest from the Regional Universities (44%). Conversely, responses from management representatives was highest from the Group of Eight Universities (29%) compared to the Regional Universities with the lowest response rate (18%).

The 55 management respondents allowed for broad comparison of their attitudes towards change to be compared to union respondents. However, meaningful comparisons across role types within sector type could not be done as the sub samples were small. Similarly, given the total number of union responses was more than double those of management, the ability to compare academic and general responses, without breaking these categories down into management and union role type was problematic. As such, and for the purposes of further analysis, the remaining sections of the survey are analysed here with regard to the attitudinal differences between management and union responses as well as attitudinal differences between sector types with an emphasis on identifying where there is convergence or divergence of opinion in regards to issues of the effectiveness of change management, the provisions of employee involvement, and perceptions of organisational justice.

In the subsequent analysis and findings, we make comments regarding apparent convergence and divergence between management and union attitudes. It is acknowledged that these observations are made at a fixed point in time, namely when the survey was conducted, and may not be replicated beyond the timeframe for the survey.

Analysis and findings

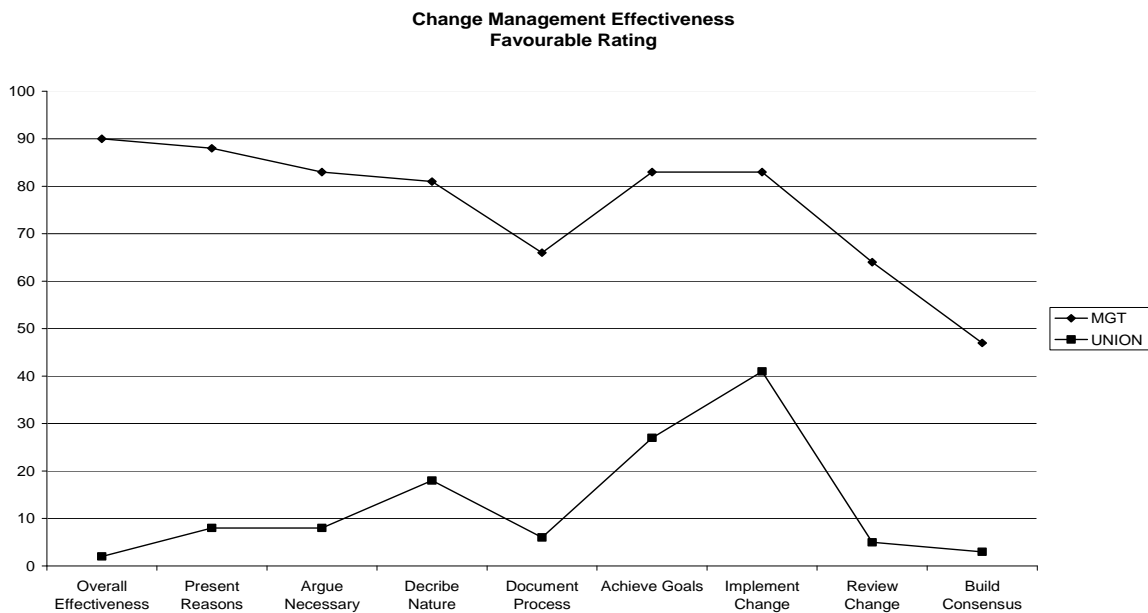
Section Two of the Attitudinal Survey focussed on perceptions towards the effectiveness of change management provisions in relation to the objective of the institution to facilitate organisational efficiency. In particular, Question 12 examined the issue of effectiveness of change with respondents asked to rate the effectiveness of the change processes within their organisation.

The responses to this question in turn used a scale developed by Victor and Franckeiss, 2002 which identified eight key dimensions to measure the effectiveness of change management processes. The survey adopted these measures in relation to the effectiveness of the university to:

1. Present reasons for the change
2. Argue that the change was necessary
3. Describe the nature of the change
4. Document the change process
5. Achieve the goals of the change
6. Implement the change process
7. Review the change process
8. Build consensus around the change

For the purposes of comparison, very high and high responses have been combined to provide a 'favourable' measure of effectiveness. In terms of overall effectiveness of the change management processes, management respondents were 90% favourable compared to union respondents who were 2% favourable. This indicates a significant divergence between management and union respondents in relation to change management provisions. Figure 1 illustrates the degree of convergence and divergence between management and union in regards to the overall effectiveness of change management processes as well as indicating the individual dimensions of effectiveness of change management.

FIGURE 1: Change Management Effectiveness: Favourable Rating



Although there is some convergence, or agreement around the dimensions of the 'capacity to implement change' (as perceived by unions) and the 'capacity to build consensus' (as perceived by management) these findings suggest that there is considerable work to be done if there is to be greater consensus between management and unions in implementing effective change.

Despite the positive overall rating of effectiveness of the change process noted by management representatives, less favourable ratings were given to the ability to 'document the change process', 'review the change process' and 'build consensus around the change process'. On the other hand, union representatives responded more favourably to their institution's ability to 'describe the nature of the change', 'achieve the goals of the change', and 'implement the change' than the overall rating of effectiveness for change management. These areas of critical evaluation by management and unions of the change process points to some scope to explore better practices to enhance the effectiveness of change management processes in relation to these specific dimensions.

In considering the effectiveness of change management processes in facilitating organisational efficiency, we found that whilst there were no marked differences between the responses of academic and general staff, an assessment of sector type revealed that Group of Eight respondents were consistently more favourable compared to the overall sector. By way of contrast, respondents from the Regional Universities were consistently less favourable when compared to the overall sector. While these responses represented the two ends of the spectrum, the responses from New Generation Universities reflected the overall survey group results. This was also the case for the Australian Technology Network except for their more favourable response in relation to the ability of their institutions to achieve the goals of change and implement the change process when compared to the sector overall. Conversely, the Innovative Research Universities, whose responses were relatively consistent with the overall survey population, were less favourable to the ability of their institutions to achieve the goals of change and implement the change process.

Section Three of the Attitudinal Survey focussed on perceptions towards the effectiveness of change management provisions in relation to the objective of fostering employee involvement. The Attitudinal Survey included reference to an extract from the original award provisions of the Australian Higher Education Sector: "It is acknowledged that sound management of workplace change requires the involvement of those who will be directly affected by the change".

In response to the question of whether the management of workplace change requires the involvement of those staff directly affected, management respondents were 90% favourable compared to union respondents who were 92% favourable. This indicates a significant convergence between management and union respondents in relation to the philosophical question of fostering employee involvement in the management of workplace change. However, when asked whether the processes for managing workplace change provide for employee involvement, management respondents were 92% favourable compared to only 30% of union respondents. This divergence between management and union respondents points to the difference between rhetoric and reality in implementing change in this sector.

In response to the question of what should be the major focus in the management of workplace change, namely organisational efficiency or employee involvement, management and union respondents were consistent in their majority response of a 'combination of involvement and efficiency' (71% for both management and union). Again, on this philosophical point, this indicates a significant convergence between management and union respondents. Further, the views on these three questions were universally shared with no significant differences across employment type or sector type compared to the overall response.

The Attitudinal Survey then explored three further questions regarding employee involvement in the management of workplace change. The first of these questions asked respondents to rate their answer along a seven point scale for measuring the degree of employee involvement as developed by the International Research Group (1976):

1. There was no employee involvement
2. Employees were provided with information on the change
3. Employees were provided with information before a final decision was made
4. Employees had the right to comment on the change
5. Employee consultation was an obligatory part of the change process
6. Employees were joint decision makers in the change management process
7. Employees had complete involvement in the change management process

Question 17 examined the degree of employee involvement in the management of workplace change.

“Which of the following [statements] best describes the degree of employee involvement in the [change] process?”

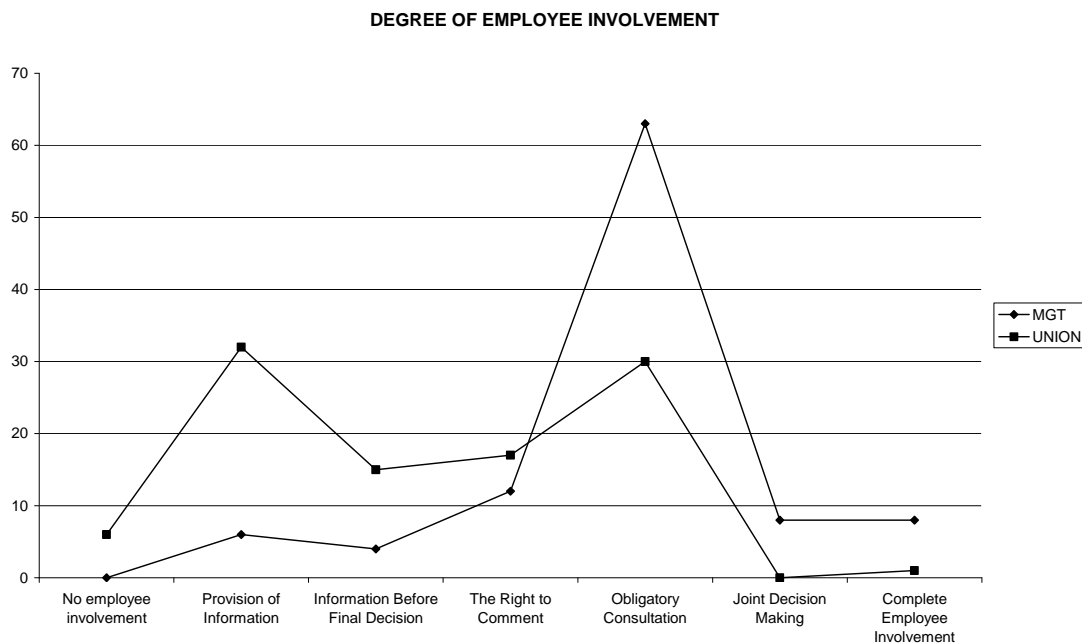
The results of the Attitudinal Survey indicated a divergence between management and union respondents in relation to the perceived degree of employee involvement in the management of workplace change. Most management representatives indicated that the degree of employee involvement ranked fifth, Obligatory Consultation (63%). Unions on the other hand ranked it second, Provision of Information (32%) as well as Obligatory Consultation (30%) indicating perhaps the different involvement practices across Australian universities.

There was less divergence between management and union respondents in relation to the form of employee involvement. Here, the majority response for both management (53%) and union (38%) was that that employee involvement occurs on a tripartite basis (between management, staff and union representatives).

In the case of each of the questions there were no significant differences across the categories of employment type (academic or general) or sector type compared to the overall response. However, whilst the responses to overall effectiveness of the change management processes in fostering employee involvement indicate no significant differences in opinion between academic and general staff, there were some differences in responses by sector type. The overall sector total of responses is relatively consistently matched by the responses from the Innovative Research Universities, the Australian Technology Network and the New Generation Universities. The Group of Eight Universities however reported a considerably

lower level of responses at the ‘low effectiveness’ end of the scale while conversely the Regional Universities reported a considerably lower level of responses at the ‘high effectiveness’ end of the scale. In other words, it appears that Group of Eight Universities were more positive that change management processes had fostered employee involvement than the Regional Universities.

FIGURE 2: Employee Involvement: Degree of Employee Involvement



The fourth section of the Attitudinal Survey focussed on perceptions of fairness in the management of workplace change. The survey explored an organisational justice context with a focus on perceptions of fairness of the decision-making process and its outcomes. Organisational justice in turn was defined as consisting of three aspects; distributive, procedural and interactional justice. Question 20 examined the issue of distributive justice, or the perceived fairness of the outcomes. The responses to this question featured a scale developed by Cobb, Folger and Wooten (1995) in relation to the dimensions of distributive justice:

1. The final decision was based on merit
2. The decision impacted equally on all participants
3. The needs of the organisation were considered
4. The needs of the participants were considered
5. Appropriate compensation was provided for adverse decisions

As with previous questions, responses indicating ‘very high’ and ‘high’ were combined to provide a ‘favourable’ measure of effectiveness. In terms of overall perceptions of the fairness of the outcomes of the change decision making processes, 78% of management respondents were favourable compared to only 4% of union respondents. This indicates a considerable divergence between management and union respondents in relation to distributive justice, again pointing to different perceptions between management and union representatives. There were no significant differences between the responses of academic and general staff.

FIGURE 3: Distributive Justice Dimensions: Favourable Rating

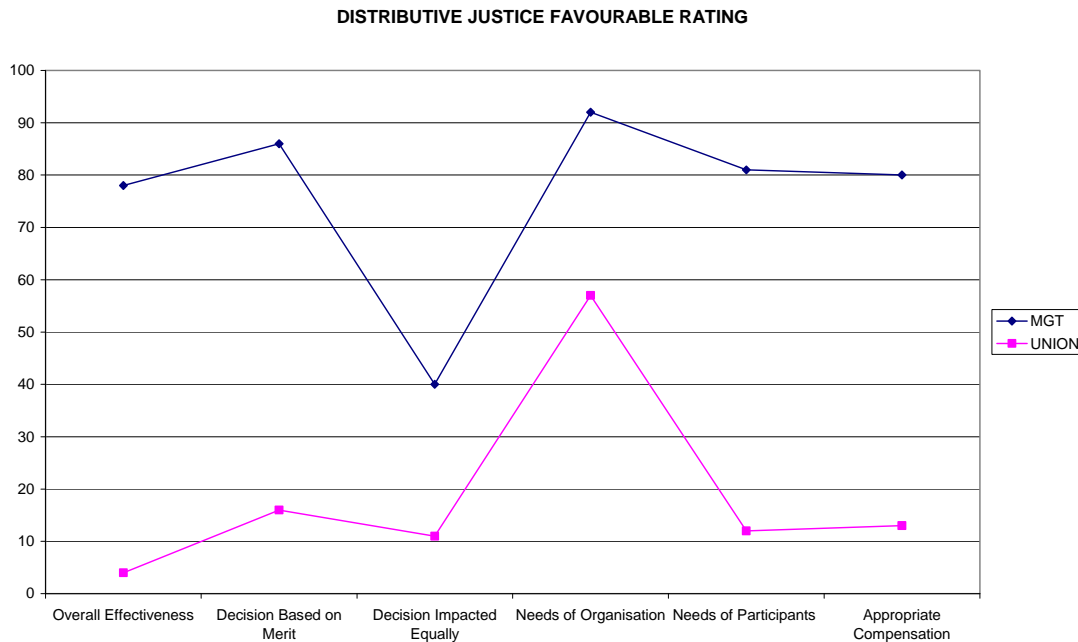
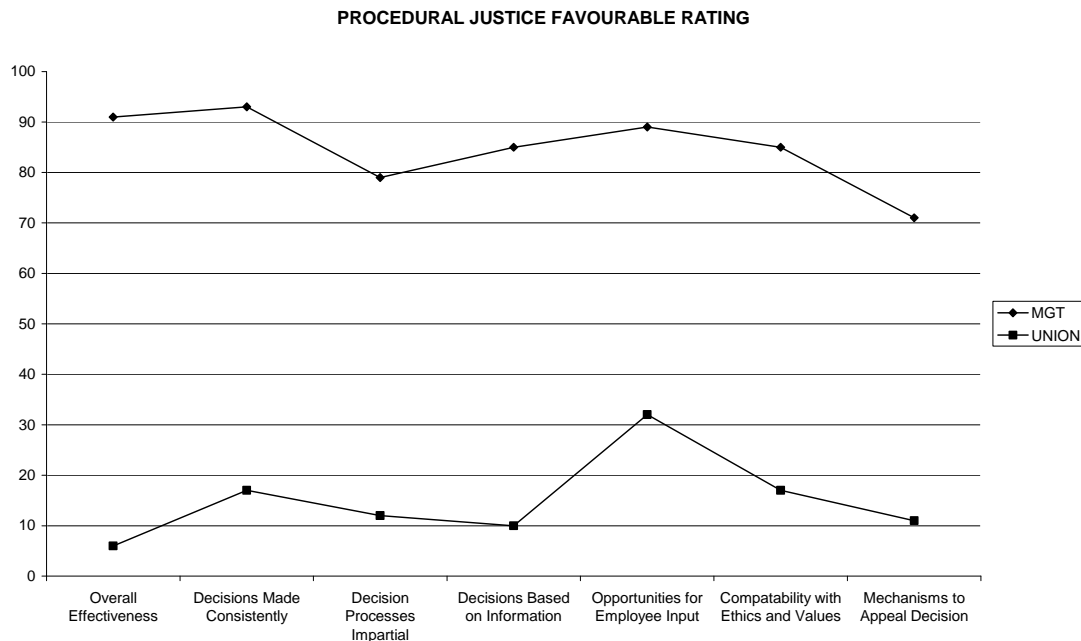


Figure 3 illustrates the considerable divergence in the responses of management and union respondents in relation to the overall provisions for distributive justice. The degree of greatest divergence (>70%) occurs between management and union in relation to the dimension of ‘the decision was based on merit’. On the other hand, both management and union respondents indicated that change was undertaken more according to the needs of the organisation than its employees.

An assessment by sector type indicated some variations between ratings with the Group of Eight universities responding more favourably overall and particularly in regards to the extent to which the decision impacted equally on all participants and the provision of appropriate compensation. The Regional Universities again occupied the other end of the spectrum with respondents generally rating less favourably on these two measures. The findings suggest that change overall is perceived as being more fairly implemented in the Group of Eight universities than the Regionals.

Question 22 examined the issue of procedural justice, or the perceived fairness of the procedures. The responses to this question featured a scale developed by Paterson, Green and Carey (2002) in relation to the dimensions of procedural justice:

1. Decisions were made consistently
2. Decision making processes were impartial
3. Decisions were based on accurate information
4. Opportunities were provided to employees to have input
5. Compatibility of the process with organisational ethics and values
6. Appropriate mechanisms to appeal the decision

FIGURE 4: Procedural Justice Dimensions: Favourable Rating

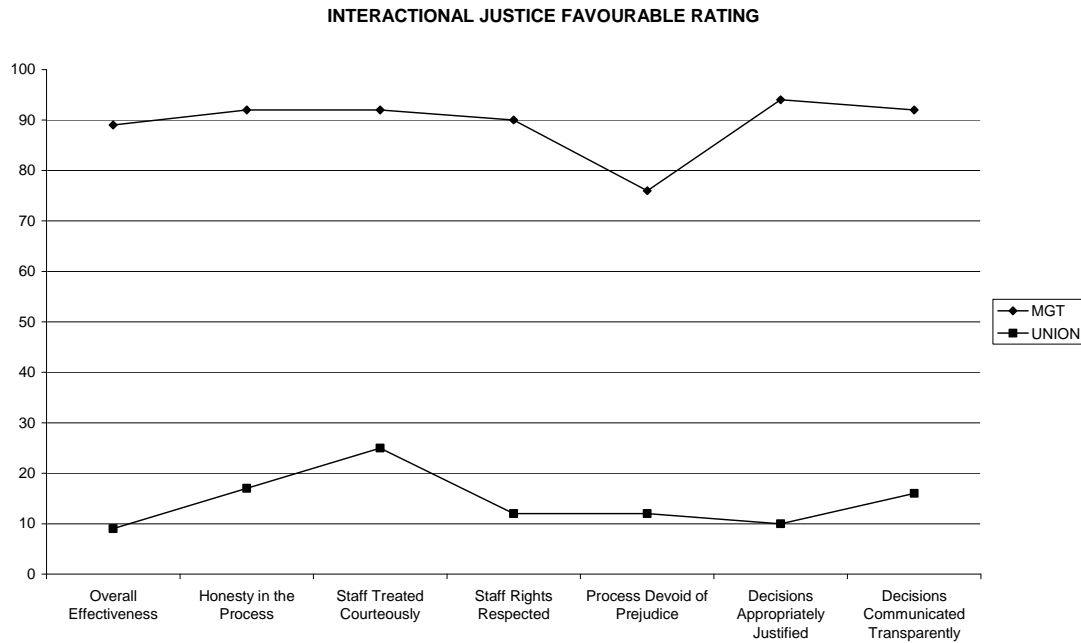
In terms of overall perceptions of the fairness of the process of the change decision making processes, 91% of management respondents were favourable compared to only 6% of union respondents as depicted in Figure 4. This significant divergence again, suggests the operation of a different set of expectations in relation to distributive justice. There were no significant differences in the responses of academic and general staff.

The degree of greatest divergence (>70%) occurs between management and union in relation to the dimensions of 'decisions were made consistently' and 'decisions were based on accurate information'. An assessment by sector type indicated some variations between ratings with the Group of Eight universities again responding more favourably overall and particularly to the extent to which decisions were made consistently and that there were opportunities for employee input. Again, the Regional Universities responded less favourably overall and particularly in regards to these same two dimensions on which the Group of Eight Universities were more favourable, suggesting a considerable degree of sectoral divergence.

Question 24 examined the issue of interactional justice, or the perceived fairness of the interpersonal treatment experienced by participants in a decision making process. The responses to this question featured a scale developed by Paterson, Green and Carey (2002) in relation to the dimensions of interactional justice:

1. There was honesty in the decision making process
2. Staff were treated courteously during the process
3. Staff had their rights respected during the process
4. The decision making process was devoid of prejudice
5. Decisions that were made were appropriately justified
6. Decisions that were made were communicated transparently

FIGURE 5: Interactional Justice Dimensions: Favourable Rating



Again, for the purposes of ease of comparison, ‘very high’ and ‘high’ responses were combined to provide a ‘favourable’ measure of effectiveness. The findings indicate that overall, 89% of management respondents were favourable compared to only 9% of union representatives. This is illustrated in Figure 5. The degree of greatest divergence (>70%) occurs between management and union in relation to the dimensions of ‘there was honesty in the decision making process’, ‘staff had their rights respected during the process’, ‘decisions that were made were appropriately justified’, and ‘decisions that were made were communicated transparently’.

There were some small variations between academic and general staff in relation to interactional justice. General Staff were more inclined than academic staff to believe that staff were treated not courteously during the process and that the decision making process was prejudiced. This seems to suggest that general staff experienced change more harshly than did academic staff.

An assessment by sector type indicated that the Group of Eight universities responded more favourably overall and particularly with regard to the extent to which staff were treated courteously and staff had their rights respected. Again, the Regional Universities responded less favourably overall and particularly in regards to these same two dimensions on which the Group of Eight Universities were more favourable, illustrating the sectoral divergence of the change management experience.

Discussion

It is apparent from the analysis of the Attitudinal Survey that there is a great deal of difference between the perceptions of management and union representatives, regardless of whether they are academic or general staff. A level of divergence, or disagreement, was found to be present across all the key areas of effectiveness in facilitating organisational efficiency, effectiveness in fostering employment involvement and each of the three dimensions of organisational justice. This might be argued to be a predictable result – the polarisation of responses from a predominantly management and union biased set of respondents. But this is too simplistic as change affects both management and union protagonists in the university sector. Further, change is generally designed to improve efficiency and productivity and this requires the cooperation and good will of employees. What the findings do reveal is that there are gradations of disagreement and agreement attached to the sector types and that overall, management respondents are overwhelmingly supportive and positive about the change. As change is instigated by management, this suggests that university management may be out of touch with the level of disenchantment experienced by their employees.

The results show that the change experience is certainly not homogenous across the sector. It is apparent that at the extremes, there is less divergence between respondents within the Group of Eight Universities but more divergence between respondents within the Regional Universities. Group of Eight Universities demonstrate the greatest level of agreement between management and union representatives that change is effective and fair. The Regional Universities demonstrate the least agreement between management and union representatives that change is effective and fair. The other sector groupings arrange themselves somewhere between, all with a degree of divergence in the change experience which would suggest that most require increased effort be put into meaningful employee involvement in their change processes. This is not to say that respondents in the Group of Eight actually consider change to *be* effective and fair but only that the degree of difference between them is smaller than that found in other sector types. Nevertheless, there may be lessons to be learned from the way change is managed in these older established institutions.

From these findings, we would argue that the management of workplace change in the Australian Higher Education Sector is in need of reform and that a focus on those dimensions of organisational justice where there is greatest convergence may provide an avenue in which to consider such reform. The results of the survey show that across the 17 dimensions of organisational justice tested, it is possible to identify seven upon which there is relative convergence between management and union on these principles:

1. The extent to which final decisions are based on merit
2. The extent to which decisions were made consistently
3. The extent to which decisions were based on accurate information
4. The extent to which there was honesty in the decision making process
5. The extent to which staff had their rights respected during the process
6. The extent to which decisions that were made were appropriately justified
7. The extent to which decisions that were made were communicated transparently

Of these seven dimensions one relates to distributive justice, two relate to procedural justice, and four to interactional justice. A tentative conclusion from this would be that the greatest degree of convergence between management and union in relation to the dimensions of organisational justice occurs in respect of interactional justice. In other words, fairness of change is perceived strongly and more positively when people are treated with respect and dignity in the process and their needs are taken into account by the decision makers. It should be noted from the survey that both management and union respondents considered that change took into account the needs of the organisation more strongly than it did the needs of the employees. A change management program addressing this issue could focus more positively on how the change will address employee needs.

By considering in greater detail the perceptions of participants within each of these seven dimensions it may be possible to identify those areas where practices can be reformed and the degree of divergence can be reduced. Thus, it may be possible to bridge the overall divide between management and union representatives in the Australian Higher Education Sector in relation to the management of workplace change. This will be the aim of the next stage of this research will involve undertaking focus group interviews with a sub-sample of the respondents to the Attitudinal Survey to gauge a deeper understanding of the institutional practices in relation to the identified organisational justice dimensions where management and union convergence is greatest.

Conclusion

This paper explored the perceptions of the effectiveness of change, the effectiveness of employee involvement and perceptions of the fairness of workplace change by university executives and union representatives as measured through an organisational justice context. The findings suggest that there is significant divergence between management and union respondents in their experience of the change process. Whilst this divergence might be argued as somewhat predictable, it suggests that action is required so that management and unions can better understand and appreciate their respective goals in workplace change. Despite the differences, there are areas of agreement in terms of the principles of organisational justice. The identification of these specific dimensions of organisational justice provides a starting point to consider a change process which facilitates fairer organisational change. Given that change management is now firmly a feature of this important Australian industry, these results point to the need for enhanced provisions for employee involvement in the management of workplace change and reform of workplace change management practices that can facilitate organisational efficiency whilst at the same time foster employee involvement.

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