

**Department of Management, Economics and Quantitative Methods**

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**Description**

Research which investigates how work systems and HRM practices can promote creativity and innovation at work is surprisingly limited. While there is widespread consent on the fact that human capital plays a major role in innovation and idea generation, and that innovative and creative behaviour in organizations is influenced by contextual variables, empirical research has not fully investigated these important links. Previous research has revealed that formalized HRM processes enhance employee creativity by reducing perceived stress and uncertainty or that specific configurations of HRM systems may have positive effects on product and technological innovation (and employee creativity). Quite counterintuitively, though, existing research fails to address the role of employee voice. Employee voice mechanisms are any mechanisms through which workers can channel their ideas to decision makers in the organization in order to contribute to solve problems, raise concerns, express and advance their interests. The role of such mechanisms is centrefold to the ability to design work systems that enhance employee creativity and innovation. Without appropriate voice mechanisms, employees' creativity cannot emerge or is severely constrained.

Consistently with this framework, the aim of this research proposal is to analyse how the different employee voice mechanisms, and their combination with other HRM practices, affect the company innovative capacity. In addition, adopting a comparative perspective, this research also aims to offer a useful empirical contribution to the understanding of how different combinations of practices could give different outcomes depending on the institutional context in which the company operates. Indeed, as suggested by the neo-institutional approach, voice mechanisms adopted by companies are strongly influenced by cultural and institutional factors and is therefore conceivable that certain HRM configurations are more effective in certain contexts than in others. The analysis will be carried out using the database of the Third European Company Survey (ECS 2013) of the Dublin Foundation (Eurofound), which collected data on about 27,000 companies with 10 or more employees operating in EU countries.

The articulation of the project over the 12-month period is as follows:

- 1) Months 1-4. Review of the literature and development of the theoretical framework.
- 2) Months 5-7. Setting of the database; identification of the statistical techniques to be used; data analysis of data
- 3) Months 8-12. Writing of research outputs.