Abstract:
Bridging the divide between behavioral science & policy
Craig R. Fox & Sim B. Sitkin

Traditionally, neoclassical economics, which assumes that people rationally maximize their self-interest, has strongly influenced public and private sector policymaking and implementation. Today, policymakers increasingly appreciate the applicability of the behavioral sciences, which advance a more realistic and complex view of individual, group, and organizational behavior. In this article, we summarize differences between traditional economic and behavioral approaches to policy. We take stock of reasons economists have been so successful in influencing policy and examine cases in which behavioral scientists have had substantial impact. We emphasize the benefits of a problem-driven approach and point to ways to more effectively bridge the gap between behavioral science and policy, with the goal of increasing both supply of and demand for behavioral insights in policymaking and practice.

Abstract:
Using Organizational Science Research to Address U.S. Federal Agencies’ Management and Labor Needs
Herman Aguinis, Gerald F. Davis, James R. Detert, Mary Ann Glynn, Susan E. Jackson, Tom Kochan, Ellen Ernst Kossek, Carrie Leana, Thomas W. Lee, Elizabeth Morrison, Jone Pearce, Jeffrey Pfeffer, Denise Rousseau & Kathleen M. Sutcliffe

We describe important and common management and labor needs across more than 80 federal agencies as identified by the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and offer evidence-based interventions for addressing them based on organizational science research. Our recommendations have the synergistic goals of improving employee wellbeing, employee productivity, and agency performance and innovation, which will result in increased agency efficiency and effectiveness for the taxpayer. Specifically, we describe empirical findings and offer suggestions for interventions to improve (a) employee motivation through engagement, empowerment, and embeddedness; (b) employee voice; and (c) within- and across-unit cooperation, communication, and collaboration. We offer recommendations that are sufficiently general to be relevant to many agencies, while also being concrete and actionable. We also offer suggestions for associated research that could be conducted in federal agencies interested in these topics.