

Implementability of HR-policies;
a multiple-case study of factors that permit HRM-programmes to be put into practice

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Paper submitted for presentation at the Dutch HRM network conference,

Amsterdam, November 13 - 14 2009

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Abstract

By means of an interview based multiple case study the impact of six manageable factors, called implementation levers, on the implementability of HRM programmes within organizations was investigated. The levers that were studied were: programme flexibility (opposite of programme standardization), programme embeddedness (fit with existing organizational processes), participative programme development (programme users being involved in the programme development), attention to politics (intra-organizational power relations being taken into account), HRM's co-workership (programme users being supported by HRM department) and HRM's accessibility (HRM department being contactable for programme users). The interview outcomes confirm the expectations about the impact of each of the levers. In addition to that, they articulate those expectations by highlighting a variety of mechanisms that explain the impact. They furthermore also point to instances of reversed impact, that is either a negative impact of the presence of a lever or a positive impact of the absence of a lever. Mechanisms that produced reversed impact were identified for all levers except HRM's accessibility. The remaining ones thus can be said to have a bright side (as was expected) but a dark side as well.

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Many activities performed by HR-professionals in organizations involve the instruction and support of other people. This state of affairs derives from the commonly applied principle of integral management which implies, among other things, that middle and other managers in the organization are accountable for HRM tasks such as organizing the performance appraisal of their coworkers, or carrying out the organization's business ethics and diversity policy in their departments. The role of HR managers is only an indirect one then: providing supervising managers and their coworkers with tools for carrying out HRM-duties. In the sections to come a multiple case study is presented which was set up in order to enhance our understanding of this part of the HR-manager's job. More specifically the study addressed the question what HR-managers can do in order to make sure that other organization members do indeed make use of their tools. As will be elaborated and explained below, this question is framed in terms of programme implementability: what can HR-managers do to secure a sound implementation of the programmes they set up for introducing HRM-tools?

HR-professionals develop tools (performance appraisal procedures, pay and promotion systems, diversity programmes etc.) for other organization members, more specifically for supervising managers, and subsequently help these members to effectively utilize those tools. Supervising managers are the first responsible for the quality of the management of their human resources, while HR-managers are responsible for the quality of the tools used to that end. This being the case, the question arises what, exactly, constitutes the quality of those tools. It is a question that touches the identity of the HRM profession.

It goes without saying that the quality of - to take an example - a performance appraisal system relates to the contents of that system (the sample of performances that are appraised and the measurement instruments that are used for appraising those performances). The sample of performances needs to reflect the essential job elements of the involved employees and the measurement instrument needs to be valid and reliable. Briefly stated the quality of an HRM-tool, as is exemplified by case of a performance appraisal system, thus evidently relates to its contents. HR-professionals tend to pay a lot of attention, therefore, to those contents. That, actually, is at the heart of their expertise. It is the core of the body of knowledge the

HRM profession is imbued with; HR professionals are recruitment experts, compensation experts, training experts and so on.

There is, though, another component of the quality of HRM tools, which is as indispensable as the adequateness of their contents but which does not automatically come into view when an HRM-department sets out to develop those tools. An HRM tool, apart from being well-developed as regards its contents, needs also to be set up in such a way that those who are supposed to use it feel inclined and enabled to do so. We speak, then, about the implementability of HRM tools. Above the HR manager's task was described as *providing supervising managers and their coworkers with the tools for carrying out HRM-duties and subsequently help those managers and coworkers to utilize those tools*'. Worded this way it is, basically, a change management task as it aims at introducing new procedures, new systems, new behaviours. The job of HR managers thus evidently involves more than designing the contents of new procedures and systems. It also includes the task to arrange the process of introducing new procedures and systems in such a way that the involved organization members do apply them indeed. In short, it is the task of HR managers to take care of the implementability of their tools.

In change management literature a three-fold distinction tends to be made as regards factors that promote the implementation of organizational changes (Pettigrew, 1985, 1987, Buchanan & Boddy, 1992, Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999, Self, Armenakis & Schraeder, 2007): change content related, change process related and change context related factors. Content related factors have to do with *what* is being changed, process related factors have to do with *how* change is brought about and context related changes have to do with *where* this is done. A content related factor is, for instance, the inclusion into a change programme of new competencies that have to be learned by employees. A process related factor is, for instance, the enactment of a top-down change strategy. A context related factor, finally, is for instance a highly competitive environment where the organization finds itself in (external context), or a low level of employees' trust in management (internal context).

Generally speaking, the task to take care of the implementability of a change programme is a matter of optimizing the whole of content, process and context factors. If applied to the job HR managers, this statement gives rise to the question what content, process and context factors play a role when HRM tools are introduced. This, basically, is the question that is addressed in the study presented in the following sections. Once we have identified those factors, we will be able to give concrete shape to the HR manager's task of securing the implementability of his/her

tools. In HRM handbooks little attention tends to be paid to this task. The study's aim can be said to come to a first articulation of it.

Implementation levers: content, process and context factors in the hands of HRM

The question 'what content, process and context factors play a role when HRM tools are introduced' needs to be qualified for being applicable to the HR manager's job. The factors we look for need to promote the implementability of HRM programmes, but in addition to that they also need to be manageable by the involved HR professionals, rather than being something given. The focus is on factors in the hands of HRM. In full, our question thus reads: *what manageable content, process and context factors play an implementation promoting role when HRM tools are introduced in an organization?* For 'manageable implementation promoting factor' we will use the term 'implementation lever' from now on.

As will be elaborated below, we come to hypothesize the existence of six implementation levers, two content ones, two process ones and two context ones. The content ones are: 'programme flexibility' and 'programme embeddedness'. The process ones are: 'participative programme development' and 'attention to organizational politics'. The context ones, finally, are 'HRM's co-workership' and 'HRM's accessibility'.

Lever 1: Programme flexibility

A change programme can be more or less standardized, that is, more or less uniformly regulated for all involved actors. This holds for HRM programmes as well. When an HR-professional develops, for instance, a new tool for career coaching to be applied by supervising managers, he/she can decide to prescribe in detail the way the tool has to be handled with or, in contrast, to let managers largely free therewith. Detailed prescriptions can be worthwhile from a strict HRM point of view, which may, for instance for fairness reasons, value a uniform enactment of the tool for all involved employees. From an implementability point of view, however, detailed prescriptions can backfire, as they may fail to entirely fit the specific situation of each involved manager. For that reason programme standardization is hypothesized to have a negative impact on the implementability HRM programmes. Positively reframed this results in the hypothesis that programme flexibility has a positive impact. Flexibility is defined, then, as the degree to which involved organization members, when enacting an HRM programme, have freedom as regards the way they

do so, or, conversely stated, the degree to which they are bound by strict rules and procedures.

Lever 2: Programme embeddedness

A new HRM tool that is to be introduced does, by definition, not form part of existing routines in the organization as it is supposed to add something essentially new to those routines. That is not to say, however, that it is in all respects a *Fremdkörper* in the organization as one can choose to model the new tool in such a way that discrepancies with existing routines are minimized. A new compensation tool, for instance, can be linked to an existing HRM cycle, rather than being simply added to the whole of existing regulations. From an implementability point of view, minimization of discrepancies with existing routines may be a wise approach as it diminishes the newness of a tool for the involved actors and consequently reduces the efforts they have to invest in applying it. Positively stated, we may hypothesize, therefore, that an HRM tool is the more implementable, the more it is embedded in (rather than added to) existing processes in the organization. Programme embeddedness is defined, then, as the degree to which an HRM programme fits in with existing processes in the organization or, conversely stated, the degree to which it is disconnected to those processes.

Lever 3: Participative programme development

In the change management literature many change management strategies are described and discussed. Among the most advocated ones is the so-called participative change strategy, also called the collaborative or consultative mode of change management, or, in short, OD (organization development) (cf. Stace & Dunphy, 1991). It is a change management approach that allows many actors in the organization, both low and high in the hierarchy, to exert influence on change related decisions and courses of action. The co-decision making of involved organization members, which is the key characteristic of it, serves as an instrument for optimizing the quality of decisions that are taken while simultaneously creating positive attitudes towards intended changes among the participating organization members. This mechanism might very well apply to the introduction of HRM programmes. Co-decision making by the involved supervising managers may help to promote the acceptability as well as the doability of those programmes and consequently enhance the implementability thereof. We may hypothesize, therefore, that an HRM tool is

the more implementable, the more it was developed in a participative way.

Participative programme development is defined, then, as the degree to which those who have to enact an HRM programme were enabled to contribute to its development or, conversely stated, the degree to which they were confronted with a programme that was entirely developed by other people.

Lever 4: Attention to organizational politics

An organization is a political arena. Chosen courses of actions in it reflect to a large extent the prevailing power relations in it. Attempts to change things within an organization are, as a consequence, doomed to failure as long as those power relations are not skillfully taken into account (cf. Boddy & Buchanan, 1992). This evidently holds unrestrictedly for the introduction of HRM programmes as well, if only because of the lack of intra-organizational formal power of the HRM departments themselves. HR managers, for performing their task well, simply need to play the power game (Silvester, 2008). Accordingly, we hypothesize that HRM tools are the more implementable in an organization, the more the HR department takes intra-organizational power relations into account when developing and introducing those tools, or in short: the more attention they give to organizational politics. Attention to organizational politics is defined, then, as the degree to which power relations within the organization have been taken into account when an HRM programme was developed and introduced, or conversely stated, the degree to which it was developed and introduced irrespective of intra-organizational power relations.

Levers 5 and 6: HRM's co-workership and HRM's accessibility

The implementability of a change programme, as was posited above, depends on the change context. To promote the implementability of their programmes change agents have no choice, therefore, but to positively manipulate that context. Especially in the case of HR-managers in the role of change agent, however, the possibilities to do so are limited. Conditions in the external change context (the organization's environment) as well as the internal context (the organization itself) are largely given, or decided on by other actors. There is, though, another side of this medal. The HR managers themselves form part of the internal context of the changes that their tools and programmes are supposed to bring about and at least that part of the internal context is something that an HRM department can try to optimize for

implementability reasons. More specifically, it can position itself in such a way that it does everything possible to remove implementation barriers. To that end it has to play a servant role *vis-à-vis* those organization members who are supposed to enact its programmes. It can take a part of the implementation burden itself, for instance by taking care of the administrative elements of an HRM programme. Or it can organize itself as a desk for information and support which can be consulted by organization members any time they are confronted with implementation related problem. We label a stance of an HRM department like that ‘HRM-coworkership’ and ‘HRM’s accessibility’ respectively and thus hypothesize that HRM tools are the more implementable in an organization, the more the HRM department displays coworkership and accessibility. HRM’s co-workership is defined, then, as the degree to which the HRM department relieves the work load or otherwise facilitates the task of organization members whose task is to enact an HRM programme. And HRM’s accessibility is defined as the degree to which the HRM department can be contacted for help and advice each time those who have to enact an HRM programme are in need of help and advice.

Research method

For testing and amending the research hypotheses about the effects of the six implementation levers that were distinguished, a multiple case-study was conducted, mainly based on interviews with involved organization members. Four different HRM-programmes in four different organizations were investigated.

The cases

The four cases that were investigated all dealt, one way or another, with HRM programmes for the improvement of performances and/or competencies of personnel. The first one, labeled ‘career scan’ was in a large school (about 1250 teachers) where the HRM-department had developed an audit instrument, to be used by individual employees on a voluntary basis, that provides input for an employee’s career management. The second one, labeled ‘upgrading’, was in an assurance company where the HRM department had composed a package of educational modules that were meant to be used by employees for upgrading their educational level, together with regulations that facilitated the use of those modules. The third one, labeled quality & safety, was in a production plant where the HRM department had launched a behavior modification project, aimed at inducing the personnel to conform to

certain quality and safety related behavioral rules. The fourth one, finally, labeled tenure track, was in a medical school where the HRM department had designed a new set of rules for career advancement of the faculty, aimed at creating excellency in the faculty as a whole.

The interviews

Interviews were planned for each case with three types of respondents: a representative of the HRM department, a line manager who was involved in the HRM programme under study, and an employee involved in that programme. Apart from the quality&safety case, where the employee interview could not be arranged in time, and the tenure track case, where two HRM representatives were interviewed instead of one, a series of interviews was accordingly conducted,.

The interviews were strictly set up, which is something different from strictly structured. In fact, they were rather unstructured, but nonetheless aimed at the collection of well-specified data. During the interview the respondent was made familiar with the study's seven key concepts (implementability and each of the six implementation levers). This occurred, in teaching-like intermezzo's, before questions related to those concepts were asked. The questions that were asked related to one lever at a time. As regards each lever the respondent was asked 1) to what degree the lever was present in his/her case (*e.g.*: how flexible was the programme?), 2) in what way it was present (what, exactly, made the programme flexible or unflexible?), 3) what evidence underlied the answers given on the first two questions (do those answers reflect more than private opinions or impressions?), 4) whether the lever had played a positive and/or a negative role as regards the programme's implementability, 5) in what way it had played that role (what mechanisms strengthened or weakened the implementability?) and 6) what evidence underlied the answers given on the fourth and fifth question (see question 3). The respondent was thus invited to critically consider his/her experiences with the HRM programme under study, and to articulate his/her understanding of those experiences. The respondent's knowledge of the situation, including his/her knowledge of the mechanisms that played a role, were – so to say – elicited. Quite often this proved to be a very hard job to do for respondents, especially as they were induced to refrain as much as possible from giving opinions and mentioning facts only instead (for that reason the questions 3 and 4 were included in the interview).

Analysis of interview outcomes

For answering the research questions the interview questions 5 and 6 are directly relevant (that is not to say that interview questions 1 to 4 were dispensable; for creating a meaningful context for questions 5 and 6 they had to be answered first). The answers given to these two questions, which referred to the mechanisms related to the six hypothesized implementation levers, were compiled in such a way that for each lever the mechanisms that were identified by at least one respondent (derived from question 5 answers), as far as the answers were sufficiently fact based (derived from question 6 answers), were distilled from the body of answers given. The result is an overview of the mechanisms that turned out to be associated with the levers in the cases studied.

Results

Answers given by each of the respondents to the six interview questions are summarized in tables 1 – 6 (one table for each implementation lever). As can be seen, data were missing in a couple of instances. This is explained by the high difficulty level of the type of interview that was used, which forced the respondents to come up with facts and experiences rather than perceptions and opinions. Taken together, however, the interviews still elicited a broad range of answers to the questions, including the questions about mechanisms related to the implementation levers (the number five questions). These mechanisms, distilled from the data in tables 1-6, are presented in tables 7 – 12. A number of the mechanisms that thus show up underscore the hypothesized impacts of the implementation levers, pointing to either positive effects of the presence, or negative effects of the absence of the levers. They furthermore clarify the working of the levers by highlighting, for each lever separately, a variety of factors that mediate the impact on implementability. As such, they thus do more than just corroborating the hypotheses. They also amend them as they articulate the whole of underlying mechanisms. The most striking outcome of the interviews, though, is that not only positively impacting mechanisms were described by the respondents. Two other types of mechanisms were identified as well, one representing a *negative* impact of a lever on implementability (this was the case with the lever flexibility) and one representing a positive impact on implementability of *the absence* of a lever on implementability (this was the case with all levers except HRM's accessibility). In addition to that, finally, instances of zero impact showed up as well. This was the case with the lever participative programme

development, which turned out to have no impact at all in conditions that prevailed in one of the four cases that were studied.

Discussion issues

- Dark side and bright side of implementation levers: levers do play a role but need to be dealt with carefully
- Multitude of mechanisms involved: implementability theory becomes complicated
- Small sample of cases: more cases will probably enhance the quantity of identified mechanisms, which further enhances the theory complexity
- Restricted set of implementation levers studied: more levers with still more mechanisms may be found, which once more is going to enhance theory complexity
- Need of looking for basic mechanisms, to reduce the theory complexity.
- Methodology of elicitation of practitioners' knowledge by means of fact-based interviewing proves to be fruitful

Table 1. Level and impact of implementation level 1: programme flexibility					
	HRM-programme	CAREER SCAN Individual career scans for career planning	UPGRADING Education modules for workforce upgrading	QUALITY/SAFETY Quality and safety related behaviour change of employees	TENURE TRACK Excellence promoting career regulations
Respondent 1 HRM-1	Level(s)	10 & 1	6	10 & 3	2½
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Basic system simplicity but complex individual decisions/ <i>Employee comments</i>	Missing/ <i>Missing</i>	(Flexible design phase but) standardized implementation phase/ <i>Missing</i>	Strict & fixed set of rules for involved employees/ <i>Facts</i>
	Impact	+	+	+ & -	+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Low flexibility → structure High flexibility → prevent irrelevancies/ <i>Employee comments</i>	High standardization → Clear communicability towards employees/ <i>Positive reactions</i>	High standardization → understandability High standardization → 'not invented here' feelings/ <i>Employee reactions</i>	(Set aside possible undesirable consequences:) the rules force the involved employees to conform/ <i>Respondent experience</i>
Respondent 2 Manager	Level(s)	2	3	3½	2
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Scan system is standardized, as is the ICT / <i>Fact</i>	Ready made program of external provider/ <i>Missing</i>	Largely ready made programme copied from other organizations/ <i>Missing</i>	Strict & fixed set of rules for involved employees/ <i>Uniform practices</i>
	Impact	+	Missing	+	+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Clear communicability towards employees/ <i>Personal opinion</i>	Missing/ <i>Missing</i>	Standardization fits with org. culture (high degrees of freedom do not) / <i>Respondent experience</i>	Lack of standardization would give rise to lowering the excellence norms/ <i>Respondent experience</i>
Respondent. 3 Employee	Level(s)	7	2		3
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	ICT = standardized Personal HRM-advice = customized/ <i>Fact</i>	Take it or leave it nature of programme/ <i>Fact</i>		Rules and timing are unambiguous/ <i>Missing</i>
	Impact	+	0		+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	It is the combination of ICT and personal advice: Personal HRM advice may correct misunderstood directives of ICT system/ <i>Respondent experience</i>	High standardization did not play any role/ <i>Missing</i>		Due to the standardization the involved employees face clear tasks and clear goals which highly motivates them/ <i>Respondent experience</i>
Respondent 4 HRM-2	Level(s)				3
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				Strict & fixed set of rules for involved employees/ <i>Fact</i>
	Impact				+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				High standardization → transparency → positive attitude of involved employees/ <i>Reactions of employees</i>

Table 2. Level and impact of implementation lever 2: programme embeddedness

	HRM-programme	CAREER SCAN Individual career scans for career planning	UPGRADING Education modules for workforce upgrading	QUALITY/SAFETY Quality and safety related behaviour change of employees	TENURE TRACK Excellence promoting career regulations
Respondent 1 HRM-1	Level(s)	9	7½	9	2
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Fit with overall HRM-strategy Possible misfit with daily supervisor practices/ <i>Fact & employee reactions</i>	Alignment with job content of involved employees No home-program interference/ <i>Facts and employee experiences</i>	Fit with team based org.-culture & structure Fit with experienced problems/ <i>Enthusiasm & satisfaction in organization</i>	Programme is entirely different from existing HRM practice. Programme does an entirely different appeal on employees
	Impact	+/-	+	+	+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Fit with HRM-strategy is fine Misfit with supervisor style may be failure factor/ <i>Employee reactions & respondent experience</i>	Fit with employees' work situation makes program understandable, motivating and doable/ <i>Missing</i>	Fit promotes acceptance by MT, middle management and work teams/ <i>Missing</i>	Low embeddedness → high visibility and much attention; also → transfer of experiences to existing HRM practices/ <i>documents, facts</i>
Respondent 2 Manager	Level(s)	2	8	8	3
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	The scan is a private thing, unrelated to HRM cycle/ <i>Fact</i>	Programme was made easy for employees. No connection with HRM-procedures/ <i>Fact</i>	Fit with team based org.-culture & structure / <i>Reactions of employees, respondent's experiences</i>	Entirely different from existing HRM practice/ <i>fact</i>
	Impact	+	---	+	missing
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Low embeddedness means low interference with daily work/ <i>Respondent opinion, employee reactions</i>	---	Fit with team-based culture made that ownership was felt (by the teams) <i>Respondent opinion</i>	Dysfunctional contrast with existing HRM practice may backfire someday/ <i>respondent's expectation</i>
Respondent. 3 Employee	Level(s)	8 & 2	8		7
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Low: scan outcomes do not fit with respondent's position in the organization. High: scan outcomes were subsumed in HRM-cycle/ <i>Documents</i>	Fit between programme content and respondent's job. Lack of time and agenda constraints made program doable/ <i>Facts</i>		Moderate differences with existing HRM practice/ <i>fact</i>
	Impact	+ & -	+		+ & -
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Negative: scan outcomes couldn't be utilized/ <i>Conflict with supervisor</i>	Fit with job is motivating/ <i>Missing</i> ---		Dysfunctional contrasts with existing practice may backfire, functional contrasts add to acceptance/ <i>respondent impression and opinion</i>
Respondent 4 HRM-2	Level(s)				9
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				Old and new system work separately/ <i>Practice experiences</i>
	Impact				+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				No old-new interference

Table 3. Level and impact of implementation lever 3: participative programme development

	HRM-programme	CAREER SCAN Individual career scans for career planning	UPGRADING Education modules for workforce upgrading	QUALITY/SAFETY Quality and safety related behaviour change of employees	TENURE TRACK Excellence promoting career regulations
Respondent 1 HRM-1	Level(s)	10	1	8	Missing
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Pilot has been done before programme start/ <i>fact</i>	Respondent was faced with ready made programme/ <i>fact</i>	Mainly upper echelon participation, but bottom-up as well/ <i>fact</i>	Missing/ <i>Missing</i>
	Impact	+	0	+	Missing
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Apparent high levels of satisfaction by participating employees/ <i>respondent's (selective?, biased?) observation</i>	Due to high attractivity of programme no need of participation was felt/ <i>respondent's view</i>	Participation gives rise to good relationship/ <i>feeling of respondent; positive attitudes of MT- and WC (workers' council) members</i>	Missing <i>Missing</i>
Respondent 2 Manager	Level(s)	1	1½	8	1
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Programme was ready made/ <i>fact</i>	Through high speed of introduction no participation was planned/ <i>fact</i>	MT and WC (workers' council) was involved in decision making, as well as representatives of work units/ <i>facts</i>	Entirely top-down decision making/ <i>fact</i>
	Impact	missing	0	+	0
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>	No spontaneous comments came from involved actors → apparently no need of participation/ <i>respondent's view</i>	Participation → acceptance/ <i>respondent's experience</i>	The take it or leave it nature of the programme made that the involved employees voluntarily engaged themselves/ <i>nobody resistance</i>
Respondent. 3 Employee	Level(s)	3	1		1
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Opinion was asked afterwards only/ <i>fact</i>	Before start of programme there was no participation at all / <i>fact</i>		Entirely top-down decision making; room for improvement ideas/ <i>fact</i>
	Impact	+	0		0
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Being asked for an opinion feels good (but no certainty about use of it) / <i>respondent's self-observation</i>	Due to high attractivity of programme no resistance was felt → no need of participation was felt/ <i>missing</i>		Missing/ <i>Missing</i>
Respondent 4 HRM-2	Level(s)				2
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				Ready made imported programme; some consultation afterwards of first users/ <i>facts</i>
	Impact				0
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				Participation was not an issue/ <i>Smooth introduction of programme, no resistance</i>

Table 4. Level and impact of implementation lever 4: attention to politics					
	HRM-programme	CAREER SCAN Individual career scans for career planning	UPGRADING Education modules for workforce upgrading	QUALITY/SAFETY Quality and safety related behaviour change of employees	TENURE TRACK Excellence promoting career regulations
Respondent 1 HRM-1	Level(s)	8½	Missing	8	2½
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Management team is initiator of programme, unions were informed and committed/ <i>facts</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>	Active involvement of PM (plantmanager), WC (workers' council) and mother company	HRM approached top management only; supervisors were disregarded/ <i>facts</i>
	Impact	+	Missing	+	+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Committing of MT and unions → MT and unions provided financial resources for the programme/ <i>view of respondent</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>	Within MT (management team) status of programme was unquestioned; support of WC, PM and MT was helpful/ <i>respondent's view</i>	Network of supervisors ('old boys network') was effectively overruled by topmanagement/ <i>respondent's observation</i>
Respondent 2 Manager	Level(s)	2	3	6	3½
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	No constraints for participation in programme; open discussion about scan outcomes/ <i>respondent's experience</i>	There were no conflicts of interest between parties involved/ <i>missing</i>	Active involvement of WC (workers' council) and individual MT members/ <i>respondent's experience and own initiatives</i>	Programme was kept apart from existing practices, which were not abolished → no threat for supervisors/ <i>facts</i>
	Impact	+	Missing	+	+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Participant being autonomous, unrestricted by power relations → participant's ownership feeling/ <i>resp's opinion</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>	Cooperative WC/ <i>respondent's perception</i>	Influence of involved supervisors was respected/ <i>not much resistance and conflict</i>
Respondent. 3 Employee	Level(s)	1	Missing		3½
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Interests of one big actor (employee's organizational unit) has been disregarded/ <i>comments of unit leader</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>		As regards career decisions: those who were in power (supervisors) remain largely in power/ <i>fact</i>
	Impact	-	Missing		+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Programme gave rise to conflict between unit and organization / <i>fact</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>		Power maintenance of supervisors → commitment of supervisors/ <i>resp's observation</i>
Respondent 4 HRM-2	Level(s)				8
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				As regards career decisions: those who were in power (supervisors) remain largely in power/ <i>fact</i>
	Impact				+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				Power maintenance of supervisors → commitment of supervisors/ <i>resp's observation</i>

Table 5. Level and impact of implementation lever 5: HRM's co-workship					
	HRM-programme	CAREER SCAN Individual career scans for career planning	UPGRADING Education modules for workforce upgrading	QUALITY/SAFETY Quality and safety related behaviour change of employees	TENURE TRACK Excellence promoting career regulations
Respondent 1 HRM-1	Level(s)	2/9	9	5	Missing
	Level(s) explained/ Evidence	Low: employee does all the work him/herself High: HRM gives time, materials, attention, ideas, contacts/ facts	All practicalities were organized by HRM/ <i>view of respondent</i>	HRM arranged last minute issues, worked fast, did fair amount of task- relieving jobs	Missing/ <i>missing</i>
	Impact	+	+	+	Missing
	Impact explained/ Evidence	Low → employee responsibility remains intact. High → employee not bothering about practicalities/ <i>respondent's impression</i>	Removal of practical constraints/ <i>missing</i>	HRM has an exemplary role; basically, however, HRM should refrain from doing the work/ <i>positive comments of involved organization members</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>
Respondent 2 Manager	Level(s)	3/6	9	4 & 8	8
	Level(s) explained/ Evidence	Low (1): employee has to do all tasks involved Low (2): poor ICT related facilitation High: HRM's content related facilitation <i>facts</i>	Practicalities were organized by HRM, implementation related questions were answered/ <i>facts</i>	Low: HRM refrained from doing the work High: HRM facilitated things, arranged practicalities	HRM supervised procedures HRM provided technical (legal) knowledge/ <i>facts</i>
	Impact	+/-	Missing	+	+
	Impact explained/ Evidence	Low (1) → employee's feeling of responsibility and ownership Low (2) → frustration → resistance/ <i>resp.'s and employees' experience</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>	Missing/ <i>positive comments of involved organization members</i>	Due to HRM's contribution, management and employees are enabled to focus on programme content/ <i>no complaints</i>
Respondent 3 Employee	Level(s)	2/8	3		7
	Level(s) explained/ Evidence	Low: employee has to do all tasks involved High: HRM's content related facilitation/ <i>facts</i>	HRM dealt with practicalities only; not with content related issues/ <i>facts</i>		HRM supervised procedures HRM provided technical (legal) knowledge / <i>facts</i>
	Impact	+	+		+
	Impact explained/ Evidence	Low → effectivity, because self-doing is essential High → better understanding of possibilities/ <i>respondent's experience</i>	Organizing practicalities is OK. HRM must refrain from playing the leader role/ <i>respondent's view</i>		HRM takes care of the progr. organization → involved org. members can concentrate on program content/ <i>experience of respondent and colleagues</i>
Respondent 4 HRM-2	Level(s)				1
	Level(s) explained/ Evidence				Restricted role of HRM (legal matters, support)/ <i>missing</i>
	Impact				+
	Impact explained/ Evidence				HRM lacks expertise for more than restricted role/ <i>daily practice</i>

Table 6. Level and impact of implementation lever 6: HRM's accessibility

	HRM-programme	CAREER SCAN Individual career scans for career planning	UPGRADING Education modules for workforce upgrading	QUALITY/SAFETY Quality and safety related behaviour change of employees	TENURE TRACK Excellence promoting career regulations
Respondent 1 HRM-1	Level(s)	9	8	8	Missing
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	HR consultants have an open attitude. Though not literally always accessible, they practically are/ <i>daily practice, opinion of resp.</i>	Programme leader is 24/24 accessible, HRM department is well informed/ <i>respondent's experiences</i>	HRM was available, especially at programme's start when many questions were asked/ <i>fact</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>
	Impact	+	+	+	Missing
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Missing/ <i>no complaints</i>	Accessibility → problems are quickly solved; and → participants feel supported/ <i>missing</i>	High accessibility → smooth implementation/ <i>positive comments by participating members</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>
Respondent 2 Manager	Level(s)	9	9	8	9½
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Appointments are easily made, consultants are easily found; consultants are client oriented/ <i>daily practice</i>	For daily problem solving and for informing HRM was permanently available for employees, team leaders, managers, external party./ <i>missing</i>	Missing/ <i>fact</i>	Whenever a problem comes up, HRM is available for support/ <i>respondent's experience</i>
	Impact	+	Missing	+	+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Quick and immediate support 'keeps momentum', helps to persist/ <i>personal experience</i>	Missing/ <i>missing</i>	Missing/ <i>positive comments by participating members</i>	Steadiness of HRM-support → successful implementation/ <i>respondent's experience</i>
Respondent. 3 Employee	Level(s)	10	8		10
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	Quick mail and telephone replies; client orientedness of consultants/ <i>respondent's experience</i>	Program leader could always be called and was present at training sessions, fulfilling consultant role/ <i>facts</i>		Accessibility & client orientedness/ <i>respondent's experience</i>
	Impact	+	+		+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>	HRM accessibility → respondent's feeling of being listened to and → respondent's motivation to invest in programme / <i>respondent's experience</i>	Accessibility → feeling of being backed and → feeling of being not alone as programme participant		Accessibility → HRM is able to play facilitating role → smooth implementation/ <i>respondent's experience</i>
Respondent 4 HRM-2	Level(s)				9
	Level(s) explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				HRM pays lot of attention to high potentials/ <i>facts</i>
	Impact				+
	Impact explained/ <i>Evidence</i>				Accessibility & supportingness → commitment of involved employees and → satisfied employees, managers/ <i>comments by employees and managers</i>

Table 7. Factors that mediate the impact on implementability of high and low levels of programme flexibility			
	Positive impact	Negative impact	Zero impact
High	Prevention of irrelevancies Personalisation, customization of programme	Erosion of norms that underlie the programme	---
Low	Clarity of programme structure Communicability of programme Understandability of programme Strength, forcingness of programme Motivatingness of clear programme goals Highly appreciated programme transparency	'Not invented here' attitudes	

Table 8. Factors that mediate the impact on implementability of high and low levels of programme embeddedness			
	Positive impact	Negative impact	Zero impact
High	Programme's alignment with other HRM practices Ownership feelings Programme acceptance Programme understandability Programme doability Programme's motivatingness	---	---
Low	Zero interference with daily work Programme visibility, salience Transfer of programme elements to existing HRM-practices Programme acceptance due to functional contrast with existing practices	Unusability of programme outcomes through conflict with supervisor style Unusability of programme outcomes through problematic transfer to employee's work situation	

Table 9. Factors that mediate the impact on implementability of high and low levels of participative programme development			
	Positive impact	Negative impact	Zero impact
High	'Feel good' reactions of those participating in programme development Positive personal relationships resulting from participation in programme development Programme acceptance as a result of participation in programme development	---	Superfluity of participation in case of apparent inherent programme attractiveness
Low	Commitment enhancement of those volunteering in the programme without having participated in the programme development	---	

Table 10. Factors that mediate the impact on implementability of high and low levels of attention to politics			
	Positive impact	Negative impact	Zero impact
High	Willingness of powerholders to provide resources Supportive, committed and cooperative attitude of powerholders Zero threat for powerholders	---	Superfluity of attention to politics in case of apparent absence of conflicting interests
Low	Safeguarding the autonomy of involved organization members	Conflict with disregarded actor	Superfluity of attention to politics as far as effective overruling is possible

Table 11. Factors that mediate the impact on implementability of high and low levels of HRM's co-workership			
	Positive impact	Negative impact	Zero impact
High	Organization members being released from care for practicalities and technicalities Organization members being enabled to entirely concentrate in programme content Removal of practical constraints Programme being well understood by organization members	---	---
Low	Safeguarding the responsibility of involved organization members Safeguarding the ownership feeling of involved organization members	Resistance rooted in frustration	

Table 12. Factors that mediate the impact on implementability of high and low levels of HRM's accessibility			
	Positive impact	Negative impact	Zero impact
High	Smoothness of implementation Momentum maintenance Organization members' commitment Organization members' feeling of being listened to Organization members' feeling of being supported Organization members' feeling of being not alone Organization members' motivation to invest efforts in programme Organization members being encouraged to persist	---	---
Low	---	---	

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