

DESAYUNO EJECUTIVO

The HR department's contribution to line managers' effective implementation of HR practices

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RESEARCH ON THE HRM-PERFORMANCE RELATIONSHIP

- **Five major (interrelated and consequential) themes**

- 1.** Impact of HRM on performance
- 2.** Boundary conditions of HRM effectiveness
- 3.** Linking mechanisms between HRM and performance
- 4.** Meaning of HRM for employees
- 5.** Achieving effective HR implementation

THEME I - IMPACT OF HRM ON PERFORMANCE



Broad RQ



What influence does HRM have on organizational performance?

THEME I - IMPACT OF HRM ON PERFORMANCE

The crucial HRM goal is to provide employees with the necessary **Abilities, Motivation and Opportunities (AMO)** to perform to a high level (Jang et al., 2012; Subramony, 2009)

-----> **High-Performance Work Systems** are the quintessential expression of “good HRM” (Guest, 2011)

HPWS = Best HR practices = HRM (Godard, 2010; Guest et al., 2003)

THEME I - IMPACT OF HRM ON PERFORMANCE

- **Performance outcomes relevant to HR** (Dyer & Reeves, 1995)

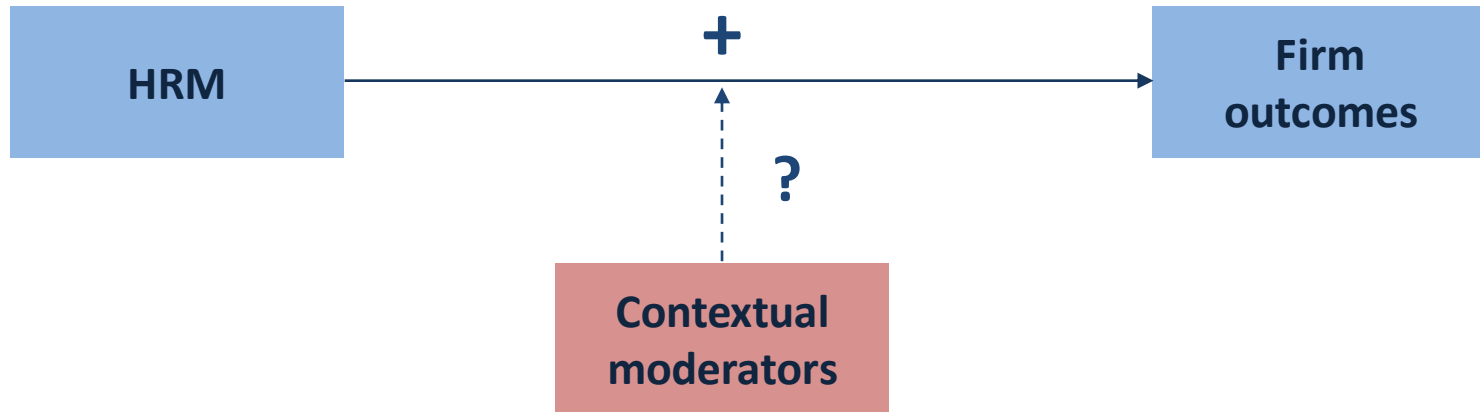
EMPLOYEE OUTCOMES (e.g., turnover, absenteeism, wellbeing)

ORGANIZATIONAL OUTCOMES (e.g., productivity, quality, innovation)

FINANCIAL OUTCOMES (e.g., profits, market share, Tobin's q)

Consequential order
(Huselid, 1995; Jiang et al., 2012)

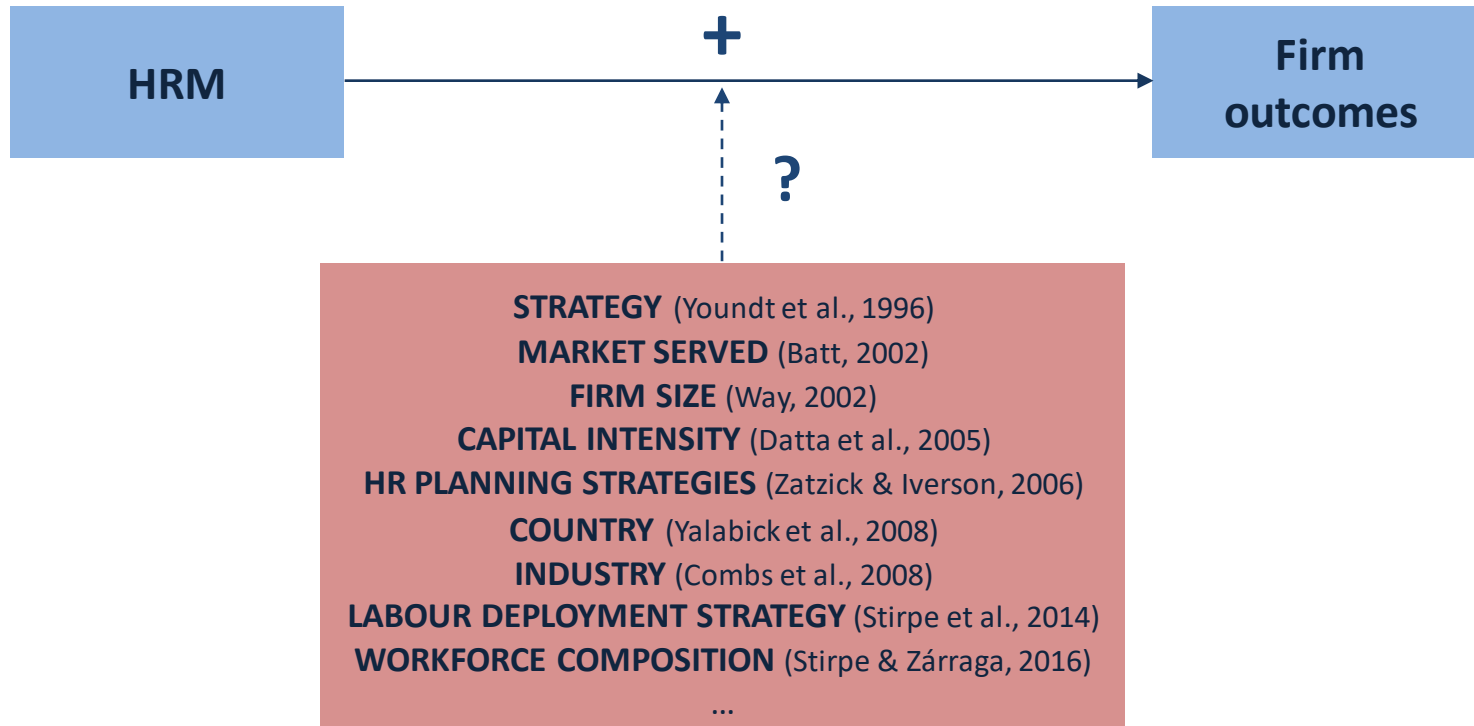
THEME 2 - BOUNDARY CONDITIONS OF HRM EFFECTIVENESS



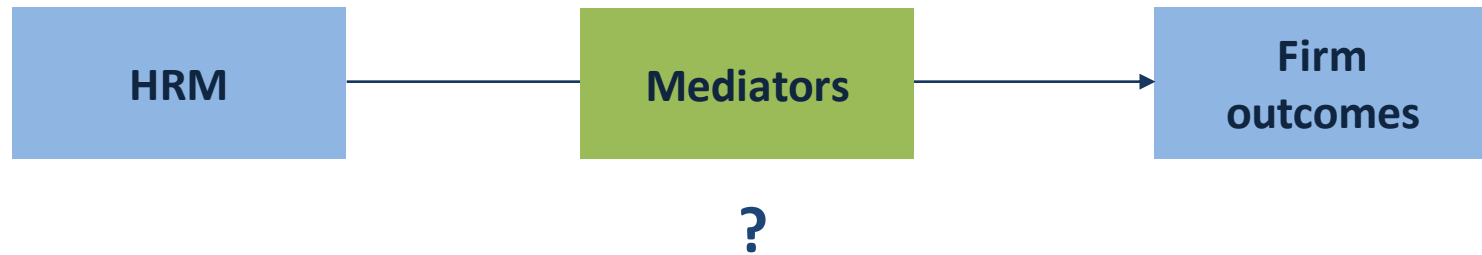
Broad RQ

Does HRM value vary from one setting to another?

THEME 2 - BOUNDARY CONDITIONS OF HRM EFFECTIVENESS



THEME 3 – LINKING MECHANISMS BETWEEN HRM AND PERFORMANCE

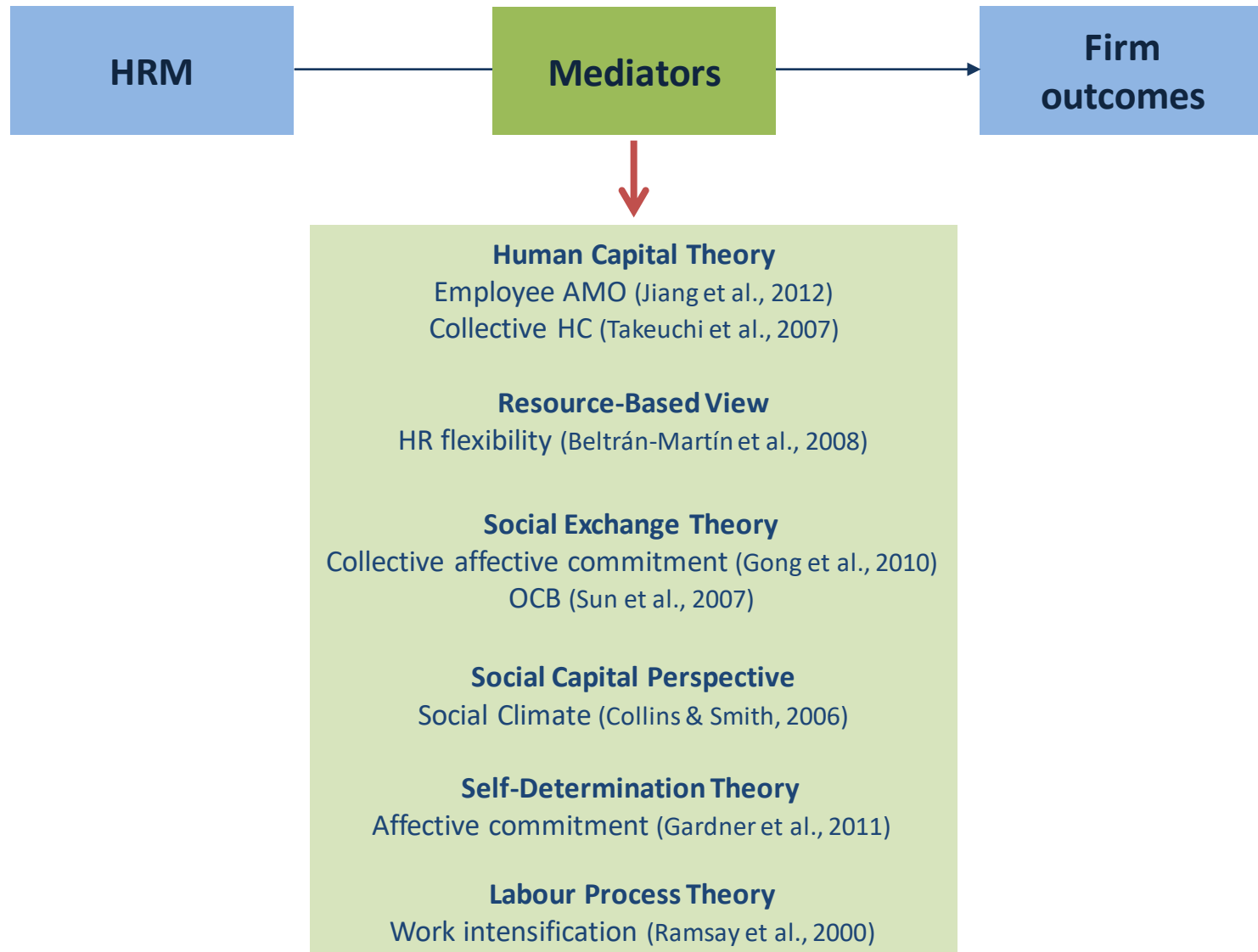


Broad RQ

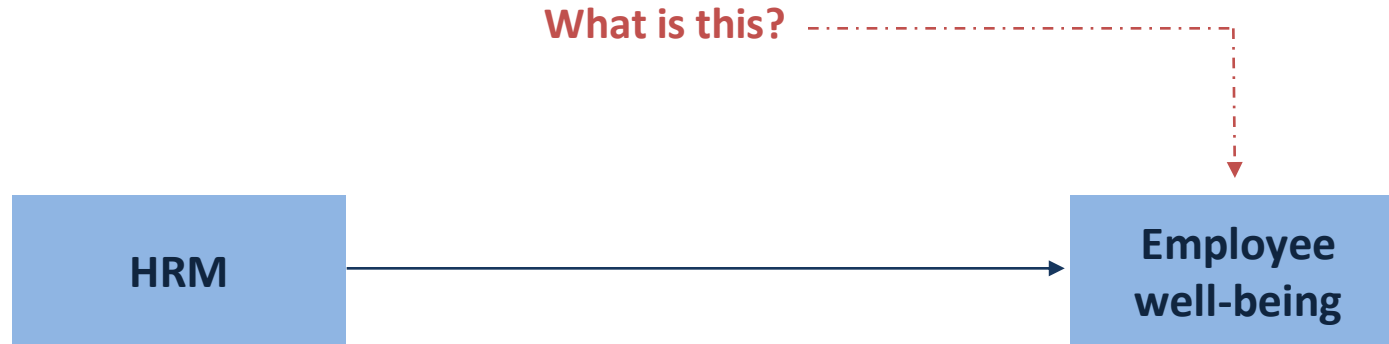


What factors help to explain why HR practices influence performance?

THEME 3 – LINKING MECHANISMS BETWEEN HRM AND PERFORMANCE



THEME 4 – THE MEANING OF HRM FOR EMPLOYEES



Broad RQ

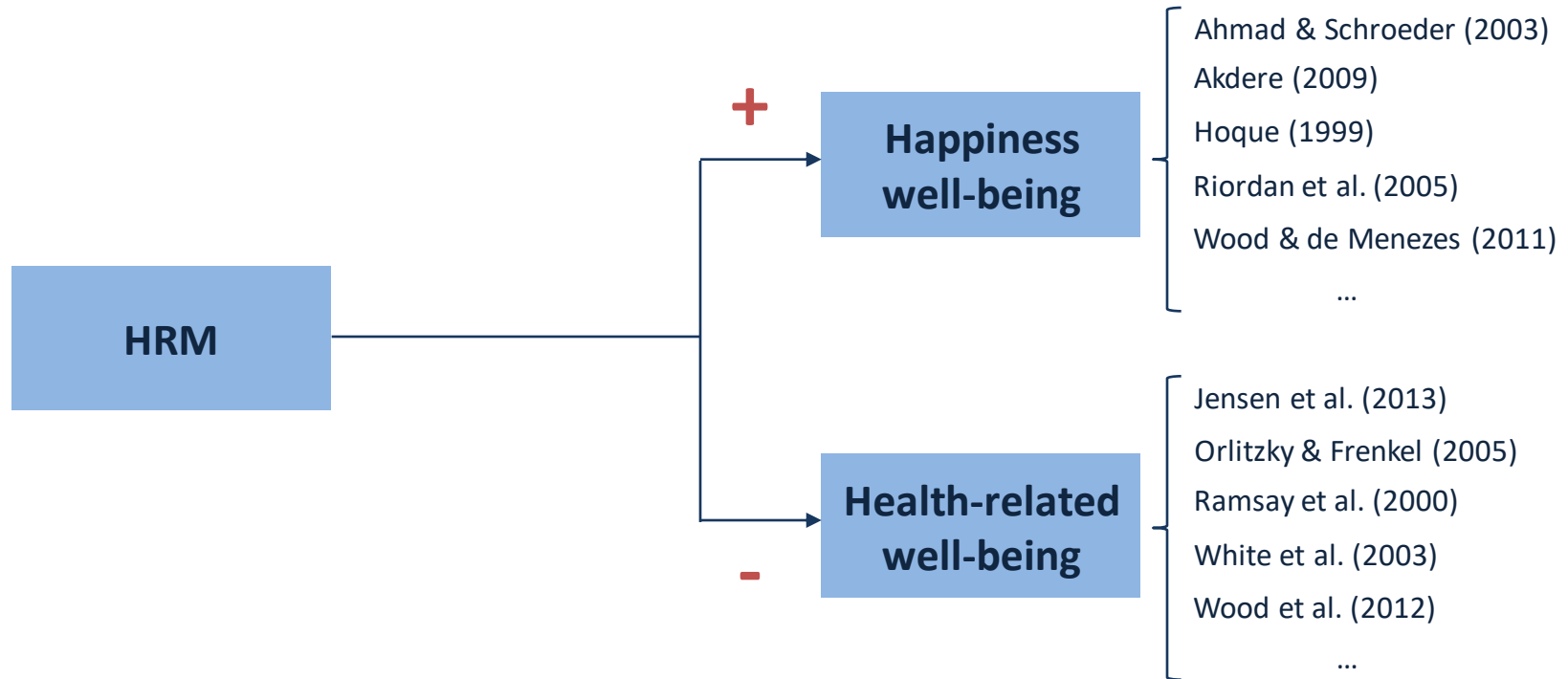
→ **What influence does HRM have on employee well-being?**

THEME 4 – THE MEANING OF HRM FOR EMPLOYEES

EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING



THEME 4 – THE MEANING OF HRM FOR EMPLOYEES



HRM may have parallel effects on different employee well-being outcomes

HRM has a “bright side” as well as a “dark side” (Peccei et al., 2013; Van de Voorde et al., 2012)

THEME 5 – ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE HR IMPLEMENTATION



“[...] any impact is likely to be limited if good HR policy and practice is poorly implemented” (Woodrow & Guest, 2014:51)

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Broad RQ

┌
└───> **What does it take to have well-executed HR activities?**

THEME 5 – ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE HR IMPLEMENTATION

KEY HR IMPLEMENTERS

Line
managers

IMPLEMENTATION PERFORMANCE

f

Desire (e.g., Harris et al., 2002)

Resources (e.g., Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010)

Capability (e.g., Renwick, 2000)

Support (e.g., Hope Hailey et al., 1997)

Top MGMT

Provides business strategy-HR strategy links (Stanton et al., 2010)

Sense-giving agent (Stirpe et al., 2015)

HR
Department



Only general, though relevant, statements on the importance of HRP design and assistance to LMs can be found (e.g., Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013)

Trullen, J., Stirpe, L., Bonache, J., & Valverde, M. (2016). The HR department's contribution to line managers' effective implementation of HR practices. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 26(4), 449-470.

INTRODUCTION

Research question



How can HR departments contribute to the effective implementation of HR practices (HRPs) by line managers (LMs)?

- ◆ New antecedents of effective HR implementation by LMs (theory building)
- ◆ Advance our understanding of the roles HR departments can play
- ◆ Identify practical initiatives to boost LMs' implementation performance

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

We developed a preliminary model suggesting where to look for relevant evidence (Yin, 1989)

OUTCOME

Effective HRP
implementation

“[An HR practice] is effectively implemented when there is an ideal overlap between intended and actual practices” (Trullen et al., 2016: 451)

“[...] ineffective implementation occurs when the HRPs are only partially implemented, implemented in ways that are inconsistent with their initial intent, or not implemented at all” (Trullen et al., 2016: 451)

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

We developed a preliminary model suggesting where to look for relevant evidence (Yin, 1989)



● LMs implementation performance may be explained by the AMO theory (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013)

Abilities (e.g., Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Harris et al., 2002; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003)

Motivation (e.g., Guest & King, 2004; Kulik & Bainbridge, 2006; McGovern et al., 1997)

Opportunity (e.g., Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Hutchinson & Purcell, 2010)

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

We developed a preliminary model suggesting where to look for relevant evidence (Yin, 1989)



- LMs implementation performance may be explained by the AMO theory (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013)

Abilities

Any implementation outcome will be poor without the necessary competences (e.g., legislation, TUs relationships, people management skills, procedures on how to use the HRP) (Nehles et al., 2006)

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

We developed a preliminary model suggesting where to look for relevant evidence (Yin, 1989)



- LMs implementation performance may be explained by the AMO theory (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013)

Motivation

LMs may pay little attention HRP implementation by prioritizing operational tasks over HR issues (their desire and willingness to effectively perform HR implementation duties may need stimulation) (Woodrow & Guest, 2014)

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

We developed a preliminary model suggesting where to look for relevant evidence (Yin, 1989)



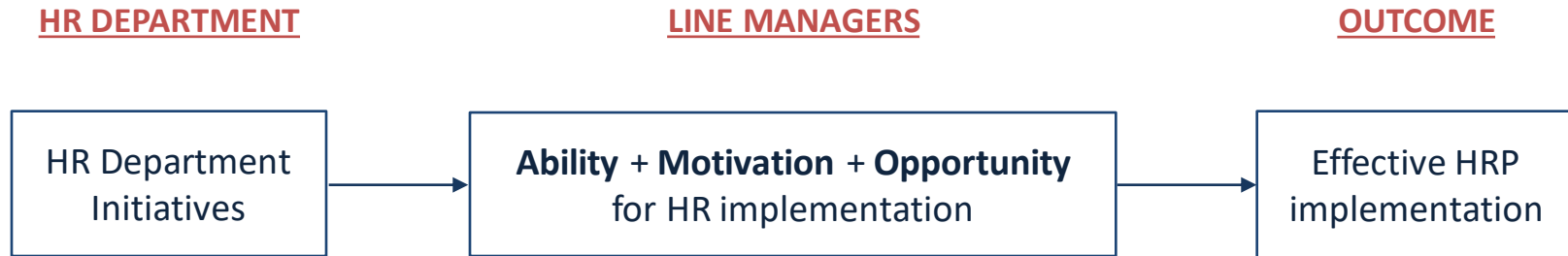
- LMs implementation performance may be explained by the AMO theory (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013)

Opportunity

The context may have an influence (which may be positive or negative) on LMs' implementation performance (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013)

PRELIMINARY CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

We developed a preliminary model suggesting where to look for relevant evidence (Yin, 1989)



METHOD

Multiple case study approach

Appropriate for addressing questions of 'how?' in an exploratory manner (Yin, 1989)

Allows comparisons across cases in order to clarify whether emergent findings are replicated in several instances (theory building) (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007)

METHOD

Sample

8 large
companies in
different
industries in
Spain

Firm	Product/Market	HR specialist interviewees
Blood Bank	Supply of blood and tissue	HR manager HR-nurse liaison
DiaperCo	Personal care	HR manager Head of OD & Training HR business partner
ChipsCo	Global food and beverage	HR manager Recruitment and selection specialist Head of Talent Development
NewsCo	Media conglomerate	HR manager Business unit HR manager
FoodCo	Global food and beverage	HR manager Head of Compensation & Benefits Head of Talent, Recruitment, and Training
InsurCo	Health and travel insurance	HR manager Head of Recruitment and Development
ParcelCo	Package delivery and logistics services	HR manager Former HR manager (now independent consultant)
SoftwareCo	Software development, manufacturing and sale	HR manager Head of OD and Training

19 in-depth
interviews, 1-3
hours each
(2013-2015)

METHOD

The firms' CEOs granted us permission to carry out the interviews

The CEO in each firm identified two HRPs developed by the HR department in the last five years that had been effectively implemented, and two that had not

29 HRPs were identified

(Examples)

HRPs	Firm	Description	Implementation outcome
Nurse training programme	Blood Bank	Training course on blood transfusion techniques for new hires	Success
180° Feedback	DiaperCo	Managers and supervisors receive feedback on their leadership style from subordinates	Success
On-boarding	ChipsCo	Socialisation programme for new hires	Failure
Performance appraisal	NewsCo	Introduction of performance appraisal in all business units	Failure
People Management Model	InsureCo	Leadership development programme based on the concept of 'servant leadership'	Success
Employee suggestion scheme	ParcelCo	Employees make suggestions aimed at improving work processes	Failure
Shadowing	SoftwareCo	On-the-job training where employees follow and observe other, more experienced, colleagues while doing their jobs	Success

METHOD

First, we interviewed the HR manager in each firm

Second, we interviewed other HR professionals in the team who were referred us by the HR manager

The interviews started by identifying the HPRs under analysis and confirming whether they were perceived as a success or failure

Interviewees were asked to openly narrate the story about each HRP implementation and the initiatives the company's HR specialists had taken to ensure it was effective

METHOD

We used an analytic induction approach based on the preliminary research model

We individually open coded the initiatives identified by the HR specialists and linked them to the AMO factors

We then met to compare our codes and links to the AMO factors and reach a shared scheme

METHOD

SUBTHEMES CODING SUMMARY TABLE

HR PRACTICE (FIRM)	SUPPORT MATERIALS	HR TRAINING	OPEN-DOORS	IN-THE-FIELD HR SPEC.	FRAMING	CONSULTATION	RECOGNITION	USE OF CONSULTANTS	USE OF CEO SUPPORT	CULTURAL FIT	POLITICAL FIT	WINDOW OF OPP.	IMPLEMENTATION OUTCOME
Nurse Training (B)	x	x		x		x	x		x	x		x	S
Nurse Work Pool (B)				x	0						0	0	F
Hemat. Work Pool (B)	x					0				0			F
Knowledge Mg. (B)	x				x			x		x			S
180° Feedback (D)	x	x		x			x		x	x			S
Collateral Coaching (D)		x		x						0		x	F
Self-Manag. Teams (D)		x		x					0-x		0		F-S
Compet. Dev.Ctr. (D)	x	x		x	x	x	x	x					S
Career Conversations (C)	x	x							x			x	S
Onboarding (C)	x											0	F
Development Review(C)	x	x							0	0			F
Mentoring (C)	x	x				0			0	0			F
Leading Diff. Times (C)	x								x			x	S
HR Shared Services (N)					x			x	x		0		S
Org. Transf. Program (N)		x			0			x				0	F
Performance Appr. (N)	x				x						0		F
Climate Teams (N)					x					x		x	S
360° Feedback (F)	x	x	x	x		x	x	x					S
People Dev. Review (F)	x	0		0	0								F
Performance Pay (F)					0	0			0		0		F
People Mgmt. Model (I)	x	x			x		x	x	x	x	0		S
Performance Review (I)					0				0	0	0		F
Cross-function Train. (I)	x				x		x		x	x			S
Disabilities Initiative (P)		x	x			x	x		x	x	0		S
Suggestion System (P)	0		x						0				F
E-learning Project (P)	x		x		0						0	0	F
Teaming Initiative (P)			x				x	x	x	x			S
Performance Appr. (S)			x	x	x		x						S
Workshops Innov. (S)			x	x	x		x					x	S

Legend

x = Interviewees explicitly mentioned the presence of the subtheme when talking about the process of implementing that practice.

0 = Interviewees explicitly mentioned the absence of the subtheme when talking about the process of implementing that practice.

A **blank space** means that that particular subtheme was not explicitly mentioned by interviewees when talking about that practice.

S/F = Success/Failure

B = Blood Bank

D = DiaperCo

C = ChipsCo

N = NewsCo

F = FoodCo

I = InsurCo

P = ParcelCo

S = SoftwareCo

Note: One emerging theme (line managers' selection) was mentioned by interviewees without referring to a particular HR practice, but rather reflecting on the overall lessons they had learnt from their experience at the company. Hence, it is not included in this table.

FINDINGS

ENHANCING LMs' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

◆ HR support material

Manuals/toolkits including descriptions of the new HRP, its purpose and directions for implementation

ENHANCING LMs' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

◆ HR training before launching the HRP

[After the seminar,] 'managers understood how to listen in non-defensive ways to what their employees might tell them, and how to deal with it' (Head of OD and Training, DiaperCo, commenting on the introduction of 180-degree feedback)

'The roll-out phase was too fast in my opinion. Managers did not understand how PDR [i.e., People Development Review] was different from other ongoing processes, and how exactly they had to use it. We should have met with them before hand and explained the whole thing much more clearly. I think this lack of instruction killed PDR' (Head of Talent, FoodCo)

ENHANCING LMs' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

◆ HR support services

OPEN DOOR POLICIES

'We made it crystal clear that we were happy to assist them because that was our job. In fact, we ended up calling managers ourselves periodically and asking them how they were doing' (HR manager, SoftwareCo)

'When managers go to training sessions they sometimes find it difficult to subsequently relay what they've learnt to their units. So you need to be available afterwards to answer their queries. This is what managers really appreciate the most, I mean, getting help right when they need it' (ParcelCo's HR manager)

ENHANCING LMs' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

◆ HR support services

IN-THE-FIELD HR SPECIALISTS

'When a new policy is launched, we are right there beside them to help them in any way we can. You don't know how to do something? Well go right ahead and ask, don't be scared. And being there means we can also give them feedback on how they are doing' (HR business partner, DiaperCo)

'When you go out there with them [i.e., LMs] and talk to their employees, well, they [i.e., LMs] really appreciate it. They feel more confident because they know that if there are questions you will be there to help address them' (HR manager, SoftwareCo)

ENHANCING LMs' ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

PROPOSITION 1

HR departments will enhance LMs' ability to implement HRPs effectively by providing support materials, training, and support services (e.g., open-door policies and the deployment of in-the-field HR specialists)

ENHANCING LMs' MOTIVATION TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

◆ Framing initiatives to make LMs' receiving the HRP more positively

'We tried to show them how this initiative [i.e., People Management Model] was consistent with the new strategic plan, and how it would help the firm to achieve the objectives in that plan. We worked really hard to make all these links clear in a foolproof PowerPoint. This presentation helped us a great deal in convincing managers to get involved because they realised it was not only an "HR thing"' (Head of Recruitment and Development InsurCo).

'Line managers always ask themselves the same question in their heads: "What's in it for me?" We know, and when we propose something new [i.e., a new HRP] we get in first and provide them with the information they need to find an easy answer' (Head of OD & Training, SoftwareCo)

ENHANCING LMs' MOTIVATION TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

◆ Early LM involvement in the HRP development

'You [i.e. HR] depend on the line. If they do not want to use what you propose to them, they won't. But if you involve them in the development of the policies from the very beginning they will have fewer excuses for ignoring you' (Blood Bank, HR Nurse Liaison)

'[...] Managers knew that the practice was the result of common effort. I think that this increased the sense of responsibility of every manager when using the practice' (DiaperCo, Head of OD and Training)

ENHANCING LMs' MOTIVATION TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

◆ LM's effort recognition to increase intrinsic motivation

'When line managers perform especially well, I try to make sure their work is acknowledged. I go there [to their business units] and praise them in front of their team. This encourages them to continue the good work [i.e., using the new HRP]' (InsurCo, HR manager)

'In the implementation of 360 degree feedback, I took personal responsibility to send an email, with a copy to the CEO, to all those managers who took part in the experience. [...] This made them feel good' (FoodCo, Head of Talent, Recruitment and Training)

ENHANCING LMs' MOTIVATION TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

- ◆ When the HR department was unable to motivate LMs, implementation could be ineffective

'[...] I guess I was not able to get across how relevant [the practice] was for us [i.e., the company], and how it would benefit them as well. I should have done more canvassing' (Blood Bank, HR manager)

ENHANCING LMs' MOTIVATION TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

PROPOSITION 2

HR departments will enhance LMs' motivation to implement HRPs effectively by framing the HRPs in appealing ways, involving the line in the development of the practices, and providing recognition to the line for good HR work

ENHANCING LMs' OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

HR department may play a role in boosting an implementation-friendly environment for LMs

◆ Hiring of consultants to give legitimacy to the line's HR implementation endeavours

'We were lucky enough to count on the support of a top consulting firm for the program's design [i.e., Knowledge Management Initiative], and we made sure that everyone knew about it. This made the project much more attractive and created a great deal of expectation. This made it quite easy for managers to implement the program in their units' (Blood Bank, HR manager)

'[...] The fact we had hired a consulting firm sent out a signal that we were spending a load of money, that something big was being done for the organisation, and this made the managers' implementation work easier. Employees understood that something was being done that the organisation believed in' (DiaperCo, Head of OD and Training, DiaperCo)

ENHANCING LMs' OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

HR department may play a role in boosting an implementation-friendly environment for LMs

◆ Seeking CEO active support for HRP

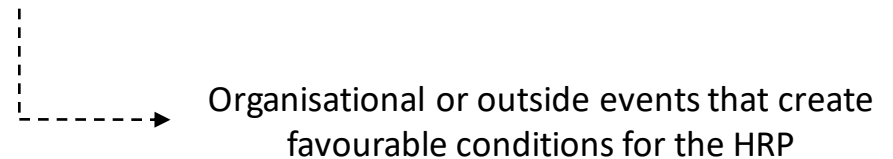
'[...] We were convinced that the program [i.e., *leadership development program*] was good for the organisation, so we asked the CEO to lend us a hand [...] The CEO was the first to attend the initial training [...] and set his own plan for self-improvement. This expedited the implementation work of managers. They encountered less resistance along the way [...] The CEO was the example to follow for their people' (InsurCo, Head of Recruitment and Development)

'The CEO might like an idea and encourage you to pursue it. But that is not enough. To make it work, the CEO also needs to get his feet wet. My job is to bring him on board whenever possible' (FoodCo, HR manager)

ENHANCING LMs' OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

HR department may play a role in boosting an implementation-friendly environment for LMs

- ◆ Matching the introduction of new HRPs to windows of opportunity



'We had been thinking of [Workshops for innovation] for some time, but team leaders [i.e., LMs] advised against it. They didn't dare propose something like that, because the programmers were too busy [...]. But when we found out that our closest competitor had introduced something similar, we thought it would be a golden opportunity to finally do the same ourselves. We knew that the team leaders now had good arguments for selling the scheme to the programmers' (SoftwareCo, Head of OD and Training)

ENHANCING LMs' OPPORTUNITY TO IMPLEMENT HRPs EFFECTIVELY

PROPOSITION 3

The HR department can improve LMs' opportunity to effectively implement HRPs by hiring external consultants, seeking CEO support for the practices, and exploiting windows of opportunity

THE FACILITATING ROLE OF LM SELECTION

The 'strategic selection' of LMs facilitated the AMO-fostering initiatives by the HR departments

'When you have to deal with people [i.e., LMs] with no HR inclination, things may be awful for you as an HR manager. They don't listen to you, no matter what you do to convince them to do HR work. So hiring good [line] managers is the first step if you want them to take you seriously' (DiaperCo, HR manager).

'Things are often downhill for us [because] [...] we look for people [i.e., LMs] who, in HR matters, are already motivated. There are people with a poor attitude, and not much can be expected of them [...]' (FoodCo, Head of Talent, Recruitment and Training)

THE FACILITATING ROLE OF LM SELECTION

PROPOSITION 4

HR departments' initiatives to enhance LMs' ability and motivation to implement HRPs effectively will be more successful when LMs are selected on the basis of their HR orientation

THE FACILITATING ROLE OF HRP CONTEXT FIT

When HRPs matched the organisational values, HR departments' actions were more successful in influencing LMs' implementation AMO

'We [the HR department] proposed the program with our best intentions [...]. [But] managers at ChipsCo believe in the man that works 24/7 and is the master of his own success. Mentoring proved not to go very well with this. It is a very strong culture, where you never show your weaknesses [...] The program was there, but nobody [i.e., LMs] really used it'

'[The reason why it failed] [...] was not due to lack of effort on our part! We offered a lot of training, but then they [i.e., LMs] would make up excuses not to show up. We ended up sending them guidelines in PowerPoint, and go figure if they ever looked at them' (ChipsCo, Head of Talent Development)

THE FACILITATING ROLE OF HRP CONTEXT FIT

PROPOSITION 5

HR departments' initiatives to enhance LMs' ability, motivation, and opportunity to implement HRPs effectively will be more successful when HRPs fit the organisational context

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

- ◆ New theory on HRP implementation is developed by highlighting HR department's contributions



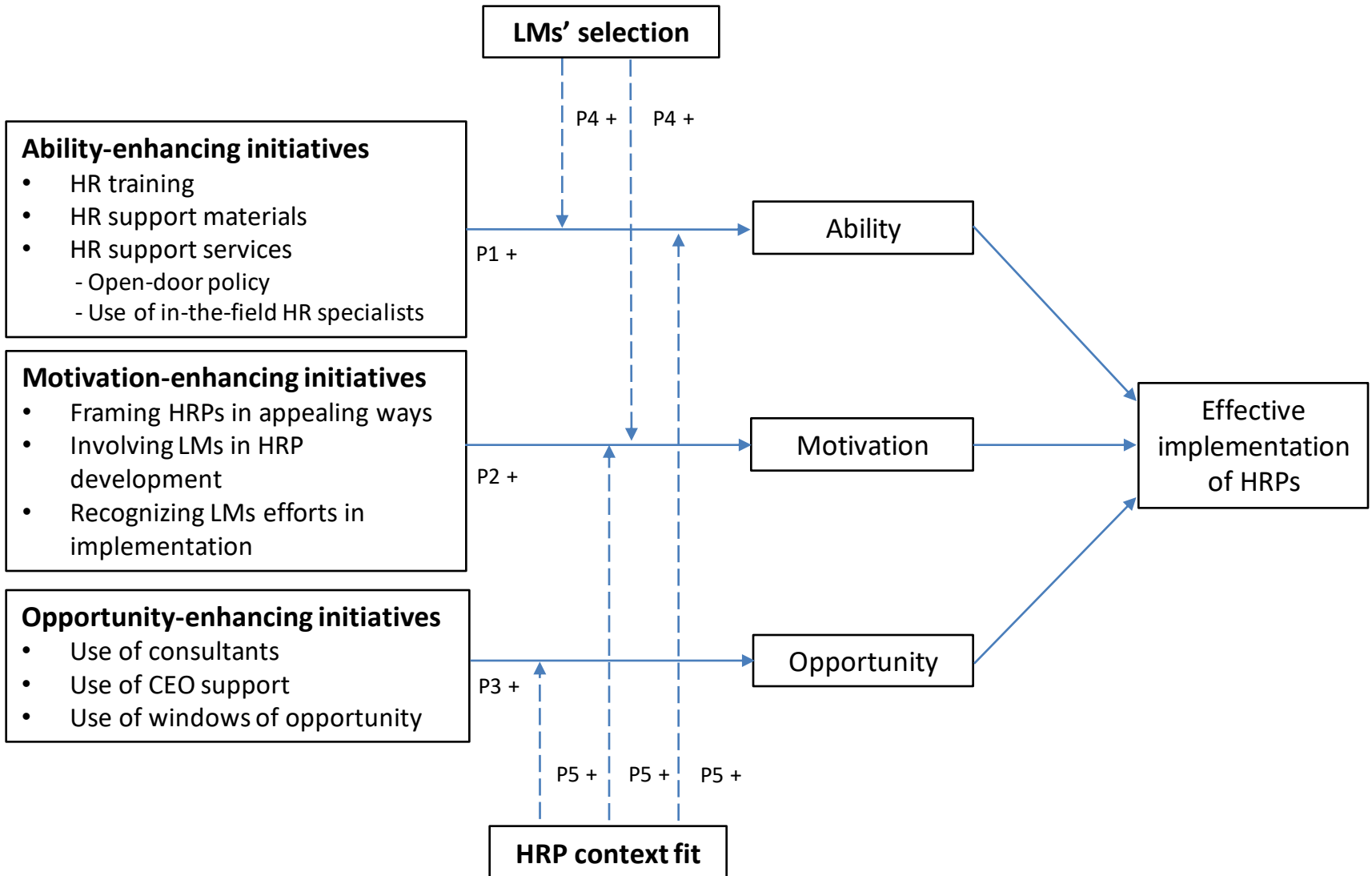
LMs' implementation AMO may be enhanced by a range of initiatives carried out by the HR department

CONCLUSION

HR DEPARTMENT

LINE MANAGERS

OUTCOME



CONCLUSION

- ◆ A more nuanced view of the roles HR departments can play is offered



The active engagement in HRP implementation may be an additional strategic role

- ◆ Practical suggestions on how to tackle HRP implementation by LMs are offered

LIMITATIONS

- ◆ Case study research does not allow the generalization of findings
- ◆ All the interviews were carried in large firms in Spain
- ◆ The research is based on retrospective accounts
- ◆ LMs have been not interviewed

FUTURE RESEARCH

- ◆ Our propositions could be operationalized and tested with a large sample

E.g.: Bos-Nehles et al.; 2013; Chow, 2012; Khilji & Wang; 2006; Sikora & Ferris, 2011; Stirpe et al., 2013, 2015.

E.g.: Bandarouk & Ruël, 2008; Bondarouk et al., 2009; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Francis et al., 2006; Gust & King, 2004; Harris et al., 2002; Hope Hailey et al., 1997; Maxwell & Farquharson, 2008; McGovern et al., 2007; Nehles et al., 2006; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Renwick, 2002, 2003; Stanton et al., 2010; Townsend et al., 2012; Trullén et al., 2016; Watson et al., 2006; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003; Woodrow & Guest, 2014.

QUANTITATIVE

QUALITATIVE

FUTURE RESEARCH

- ◆ Our propositions could be operationalized and tested with a large sample
- ◆ HR department's actions could affect more than one AMO factor simultaneously
- ◆ HR department's actions could interact to influence LMs' implementation AMO (e.g., training and in-the-field HR specialists)
- ◆ The moderating role of 'HR department's reputation' (Stirpe et al., 2013) may be explored

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