**Antecedents and Outcomes of Enabling HR Practices: The Paradox of Consistency and Flexibility**

**Abstract**

Reconciling competing demands for consistent HR implementation and providing individualized supervisor support to employees has always been a challenge in strategic human resource management (SHRM). Given that there is burgeoning evidence that frontline managers (FLMs) are at the center of HR implementation, we examine how the organization helps FLMs reconcile demands for consistent HR implementation and deliver individualized support to those under their supervision. With the data from 181 FLMs and 311 employees reported to these FLMs, we find that FLMs' perceived enabling HR practices mediate the relationship between high-performance work systems (HPWS) and FLMs' willingness to be flexible (WTBF). Furthermore, WTBF mediates the relationship between FLMs' perceived enabling HR practices and consistent HR implementation and between FLMs' perceived enabling HR practices and employees' individualized support. Our study offers new insights by highlighting that an effective HR system is not merely improving frontline managers' HR competency and knowledge but capturing FLMs' willingness to be flexible in carrying on a broad range of HR tasks. Furthermore, our study provides an expanded and novel understanding that FLMs will likely face two opposite HR tasks that coexist and should be dealt with simultaneously as a pair. We then discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our findings and suggest future research directions.

**Keywords**: Frontline manager; perceived enabling HR; willingness to be flexible, HR consistency; individualized support

**PRACTITIONER NOTES**

What is currently known?

* Contemporary HRM research confirms the necessity of devolving HR responsibilities to frontline managers.
* Frontline managers' HR involvement and subsequent HR performance are primarily driven by their HR knowledge, ability, and skills.
* Effective HR implementation entails two opposing responsibilities, including HR consistency and delivering individualized support to employees.

What does this study add?

* A key component of a successful HR system is to enable frontline managers to fulfill both organizational expectations and managerial responsibilities towards their subordinates when employees demand individualized support and attention.
* The enablement of frontline managers should go beyond merely enhancing their knowledge and HR competency. It should also capture frontline managers’ willingness to be flexible so that they have both the motivation and the discretion to devote their efforts to various HR tasks.
* Frontline managers’ *willingness to be flexible* is crucial for frontline managers to alternate between their competing tasks of consistent HR implementation and delivering individualized support to subordinates.
* Discussing frontline managers’ effective implementation behaviours would be irrelevant if the paradox in their HR involvement is not factored in. This is an important distinction, as flexibility does not lie in the HR system per se but largely hinges on frontline managers’ behavioral choices.

The implications for practitioners

* There should not be a single focus on consistent HR implementation and employee outcomes. Frontline managers expected to understand the HR system should be attentive and sensitive to the firm's and individual employees' unique needs and expectations.
* High-performance work systems should be cautiously implemented to trigger frontline managers’ willingness to be flexible; otherwise, they might experience work intensification and withdraw from their HR involvement.
* Effective HR implementation should be observed and measured as the product of consistency and delivery of individualized support. Polarization toward either one places the HR system on the verge of failure.

**INTRODUCTION**

Empirical evidence has shown that the effectiveness of HRM is heavily influenced by the HR implementation behaviors of frontline managers (FLMs) (López-Cotarelo, 2018; Pak & Kim, 2018; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Teague & Roche, 2012). This has led to a growing interest in delegating HR responsibilities to the frontline (Gilbert et al., 2011; Perry & Kulik, 2008). FLMs, being responsible for overseeing daily employee operations and often the first point of contact between the organization and its employees due to their proximity (Crawshaw & Game, 2015; McConville, 2006), play a pivotal role in bringing HR policies and practices to life for employees at the ground level (Bos-Nehles & Meijerink, 2018; Shipton et al., 2016). As a result, both scholars and practitioners have shown a keen interest in considering FLMs as HR agents, implicitly assuming that FLMs enact HR policies in line with the standards set by the HR department to bridge the gap between intended and enacted HR practices (Kurdi‐Nakra et al., 2022).

           While prior research has demonstrated that FLMs' HR involvement can fill the gap between espoused and actual HR practices to address the so-called HR consistency problem (Pak, 2022; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Teague & Roche, 2012), scholars also argue that FLMs have their own modus operandi in enacting HR practices in their employees and they do not necessarily carry on HR practices as designed at the top of the organization (Guest & Bos-Nehles, 2013; Harris, 2001; Pak, 2022). Therefore, FLMs may not simply submit themselves to the HR system’s expectations; they may implement HR practices based on their discretion and awareness of their subordinates' needs (Bondarouk et al., 2016; Pak, 2022; Sanders & Yang, 2016). These contradictions imply that a critical paradox exists in FLMs' implementation behaviours that should be adequately addressed: on the one hand, HR practices must be delivered consistently in an equal and fair manner across the organization (López-Cotarelo, 2018). On the other hand, each employee in the organization must be treated in a unique way, with HR implementation tailored to their individual needs (Gilbert et al., 2015; Ryu & Kim, 2013; Sikora & Ferris, 2014) given that FLMs are positioned in an organizational hierarchy wherein their actions have an immediate impact on employees (Poole & Jenkins, 1997).

More recently, Fu et al. (2020) have shown that FLMs who balance consistency and individualized consideration can improve employee performance and team effectiveness. However, their study does not unveil what comes before FLMs’ paradoxical implementation behaviours and how they can be triggered and fostered. In other words, their study merely focuses on the desired outcomes of FLMs’ balanced behaviours, without much to say about their determinants. Therefore, it remains unclear what needs to be done to help FLMs deal with conflicting demands for consistency and personalized employee support. Our review of related literature shows that the devolution literature devoted little attention, if any, to the intricacy and paradoxes laid in FLMs’ HR role. Gjerde and Alvesson (2020) also contemplated the paradoxical nature of FLMs’ HR role. Still, their study has not investigated this issue in an empirical setting, leaving the question unanswered of how FLMs balance demands from superiors (i.e., consistency) and subordinates (i.e., personalized support) simultaneously. Further scrutiny in this line of research is thus warranted.

Furthermore, past research has reported that FLMs are often unwilling to undertake their HR responsibilities and believe that *HR is not their job* (Hall & Torrington, 1998; Kurdi-Nakra et al., 2022). Some also reported that FLMs consider HR tasks as something out of their domain of expertise and conflicting with their operational tasks (Harris et al., 2002; Renwick, 2000). Responding to this challenge, efforts have been made to deepen the knowledge of how to improve FLMs’ HR-related competence and willingness mainly through the lens of ability, motivation-, and opportunity-enhancing HR framework (AMO) (e.g., Bos-Nehles, 2013; Trullen et al., 2016). Notwithstanding this line of inquiry generates insight into enhancing FLMs’ HR dexterity and knowledge, some research still underlines skepticism around FLMs’ eagerness and flexibility to be involved in various HR roles. Paralleling this controversy, some scholars argue that HPWS can increase job strain (Huang et al., 2018; Jensen et al., 2013). Relatedly, Guest (2017) contends that the link between HR systems and performance has been pursued at the expense of reduced concern for employees. Hence, it is possible that FLMs subject to HPWS may experience work intensification, stress, and consequently reduced motivation, which undermines their HR engagement and flexibility (Kurdi-Nakra et al., 2022; Van De Voorde et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2021). Taken together, with mixed and often contradictory results, it is not clear whether and how FLMs could flexibly tackle consistent implementation of HR policies while serving employees with individualized support.

In this study, we propose that one of the potential causes behind the mixed findings on desired implementation behaviours is overlooking FLMs’ perceptions toward organizational support and resulting flexible attitudes toward their HR duties. We argue that FLMs are not only HR agents but also primary recipients of HR practices in the context of high-performance work systems (HPWS) (Huang et al., 2018; Kurdi-Nakra et al., 2022). Drawing on social exchange theory (SET) (Gouldner, 1960), the current study unpacks how FLMs respond to HR support. The tenet of SET posits that relationships evolve into trusting, mutual commitment, and reciprocation (Blau, 1964). In this light, if FLMs find firms’ HR practices (i.e., HPWS) have eyes on their needs and assist them in fulfilling their HR tasks, they will hold a favorable attitude toward the HR system as enabling (i.e., perceived enabling HR). In particular, we posit that FLMs’ perceived enabling HR mediates the relationship between HPWS and FLMs’ willingness to be flexible (WTBF). FLMs’ perceived enabling HR refers to the extent to which FLMs find that the HR department respects their managerial discreetness and leadership insights and gives them space and volition to address their subordinates’ unique needs. Recent advancements in SET demonstrate that empowerment practices and enhancing individuals’ autonomy and confidence are more likely to foster beliefs in mutual obligations, commitment, and reciprocity (Yin et al., 2019). In this sense, if FLMs conceive that HR is aiming at enhancing their managerial dexterity and equip them with reasonable volition, this perception of HR system as enabling would trigger FLMs’ WTBF as an intention and inner driver to go beyond their tasks and reciprocate HR with effective involvement in people management responsibilities. By definition, WTBF refers to the willingness to adapt to the way other people work and cope with differences in conditions or environment (Solberg et al., 2021). FLMs with greater WTBF consider their working environment and roles from multiple perspectives, fully grasp the complexities of their HR responsibilities, and alternate between various HR tasks.

Furthermore, in this study, we specifically examine how FLMs’ WTBF mediates the relationship between enabling HR practices and HR consistency and employees’ individualized support to delineate the dynamic nature of the paradox of consistency and flexibility facing FLMs. Based on SET, we reason that FLMs’ WTBF, on the one side, slips them toward consistent HR implementation because they are trained, entrusted, and named HR agents, which imposes them under normative pressure to enact HR in line with HR department expectations. On the other side, upon the promise of SET, some commentators argue that HR can create a climate of psychological fulfillment in which individuals go beyond bilateral reciprocation and are involved in extra responsibilities that benefit all (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Rupp et al., 2014). Given that employees are salient others to their immediate managers, FLMs should not disregard subordinates’ needs or what they deem desirable for employees. Therefore, WTBF allows FLMs to find themselves empowered enough to consider subordinates' needs while enacting HR consistently (c.f., Kehoe & Han, 2020).

This study makes several significant contributions. By exploring the mediating role of enabling HR practices in the relationship between HPWS and FLMs’ WTBF, we first aim to help resolve the long-lasting challenge that FLMs believe *HR is not their job* (c.f., Kurdi-Nakra et al., 2022; Op de Beeck et al., 2016; Renwick, 2003). Our examination of perceived enabling HR is beyond merely emphasizing training and supporting FLMs. We argue that FLMs seek to ensure undertaking HR tasks would not limit their leadership and managerial insight but come to value their discretion and allow them to adjust HR based on employees’ needs while serving HR equally. Even though past research warns that FLMs are reluctant to undertake HR tasks and HR should thus assist them and propose solutions, this approach remains limited in that it only focuses on enhancing FLMs’ HR knowledge and ability. However, triggering FLMs’ willingness and flexibility remained an untested assumption. Investigating FLMs’ WTBF as a result of enabling HR practices provides a springboard for more advancement in this direction. Second, this study addresses the recent calls by Gjerde and Alvesson (2020) and Kehoe and Han (2020), encouraging scholars to explore further how FLMs respond to conflicting demands for consistency and individualized support. We also respond to Nishii and Paluch’s (2018) and Chacko and Conway’s (2019) concerns, arguing that an effective HR system is not merely about predicting consistency but also allowing for a reasonable deviation from espoused HR practices. Thus, we empirically demonstrated that FLMs embody a broader HR role and should simultaneously serve the organization and meet the needs of the employees they oversee. We add to the literature by demonstrating that FLMs’ effective HR performance should be measured as the combination of their subordinates’ satisfaction with the way HR policies are implemented to meet their needs on the work floor (i.e., flexibility) and how their implementation behaviours are equal and fair, in line with the firm’s HR policies and practices (i.e., consistency).

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

Involving FLMs in HR process is primarily motivated by ensuring HR practices are uniformly delivered throughout the organization in order to reduce the variability in HR implementation (Guest, 2021). In this context, effective HR implementation is to enact HR in line with HR department’s expectations, and consequently, flexibility and deviation from designed HR practices have turned into intolerable assumptions (Sikora et al., [2015](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/hrm.22189#hrm22189-bib-0107)). An in-depth perusal of the said literature shows that the reality of FLMs’ people management responsibility, that is, the paradox of switching between satisfying higher authority’s (i.e., HR department) and subordinates’ demands, is not sufficiently mirrored in contemporary HR research. While competing demands for consistency and flexibility often co-exist in today’s organizations, the common quest in empirical inquiries surprisingly only revolves around preparing FLMs for consistent HR implementation, which is a less suitable lens (Fu et al., 2020; Kehoe & Han, 2020). This may partially explain why research on FLMs’ willingness and involvement in HR function points to mixed and discrepant findings and why FLMs still show frail attention and willingness toward their HR responsibilities (Kurdi-Nakra et al., 2022).

Gjerde and Alvesson (2020) also raise the concern that the long-granted positive link between HR consistency and employees’ performance has blurred the reality of paradoxical HR responsibilities that FLMs often have to deal with in organizations. Relatedly, Björkman et al. (2011) and Kehoe and Han (2020) argue that unilaterally emphasizing FLMs’ consistent HR implementation only conveys an instrumentalist view toward FLMs, which cannot capture FLMs’ critical role in full. However, notwithstanding the importance of FLMs’ attention to employees’ unique needs and flexible HR enactment has gradually come to the surface of the devolution dialogue, the critical question of how to prepare FLMs and elicit their willingness for ambidextrous people management is still under studied. This motivated us to revisit the important yet lingering question in HRM literature: How can FLMs serve HR systems with consistent implementation and, at the same time, respond to employees’ unique needs with flexibility? Previous research often argues that FLMs’ aversion or defensiveness regarding people management responsibilities stems from their perceived inability, lack of control over their HR role, and *ought*-related competence standards (Townsend et al., 2012). The follow-up study by Gjerde and Alvesson (2020) shows that FLMs also have an inner tendency to shield their subordinates from unwelcoming work practices, which might be a reason why FLMs resist accepting their HR duties because accepting HR duties often places a great pressure on FLMs to address HR department’s expectations. In other words, being responsive to subordinates’ needs and serving them with unique attention and implementing HR policies consistently in organizations creates a paradox on FLMs’ HR duties.

Building on this core idea, our study draws on social exchange theory (SET) to examine the impact of HPWS on FLMs’ perceived enabling HR practices, WTBF, HR consistency, and individualized support to employees. SET posits that if organizations initiate supportive actions or provide resources, they foster reciprocal behaviors in response to the initiating action (Cropanzano et al., 2017; Flynn, 2005). Therefore, SET provides a useful lens to explain how HR policies convey organizational support and attention to FLMs as the first recipient of HR practices and what the organizations expect to receive in return for these HR practices (Chang et al., 2020; Guzzo & Noonan, 1994). It is expected that implementing HPWS can enhance FLMs’ managerial competencies by supplying them with HR-related knowledge and guides to increase their HR related abilities and by shaping positive attitudes among FLMs toward their HR responsibilities to increase their motivation. Furthermore, opportunity-enhancing HR policies boost FLMs' perceived behavioral control over how they enact HR in their work units at their discretion (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). In line with the central logic of SET and in reaction to the positive and supportive HPWS in place, FLMs tend to reply in kind by engaging in more positive reciprocating responses such as involvement in effective HR enactment (Kilroy et al., 2023). Though SET has been traditionally viewed as a mechanical dyadic reciprocation, recent advancements unveil that social exchange-based workplace practices can create high levels of trust and unrestricted commitment to the organization, resulting in individuals going beyond to offer help and distribute valued resources to people in the group who need them (Chang et al., 2020; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Flynn, 2005; Sun et al., 2007). In this matter, SET offers a compelling argument that when HR practices (i.e., HPWS) are perceived enabling by FLMs, it is a reasonable expectation that FLMs are willing to engage in multiple reciprocal actions, such as reciprocating the organization support with consistent HR implementation in their work units and simultaneously serving their subordinates with individualized attention to ensure the well-functioning of their teams.

We argue in this study that FLMs’ perceived enabling HR, as the aggregation of FLMs’ perceived ability, mastery, confidence, and control over HR implementation (c.f., Kuvaas et al., 2014), not only tackles their aversion to HR responsibilities but also triggers their WTBF. In this light, unlike prior research that directly relates FLMs’ perception of HR to their subsequent HR implementation, we believe FLMs’ perceived enabling HR is linked to WTBF and further to HR implementation behaviors. With high WTBF, FLMs can consider multiple viewpoints and reconcile demands for consistency and individualized employee support. FLMs with a strong WTBF also have a powerful impetus to understand their critical position, stimulating them to undertake a broader range of responsibilities along with their operational goals. In this sense, FLMs with WTBF feel connected with the HR department because they are encouraged to act as an enabled HR agent, and thus they are prepared to implement HR policies with consistency; they also feel inherently connected and committed to employees under their supervision and thus they are willing to deliver individualized support to employees with flexibility.

**HPWS, perceived enabling HR, and WTBF**

The field of strategic human resource management has widely recognized the importance of HPWS in improving both individual and organizational performance (Huang et al., 2018; Messersmith et al., 2018). HPWS can be broadly defined as a set of interconnected HR practices aimed at enhancing workforce skills, increasing employee participation in decision-making, and motivating employees to exert discretionary effort (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Datta et al., 2005; Huang et al., 2018; Jiang et al., 2012). HPWS includes HR practices such as selective staffing, various employee communication programs, extensive training, team-based work, results-oriented appraisal, and performance-related pay (Huselid, 1995; Sun et al., 2007). When these practices are used in combination, HPWS are said to be mutually reinforcing and able to generate superior organizational performance (Huang et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2007).

Meanwhile, Contemporary HR research has shown that merely designing an HR system is not sufficient, and the critical contribution of the HR department is to prepare FLMs for their HR roles by equipping them with necessary skills and knowledge, rewarding their HR performance, and providing them with support and decision-making power (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). In other words, the initiatives of the HR department do not directly predict the effectiveness of HR implementation on the ground floor of the organization but through FLMs’ perceived ability, motivation, and opportunity to deliver HR (Salvador-Gómez et al., 2023). Understanding how FLMs perceive and interpret HR practices is thus crucial for their successful implementation (Alfes et al., 2021; Op de Beeck et al., 2016; Vermeeren, 2014). On this matter, SET provides an overarching framework to explain how FLMs’ implementation behaviour stems from the support and attention they receive from the HR department in handling HR duties. At the core of SET, individuals’ perceived empowerment and enablement motivates them to compensate their organization by exhibiting favorable behaviours (Blau, 1964; Eisenberger et al., 1986; Beltrán‐Martín et al., 2017).

In this sense, enhancing FLMs’ knowledge and managerial skills gives them higher confidence and self-efficacy, encouraging them to put forth more effort and perseverance in the face of HR challenges (Heraty et al., 1995; Kurdi-Nakra et al., 2022; Nehles et al., 2006). Particularly, with respect to motivation-enhancing practices, we argue that FLMs’ involvement in HR responsibilities can be viewed from a different angle; that is, more dedication to HR duties may come with more improvement in team performance and goal achievement, which is accompanied by more reward and recognition for FLMs (c.f., Trullen et al., 2016; Van Waeyenberg & Decramer, 2018). In this light, undertaking HR responsibilities operates as an invisible motivational force that can offer benefits to FLMs. In addition, opportunity-enhancing practices equip FLMs with more volition and perceived empowerment, convincing FLMs that HR respects their managerial discretion and values their leadership potential. Thus, it is a fair assumption that the application of the AMO framework triggers FLMs’ confidence in their ability to successfully fulfill broad roles and operate flexibly.

 From the SET perspective, when FLMs perceive that the HR system is enabling (i.e., perceived enabling HR) and keeps an eye on their needs, they might feel indebted and repay the organization by undertaking a broad range of HR responsibilities and operating flexibility. Precisely speaking, FLMs’ perceived enabling HR refers to the belief that the HR system helps them fulfill their people management responsibilities (Kuvaas et al., 2014). In this process, when FLMs are trained, empowered, and untrusted, they show an inherent interest and are naturally attracted to doing HR, so the decision to be involved in HR is self-determined and not force-fed by the organization. This inspires FLMs to reciprocate this level of trust with willingness and flexibility, contributing to HR enactment, and they are also aware of the benefits of the value they offer to the subordinates and the value they add to the organization. Conversely, FLMs with lower training opportunities and less perceived trust and empowerment from the HR department may feel HR tasks have been imposed on them, showing frail commitment and obligation to HR and putting less effort into their implementation responsibilities.

Op de Beeck et al. (2016) warn us that while the HR departments optimistically assume they are supporting FLMs to gain FLMs’ HR partnership, the perceptual discrepancies between HR and FLMs are delaying the FLMs’ HR involvement from reaching its climax. Relatedly, Kehoe and Han (2020) argue that FLMs should perceive their HR duties as relevant to their values, and they can enact HR practices at their discretion. Otherwise, only assuming FLMs as a messenger of HR function, who are expected to act quite on par with HR department expectations, risks overlooking their critical values regarding their subordinates. Desired HR implementation is not only a function of ability and competency but also the result of having the power and flexibility to enact HR in a socially desirable manner to respond to important others’ expectations (i.e., subordinates) (Gjerde & Alvesson, 2020). It is thus contended in this study that HPWS improves FLMs’ WTBF by positively influencing FLMs’ perception of HR (i.e., enabling HR). WTBF is a powerful driver that enhances FLMs’ desire to adopt a broader perspective on HR implementation. If WTBF is triggered appropriately, FLMs may not feel they are the victim of undertaking HR duties, but they believe their leadership discretion is counted and credited, and this favorable treatment is expected to engender favorable reciprocity on the FLMs’ side (Gouldner, 1960; Kilroy et al., 2023). Based on this line of reasoning, we hypothesize that:

**H1***: FLMs’ perceived enabling HR mediates the relationship between HPWS and WTBF.*

**HR consistency and Individualized Support**

The consistent implementation of HR practices across the organization is crucial in shaping an integrated organizational climate and promoting desired employee behaviours (Baron & Kreps, 1999; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; García-Carbonell et al., 2018). HR consistency refers to the fair and systematic implementation of HR policies across the organization with no intent to discriminate (Kuvaas, 2008), reducing the risk of unfair treatment perceptions and impaired performance (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; Kuvaas, 2008). When FLMs are committed to implementing HR practices consistently and fairly, their actions become an effective vehicle for communicating the goals and philosophies behind espoused HR policies and practices (Yang & Arthur, 2021).

In contrast, some scholars have raised the concern that FLMs’ involvement in HR may undermine overall HR consistency because FLMs may be unable or unwilling to carry out HR practices in accordance with HR guidelines and might act upon their *modus operandi* (Hall & Torrington, 1998; Kou et al., 2022) to consider their employees’ needs. It is argued that FLMs’ implementation behaviours are often affected by subordinates’ sense of satisfaction and the credibility they obtain from their subordinates to implement particular HR activities (i.e., normative pressures) (Pak, 2022). Some also argue that FLMs tend to serve their supervisees with idiosyncratic attention, through which they can ensure employees’ effective performance (Kelly et al., 2022; Kehoe & Han, 2020). Therefore, FLMs must take into account the differences among employees and customize HR practices to their work unit’s needs. While employees expect fair and consistent treatment, they also value their immediate supervisor's attention to their specific needs, recognition of their contributions, and support for their development and growth (Cheng et al., 2015; Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010; Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003).

To consistently implement HR practices and concurrently keep an eye on individual employees’ needs for support and attention, it is important for FLMs to perceive they have control over their enactment behaviour so that they are willing to adjust. Surprisingly, most prior research considers FLMs’ perception of HR as the direct determinant of FLMs’ HR performance, and the measuring of FLMs’ HR performance is often polarized toward consistent implementation of HR policies (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004; García-Carbonell et al., 2018). However, to meet the duality between consistency and flexibility in practice, FLMs also need to have the willingness and flexibility to voluntarily switch between competing HR tasks. WTBF is thus an essential driver that enables FLMs to adopt a broader perspective on HR practices and foster positive attitudes towards the HR system to manage conflicting demands. The concept of WTBF highlights the internalization of HR responsibilities and the powerful motivation and adaptability necessary for managing changes in the work environment (Solberg et al., 2021).

The guiding principle in SET is that reciprocation is not limited to turning favor back to the initiator of favor or in-role tasks, but according to the generalized social exchange perspective (Flynn, 2005), one (FLMs) might return a sense of favor that they have received from their organization (i.e., HR department) to other people in that organization (i.e., subordinates). In other words, individuals reciprocate what they have received from the organization by showing attention toward their subordinates (Chang et al., 2020). It is because helping or serving subordinates with individualized attention is believed to contribute to achieving the objectives of the organization. In light of SET, when FLMs receive enabling HR services, are entrusted and given authority, and receive normative signals from superiors and subordinates to be involved in HR responsibilities, FLMs may feel obligated to convey gratitude to both the organization and the people they oversee because they believe serving subordinates could create a shared conviction and collectively promote the well-functioning of the organization (Collins & Smith, 2006; Vossaert et al., 2022).

In other words, FLMs’ positive attitudes toward HR responsibilities, perceived behavioural control over HR enactment, and socially desirable expectations together stimulate them to willingly embrace HR duties as part of their identity. FLMs with high WTBF do not confine themselves to setting boundaries for their roles and responsibilities. Instead, they proactively engage in multiple HR tasks and display greater versatility (Beltrán-Martín et al., 2020; Parker et al., 1997; Roca-Puig & Escrig-Tena, 2017; Solberg et al., 2021). While HPWS are assumed to support FLMs and further shape their positive perception, it is paramount to understand how this perception of enabling HR leads to implementation behaviours. In this light, FLMs with WTBF caused by perceived enabling HR, on the one hand, strive to meet the expectations over consistent HR enactment and, on the other hand, provide employees with individualized attention and support to show employees that they are valued and unique (Baard et al., 2004). Therefore, we propose that (please also see Figure 1):

**H2:** *WTBF mediates the relationship between FLMs’ perceived enabling HR and HR consistency.*

**H3:** *WTBF mediates the relationship between FLMs’ perceived enabling HR and individualized support.*

\*\*\*\*\*Insert Figure 1 about here\*\*\*\*\*

**METHODS**

**Participants and procedure**

The data for this study was collected with questionnaires from a well-established private bank that is listed in the central bank of Iran and has a workforce of over 5000 employees in its payroll. This bank was recognized as one of the top 500 most valuable banks in the world by The Banker magazine. We deliberately chose the banking sector for this study because this industry has a tall structure and a high level of formality, with many FLMs in the organization, which is suitable for the study of the significance of FLMs' HR involvement. Before collecting the data, we held an in-depth interview with the company's HR director to ensure the consistency of their HR practices with the design principles of HPWS and to confirm that frontline managers understand their HR roles and responsibilities. Participants received a cover letter with each questionnaire that explained the purpose of the study and ensured confidentiality. The completed questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes provided by the researchers through mail or collected on-site by the researchers.

To alleviate common method bias, we attempted to separate the source of responses for each variable over two waves of time. This involved surveying FLMs and employees. In particular, FLMs are the recipient of HPWS, and employees are the receiving end of HR practices implemented by their supervisors (i.e., FLMs). To ensure the validity of our findings, the surveys were administered at two points in time, T1 and T2, with a 6-month interval. At T1, FLMs were asked to provide information regarding HPWS, perception of enabling HR, and their WTBF. At T2, employees under their supervision rated HR consistency and perceived supervisor support. To match FLM and employees’ responses, we asked survey participants to provide the name (ID code) of their respective teams. Every team in the bank of our study has a numerical ID code, labelled by the headquarters. With the approval of the senior HR, all 181 FLMs have been invited to participate in our study. As per every FLM, we invited three of their subordinates to rate their team managers’ HR implementation behaviour (i.e., HR consistency and individualized support). Of the overall 724 distributed questionnaires, 181 were returned from FLMs and 330 were from their employees. However, after matching and cleaning, 19 returned questionnaires of employees were discarded due to missing information, ending with 311 completed and valid questionnaires from employees, yielding an overall response rate of 67.9%. As for the FLMs composition, the average size of a team was 5.65. The FLM sample indicated an average age of 40.52 years, and average tenure was 13.5. Male respondents accounted for 71.3% of the FLMs sample. 65.2% of FLMs had a master’s degree, 2% Ph.D., and the rest have Bachelor’s. As for the employees, Male respondents accounted for 51.3% of the employee sample. Employees had an average age of 30.03 years and an average organizational tenure of 4.36 years. Employees with a bachelor’s degree compose the largest proportion of the sample (82.5%), and the average team size was 6.3.

**Measures**

*High-performance work systems*. To measure HPWS, a 27-item scale was utilized, which was developed by Sun et al. (2007). The scale consists of 8 dimensions, including selective staffing, extensive training, internal mobility, employment security, clear job description, results-oriented appraisal, incentive reward, and participation. Respondents were asked to answer the survey questions on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of the scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which was 0.94, indicating high reliability.

*Willingness to be flexible*. was assessed using a 5-item scale developed by Solberg et al. (2021). Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements regarding their willingness to be flexible to undertake multiple responsibilities on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). For example, "I am willing to accept new tasks or responsibility areas if circumstances require it." The reliability of the scale was established with a high Cronbach's alpha score of 0.86.

*Perceived enabling HR.* Perceived enabling HR was measured using a 5-item scale developed by Kuvaas et al (2014). FLMs were asked to rate their agreement with statements such as "All in all, various HR tools and HR systems in my organization have increased my satisfaction with my managerial responsibilities." on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The internal consistency of this measurement was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, which was 0.84 in this study.

*R consistency.* To measure HR consistency, a 15-item scale developed by Chen et al. (2016) was utilized. The employees were asked to rate their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). One example item is "The same management practices are applied to all employees with the same job positions." The Cronbach’s alpha reliability was 0.96.

*Individualized support.* Was measured using four items from a scale developed by Rhoades et al (2001). Sample items are "My supervisor cares about my opinions," "My supervisor cares about my well-being," "My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values", and "My supervisor shows very little concern for me." The response format used a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.88.

*Control variables*. To control for potential confounding effects, we included several control variables in our analysis, including FLMs' tenure, age, and gender. FLMs' tenure was considered as it has been shown that those with more years of experience are more familiar with their HR responsibilities and better trained to perform them (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). Gender was recorded as a binary variable, where 1 represented male and 2 represented female. Tenure was categorized into five groups, ranging from 2 years or less to more than 11 years. As the correlation between age and tenure is very strong, we decided to exclude age from the current study.

**RESULTS**

***Data aggregation***

We aggregated the data on HR consistency and individualized support collected from individual employees (i.e., subordinates) to the team level. To ensure the appropriateness of the aggregated data, we calculated rwg values using a uniform distribution as the null distribution (James et al., 1984) and intra-class correlation coefficients (ICCs) (Bliese, 2000). The ICC(1) and ICC(2) values for the HR consistency are 0.23 and 0.61 respectively (F = 6.55, *p* < 0.001). The ICC(1) value of 0.23 is equivalent to a large effect (LeBreton & Senter, 2008). In addition, the ICC(2) value of 0.61 was above the cutoff value of 0.60 (Klein & Kozlowski, 2000) or falls into fair to good (Fleiss, 1986). Plus, The ICC(1) and ICC(2) values for the individualized support are 0.69 and 0.79 respectively (F = 10.47, *p* < 0.001). The rwg value for HR consistency and individualized support was 0.89 and 0.83 respectively, which fall into the level of strong agreement (LeBreton & Senter, 2008).

***Primary analysis***

First, a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) was conducted in Smart-PLS to ensure the convergent and discriminant validity of variables. We assessed the empirics of multiple indicators for model comparison (Hu & Bentler, 1999): the root-mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR). We used cut-off values as proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999) for good fit (RMSEA ≤ 0.06, CFI ≥ 0.95, SRMR ≤ 0.08) and acceptable fit (RMSEA ≤ 0.08, CFI ≥ 0.90, SRMR ≤ 0.10). As table 1 presents, our proposed model is acceptable and a better fit to the data compared to alternative models.

\*\*\*\*\*Please Insert Table 1 About Here \*\*\*\*\*

Further, the reliability and validity of the variables used in the study were carefully assessed to ensure robust results. As indicated in Appendix A (please refer to Appendix A for detailed scale items), all the variables showed a Cronbach's alpha coefficient higher than the minimum acceptable level of 0.7, indicating high reliability for the variables used in this study (Cavana et al., 2001). In addition, high factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE) supported the convergent validity of the model (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The mean, standard deviation, and correlations are reported in Table 2.

\*\*\*\*\*Please Insert Table 2 About Here \*\*\*\*\*

**Hypothesis testing**

H1 predicts that FLMs’ perceived enabling HR mediates the relationship between HPWS and WTBF. H2 and H3 predict that WTBF mediates the relationship between FLMs’ perceived enabling HR and outcomes variables including HR consistency and individualized support. As appendix A shows, our measurement of all variables satisfies required psychometric properties. Then, we employed the SmartPLS 3 software for PLS-SEM to analyze the model because we have a complex mediated model (i.e., two serial mediators) in this study. PLS-SEM facilitates the robust prediction of dependent variables (Hair et al., 2017), which makes PLS-SEM a suitable method for our analysis. The magnitude and significance of the path coefficients were used to assess the structural model. 5,000 resamples were used for the bootstrapping procedure. As presented in table 3, the results demonstrate that HPWS is positively and significantly related to WTBF through the FLMs’ perceived enabling HR (β = 0.292, t=6.58, p = 0.000), thus providing support for H1. In addition, the results show that WTBF mediates the relationship between FLMs’ perceived enabling HR and HR consistency (β = 0.117, t=2.82, p=0.005). WTBF also mediates the relationship between FLMs’ perceived enabling HR and individualized support to employees (β = 0.153, t=8.03 p=0.000). Therefore, H2 and H3 are both empirically supported.

To check the robustness of our findings, we also performed a mediation analysis test with a bootstrapped 95% confidence interval (CI) to test our hypotheses on the mediation effects. The HPWS’s indirect effect on FLMs’ WTBF through FLMs’ perceived enabling HR was found significant (Effect size=0.630, β = 0.292, 95% bootstrap CIs= [0.197, 0.385], not including zero). The indirect effect of FLMs’ perceived enabling HR on HR consistency through WTBF was also significant (Effect size=0.056, β = 0.117, 95% bootstrap CIs= [0.046, 0.194], not including zero). The indirect effect of FLMs’ perceived enabling HR on individualized support to subordinates through WTBF was again significant and positive (Effect size=0.683, β = 0.402, 95% bootstrap CIs= [0.287, 0.497], not including zero), which provides additional support for all the hypotheses proposed in this study.

Next, we examined the serial mediating effects of perceived enabling HR and WTBF between HPWS and our outcome variables (i.e., HR consistency and individualized support). The result of bootstrapping test indicates significant indirect effect of HPWS on HR consistency through two mediators (Effect size=0.066, β = 0.072, 95% bootstrap CIs= [0.027, 0.126], not including zero). Moreover, our results also reveal significant indirect effect of HPWS on individualized support to employees through the sequential mediation of perceived enabling HR and WTBF (Effect size=2.352, β = 0.245, 95% bootstrap CIs= [0.172, 0.318], not including zero).

\*\*\*\*\*Please Insert Table 3 about Here\*\*\*\*\*

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Receiving competing pressures for consistent and personalized implementation of HR is part of FLMs’ normal working day (Fu et al., 2020; Kehoe & Han, 2020; Kou et al., 2022). Past research acknowledges that navigating paradoxical HR enactment – that is, conflicting, interrelated, and enduring, is vitally important for having an effective HR system in practice, which largely depends on FLMs (Liao et al., 2016; Vossaert et al., 2022). Yet, how FLMs might be able to reconcile the tension between HR consistency and offering individualized support to subordinates remained unclear. In this study, drawing upon SET (Blau, 1964, Flynn, 2005) as the theoretical underpinning of our study, we proposed and empirically tested a model to explore how FLMs' perceived enabling HR and FLMs' WTBF link HPWS to the outcomes of interest: HR consistency and individualized support to employees.

**Theoretical Implications**

Our findings contribute to the literature on strategic human resource management and FLMs’ HR implementation in several important ways. To begin with, looking at FLMs’ HR role via the paradox perspective, we have revealed that for FLMs’ to exhibit effective HR enactment, more than HR ability and dexterity is required. Past research has frequently introduced HPWS (i.e., AMO framework) as the core determinant of FLMs’ HR implementation (Bos-Nehles, 2013; Kurdi-Nakra et al., 2022; Trullen et al., 2016), assuming that training and rewarding FLMs will guarantee HR consistency at the bottom line of the organization. However, this research stream only portrays half of the picture. We argue that examining FLMs’ HR implementation to solely enhance consistency misleads us in preparing and capturing FLMs’ HR involvement. In this study, we bring FLMs’ paradoxical HR tasks to the surface of the devolution literature, which not only mirrors the reality and intricacy of FLMs’ HR duties but also deepens our understanding of how to prepare FLMs for paradoxical HR implementation. Our shift in attention is a straightforward answer to very recent calls (Fu et al., 2020; 2018; Kehoe & Han, 2020; Vossaert et al., 2022), encouraging scholars to further explore how FLMs balance HR consistency and distinctiveness. Despite the valuable insights these scholars provided, current understanding of what comes before FLMs’ paradoxical implementation behaviour is far from complete.

While we do not downplay prior studies that utilize HPWS (e.g., training and rewarding) to assist FLMs with their implementation tasks, their conclusions, which disproportionately emphasize the technical preparation of FLMs for HR responsibilities, are subject to important criticisms. Against this backdrop, we argue that HPWS should make changes in FLMs’ perceptions of HR and intentions to improve their involvement in personnel responsibilities. The construct of perceived enabling HR, triggered by HPWS, is different from FLMs’ generic perception toward HR system. FLMs’ perceived enabling HR implies that for FLMs, it is important to ensure that HR system has eyes on receiving employees’ needs and values FLMs’ managerial insight and leadership style in enacting HR.  This is of significance because while some scholars argue that FLMs’ have favorable perceptions regarding HR practices (i.e., HPWS), some others have shown that FLMs refrain from undertaking their HR responsibilities and believe that *HR is not my job* (Hall & Torrington, 1998; Harris et al., 2002; Renwick, 2000; Kurdi-Nakra et al., 2022). Against this background, our study goes beyond merely investigating FLMs’ general perception of HPWS; FLMs need to ensure that embracing HR is not in conflict with their own managerial discreetness to care about employees’ unique needs. Contrary to the view that FLMs are reluctant toward people management responsibilities, we posit that FLMs’ are very sensitive to the people they oversee. However, before being involved in HR enactment, FLMs would evaluate the degree to which HR system is enabling, not limiting, and allowing them to factor in their subordinates’ demands into their implementation behaviour. Thus, our investigation of the mediating mechanisms of FLMs’ perceived enabling HR between HPWS and FLMs’ WTBF is a nuanced depiction of how HPWS should specifically change FLMs’ perception regarding their enactment behaviour. This is in line with the tenet of SET, arguing that individuals’ received support and facilitation, make them feel indebted to compensate with favor in kind (Blau, 1962; Flynn, 2005). The insight we draw from this study is that when FLMs perceive HR as enabling and endorsing their personal leadership insights, they shape a positive cognitive evaluation toward the HR department intentions.

   Moreover, our findings highlight that FLMs’ WTBF links FLMs’ perceived enabling HR to consistent implementation of HR and serving subordinates with personalized support. WTBF, if shaped and developed properly, aids FLMs in understanding different aspects of their HR role, finding meaning and values behind their HR tasks, and thus contributing to HR implementation at a broader level. Our findings unveil that if the HR system triggers FLMs’ WTBF, not only do FLMs not resist their HR responsibilities, but they also go above and beyond their call of duty and enact HR paradoxically. Our investigation of FLMs’ WTBF as the linking path between FLMs’ perceived enabling HR and their dual HR enactment behaviour answers the recent call by Townsend et al. (2022), who propose that FLMs squeeze between the aspirations of an HR system and the reality of frontline workers’ demands, encouraging further investigation in this direction. At this juncture, we found that if FLMs’ perception of HR triggers their WTBF, they would enact HR equally while making exceptions and supporting their employees. Though we didn’t test it explicitly, the opposite might be true: if FLMs do not develop WTBF, they may polarize either toward consistency or toward serving employees with individualized support, which is far from our expectations of effective HR implementation behaviours. Within Flynn’s generalized exchange theory (2005), one is likely to return favors received from their organizations (i.e., HR departments) to other people within those organizations (i.e., subordinates). In other words, FLMs display attention and support to subordinates in return for what they have received from the organization (Chang et al., 2020). This is because serving subordinates with individualized attention is believed to contribute to achieving the objectives of the organization. In this sense, WTBF, which measures FLMs’ willingness to accept seemingly competing roles, allows FLMs to reciprocate the HR department support and attention by consistent HR enactment while paying idiosyncratic attention to subordinates, who are significant to their immediate managers and can collectively improve the organization performance.

**Practical implications**

The findings of this study can have important implications for practitioners. Firms, in general, and HR professionals, in particular, should be careful about delivering HR policies and practices such as HPWS to FLMs. HR practitioners should enhance FLMs' HR knowledge and dexterity while ensuring they are not overwhelmed with the pressure for consistency and performance. Upper-echelon HR practitioners should be cautious that FLMs are also recipients of HR services, and any false signal might negatively influence FLMs' perception of HR system. We also remind HR managers and experts that flexibility does not lie in the HR system by itself. Flexible HR implementation, to a large extent, hinges on FLMs' choices. FLMs, as micro and meso-level HR actors, may withdraw or elude from their HR responsibilities if they perceive HR systems as exploitative or limiting. Further, HR professionals should also be aware that excessive emphasis on high-performance work systems (HPWS) to empower FLMs may not always be practical. HPWS are goal-oriented and focus on different motivators, which can limit FLMs' ability to provide individualized support to employees. FLMs' willingness and flexibility in their HR role should be cultivated and valued by enabling HR to address this issue.

Moreover, FLMs should be encouraged to respect individual employees' needs while consistently implementing HR practices. Over-relying on either aspect of their paradoxical roles will lead to less effective HR implementation. FLMs need to understand the philosophy behind HR policies and become aware of the organization's expectations for consistency and responsiveness toward employees. Despite the recognition of the importance of FLMs' HR responsibilities, there has been a lack of focus on how to align their HR role with business objectives and address the paradoxical demands of HR consistency and individual responsiveness (Lepak & Snell, 1999; McGovern et al., 1997). FLMs are in particular prone to experience role pressure and stress in dealing with HR tasks along with their operational unit goals. This stress and role ambiguity might be coupled when they face paradoxical HR tasks. Nevertheless, an FLM equipped with sufficient HR competency, flexibility, willingness, and a high responsibility toward subordinates can alternate between various conflicting tasks and meet dual expectations from subordinates and upper-level management. The HR department should convince FLMs that they both care about HR consistency in general and value and encourage FLMs' particular attention to their subordinates. Otherwise, FLMs would not execute HR tasks wholeheartedly, or their HR involvement might backfire.

**Limitations and future research**

This study provides valuable insights for practitioners but should be viewed with several limitations in mind. We deliberately focused on the banking sector because this industry has a tall structure and a high level of formality, as well as many managers at the bottom levels of their organization, suitable for the study of the significance of FLMs' HR contribution. However, the results may not be generalizable to other sectors and should be interpreted with caution. We should also note that in this study, we collected Time 2 data after a six-month interval. The main reason behind this is that in the bank of our study, middle and branch managers were assigned to evaluate employees under their supervision every three months in specific tasks and again rate employees' contribution to teams' goal achievements every six months to distribute rewards and performance-based bonuses. In addition, branch managers were responsible for training and coaching employees in delegating tasks and then rotating them to new positions every six months. In this sense, a six-month period was the most suitable time span for employees to have a realistic appraisal of their FLMs. However, other contingency factors might intervene during the six months which merit further investigation in future research.

Additionally, while the study attempted to draw on FLMs' perception and flexibility, capturing FLMs' inner motivation and identity for HR tasks still matters. Hence, exploring more intrinsic variables that guarantee FLMs' HR involvement and effective implementation behaviours is a fruitful avenue. Next, while we found evidence for the influence of HPWS on FLMs' perception of enabling HR, sense of flexibility, and their subsequent HR behaviour, future research can examine the HR system with team climate and social influences from the subordinates as other contingency factors to strengthen our research model. In other words, empirically exploring the concurrent effect of top-down influences from the HR department and bottom-up signals from subordinates on FLMs' implementation behaviours can be a valuable extension. Moreover, HR practices constitute a consistent system that includes additive and interactive effects. When different HR practices are used in combination, they can be mutually reinforcing and able to generate superior organizational performance (Huang et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2007). In measuring HPWS in this study, we followed previous research practice to assess HPWS as a bundled of HR practices but only for their additive effects, not considering their interactive effects, in order to stay focused on the main mechanism from HPWS to enabling HR to WBTF, and to employee outcomes (i.e., Consistency and individualized support). It is urged that future research on HPWS and other HR policies should explore their two-way or even three-way interactions among different HR practices to see if different combinations have different impact on employee behaviours and performance, which is also a fruitful research avenue. In addition, it is also possible to adopt the fit theory to explore how a fit between delivering consistent HR practices across the organization and providing individualized supervisor support can maximize FLMs’ HR performance, a potential fruitful research area (Yao & Ma, 2022). As a final thought, we only shed light on the paradoxes of consistency and individualized support in this study. Future endeavors can identify other critical paradoxes in FLMs' HR role that might influence their HR performance because studies in this field require more empirical substantiations.

**REFERENCES**

Alfes, K., Shantz, A. D., Bailey, C., Conway, E., Monks, K., & Fu, N. (2019). Perceived human resource system strength and employee reactions toward change: Revisiting human resource's remit as change agent. *Human Resource Management*, *58*, 239-252.

Alfes, K., Truss, C., Soane, E. C., Rees, C., & Gatenby, M. (2013). The relationship between line manager behavior, perceived HRM practices, and individual performance: Examining the mediating role of engagement. *Human Resource Management*, *52*, 839-859.

Alfes, K., Veld, M., & Fürstenberg, N. (2021). The relationship between perceived high‐performance work systems, combinations of human resource well‐being and human resource performance attributions and engagement. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *31*, 729-752.

Appelbaum, E., Bailey, T., Berg, P., & Kalleberg, A. L. (2000). *Manufacturing advantage: Why high-performance work systems pay off*. *Cornell University Press*.

Aryee, S., Walumbwa, F. O., Mondejar, R., & Chu, C. W. (2015). Accounting for the influence of overall justice on job performance: Integrating self‐determination and social exchange theories. *Journal of Management Studies*, *52*(2), 231-252.

Baard, P. P., Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2004). Intrinsic need satisfaction: a motivational basis of performance and well‐being in two work settings 1. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 34(10), 2045-2068.

Baron, J. N., & Kreps, D. M. (1999). Consistent human resource practices. *California Management Review*, *41*(3).

Beltrán‐Martín, I., Bou‐Llusar, J. C., Roca‐Puig, V., & Escrig‐Tena, A. B. (2017). The relationship between high performance work systems and employee proactive behaviour: role breadth self‐efficacy and flexible role orientation as mediating mechanisms. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *27*(3), 403-422.

Birtch, T. A., Chiang, F. F., & Van Esch, E. (2016). A social exchange theory framework for understanding the job characteristics–job outcomes relationship: the mediating role of psychological contract fulfillment. *The international journal of human resource management*, *27*(11), 1217-1236.

Björkman, I., Ehrnrooth, M., Smale, A., & John, S. (2011). The determinants of line management internalisation of HRM practices in MNC subsidiaries. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *22*(8), 1654-1671.

Blau, P. M. (1964). Exchange and power in social life. *New York: John Wiley.*

Bondarouk, T., Bos-Nehles, A., & Hesselink, X. (2016). Understanding the congruence of HRM frames in a healthcare organization. Baltic journal of management, 11(1), 2-20.

Bos-Nehles, A. C., & Meijerink, J. G. (2018). HRM implementation by multiple HRM actors: A social exchange perspective. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *29*, 3068-3092.

Bos‐Nehles, A. C., Van Riemsdijk, M. J., & Kees Looise, J. (2013). Employee perceptions of line management performance: applying the AMO theory to explain the effectiveness of line managers' HRM implementation. *Human Resource Management*, *52*, 861-877.

Bowen, D. E., & Ostroff, C. (2004). Understanding HRM–firm performance linkages: The role of the “strength” of the HRM system. *Academy of Management Review*, *29*, 203-221.

Cavana, R., Delahaye, B., & Sekeran, U. (2001). *Applied business research: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. John Wiley & Sons.

Chacko, S., & Conway, N. (2019). Employee experiences of HRM through daily affective events and their effects on perceived event‐signalled HRM system strength, expectancy perceptions, and daily work engagement. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *29*(3), 433-450.

Chang, H., Son, S. Y., & Pak, J. (2020). How do leader–member interactions influence the HRM–performance relationship? A multiple exchange perspective. *Human Performance*, *33*(4), 282-301.

Chen, S. Y., Uen, J. F., & Chen, C. C. (2016). Implementing high performance HR practices in Asia: HR practice consistency, employee roles, and performance. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *33*, 937-958.

Cheng, C. Y., Jiang, D. Y., Cheng, B. S., Riley, J. H., & Jen, C. K. (2015). When do subordinates commit to their supervisors? Different effects of perceived supervisor integrity and support on Chinese and American employees. *The Leadership Quarterly*, *26*, 81-97.

Crawshaw, J. R., & Game, A. (2015). The role of line managers in employee career management: An attachment theory perspective. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *26*(9), 1182-1203.

Cropanzano, R., & Mitchell, M. S. (2005). Social exchange theory: An interdisciplinary review. *Journal of Management*, *31*(6), 874-900.

Cropanzano, R., Anthony, E. L., Daniels, S. R., & Hall, A. V. (2017). Social exchange theory: A critical review with theoretical remedies. *Academy of Management Annals*, *11*(1), 479-516.

Datta, D. K., Guthrie, J. P., & Wright, P. M. (2005). Human resource management and labor productivity: does industry matter?. *Academy of management Journal*, *48*, 135-145.

Flynn, F. J. (2005). Identity orientations and forms of social exchange in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, *30*(4), 737-750.

Fu, N., Flood, P. C., Rousseau, D. M., & Morris, T. (2020). Line managers as paradox navigators in HRM implementation: Balancing consistency and individual responsiveness. *Journal of Management*, *46*, 203-233.

García-Carbonell, N., Martín-Alcázar, F., & Sanchez-Gardey, G. (2018). Determinants of building consistent human resources management systems: A focus on internal communication. *International Journal of Manpower*, 39, 354-377.

Gilbert, C., De Winne, S., & Sels, L. (2011). Antecedents of front‐line managers' perceptions of HR role stressors. *Personnel Review*, 40, 549-569.

Gilbert, C., De Winne, S., & Sels, L. (2015). Strong HRM processes and line managers' effective HRM implementation: a balanced view. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *25*, 600-616.

Gjerde, S., & Alvesson, M. (2020). Sandwiched: Exploring role and identity of middle managers in the genuine middle. *Human relations*, *73*(1), 124-151.

Gouldner, A. W. (1960). The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review*, 161-178.

Guest, D. E. (2017). Human resource management and employee well‐being: Towards a new analytic framework. *Human resource management journal*, *27*(1), 22-38.

Guest, D. E. (2021). The role of line managers in the HRM process. In *Handbook on HR process research* (pp. 177-193). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Guest, D. E., & Bos-Nehles, A. C. (2013). HRM and performance: The role of effective implementation. In *HRM and performance: Achievements and challenges* (pp. 79-96). Wiley-Blackwell.

Guzzo, R. A., & Noonan, K. A. (1994). Human resource practices as communications and the psychological contract. *Human Resource Management*, *33*(3), 447-462.

Hailey, V. H., Farndale, E., & Truss, C. (2005). The HR department's role in organisational performance. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *15*, 49-66.

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Sage.

Hall, L., & Torrington, D. (1998). Letting go or holding on--the devolution of operational personnel activities. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *8*, 41.

Harris, L. (2001). Rewarding employee performance: line managers' values, beliefs and perspectives. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *12*, 1182-1192.

Harris, L., Doughty, D., & Kirk, S. (2002). The devolution of HR responsibilities–perspectives from the UK’s public sector. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 26, 218-229.

Heraty, N., & Morley, M. (1995). Line managers and human resource development. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, *19*(10), 31-37.

Hu, L. T., & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, *6*(1), 1-55.

Huang, Y., Ma, Z., & Meng, Y. (2018). High‐performance work systems and employee engagement: Empirical evidence from China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, *56*, 341-359.

Huselid, M. A. (1995). The impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity, and corporate financial performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*(3), 635-672.

Jensen, J. M., Patel, P. C., & Messersmith, J. G. (2013). High-performance work systems and job control: Consequences for anxiety, role overload, and turnover intentions. *Journal of Management*, *39*(6), 1699-1724.

Jiang, K., Lepak, D. P., Hu, J., & Baer, J. C. (2012). How does human resource management influence organizational outcomes? A meta-analytic investigation of mediating mechanisms. *Academy of Management Journal*, *55*, 1264-1294.

Kehoe, R. R., & Han, J. H. (2020). An expanded conceptualization of line managers’ involvement in human resource management. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*, 111.

Kelly, C. M., Rofcanin, Y., Las Heras, M., Ogbonnaya, C., Marescaux, E., & Bosch, M. J. (2020). Seeking an “i-deal” balance: Schedule-flexibility i-deals as mediating mechanisms between supervisor emotional support and employee work and home performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *118*, 103369.

Kilroy, J., Dundon, T., & Townsend, K. (2023). Embedding reciprocity in human resource management: A social exchange theory of the role of frontline managers. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *33*(2), 511-531.

Klein, K. J., & Kozlowski, S. W. (2000). A multilevel approach to theory and research in organizations: Contextual, temporal, and emergent processes. *Multilevel theory, research, and methods in organizations: Foundations, extensions, and new directions*, 3-90.

Kou, X., Kurdi-Nakra, H., & Pak, J. (2022). The framework of first-line manager's HR role identity: A Multi-actor HR involvement perspective. *Human Resource Management Review*, *32*(4), 100898.

Kurdi‐Nakra, H., Kou, X., & Pak, J. (2022). The road taken and the path forward for HR devolution research: An evolutionary review. *Human Resource Management*, *61*, 239-258.

Kuvaas, B. (2008). An exploration of how the employee–organization relationship affects the linkage between perception of developmental human resource practices and employee outcomes. *Journal of Management Studies*, *45*, 1-25.

Kuvaas, B., & Dysvik, A. (2010). Exploring alternative relationships between perceived investment in employee development, perceived supervisor support and employee outcomes. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *20*, 138-156.

Kuvaas, B., Dysvik, A., & Buch, R. (2014). Antecedents and employee outcomes of line managers' perceptions of enabling HR practices. *Journal of Management Studies*, *51*, 845-868.

LeBreton, J. M., & Senter, J. L. (2008). Answers to 20 questions about interrater reliability and interrater agreement. *Organizational research methods*, *11*(4), 815-852.

Lepak, D. P., & Snell, S. A. (1999). The human resource architecture: Toward a theory of human capital allocation and development. *Academy of Management Review*, *24*, 31-48.

Liao, C., Wayne, S. J., & Rousseau, D. M. (2016). Idiosyncratic deals in contemporary organizations: A qualitative and meta‐analytical review. *Journal of organizational behavior*, *37*, S9-S29.

López‐Cotarelo, J. (2018). Line managers and HRM: A managerial discretion perspective. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *28*, 255-271.

McConville, T. (2006). Devolved HRM responsibilities, middle‐managers and role dissonance. *Personnel review*, 35(6), 637-653.

McGovern, P., Gratton, L., Hope‐Hailey, V., Stiles, P., & Truss, C. (1997). Human resource management on the line?. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *7*, 12-29.

Messersmith, J. G., Kim, K. Y., & Patel, P. C. (2018). Pulling in different directions? Exploring the relationship between vertical pay dispersion and high‐performance work systems. *Human Resource Management*, *57*, 127-143.

Nehles, A. C., Van Riemsdijk, M., Kok, I., & Looise, J. K. (2006). Implementing human resource management successfully: A first-line management challenge. *Management revue*, 256-273.

Nishii, L. H., & Paluch, R. M. (2018). Leaders as HR sensegivers: Four HR implementation behaviors that create strong HR systems. *Human Resource Management Review*, *28*(3), 319-323.

Op de Beeck, S., Wynen, J., & Hondeghem, A. (2016). HRM implementation by line managers: Explaining the discrepancy in HR-line perceptions of HR devolution. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *27*(17), 1901-1919.

Pak, J. (2022). Capturing variability of high‐performance work systems within organisations: The role of team manager's person‐HRM fit and climate for HR implementation and subsequent implementation behaviour. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 32(4), 759-781.

Pak, J., & Kim, S. (2018). Team manager’s implementation, high performance work systems intensity, and performance: a multilevel investigation. *Journal of Management*, *44*, 2690-2715.

Parker, S. K., Wall, T. D., & Jackson, P. R. (1997). “That's not my job”: Developing flexible employee work orientations. *Academy of Management Journal*, *40*, 899-929.

Perry, E. L., & Kulik, C. T. (2008). The devolution of HR to the line: Implications for perceptions of people management effectiveness. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management,*, *19*(2), 262-273.

Poole, M., & Jenkins, G. (1997). Responsibilities for human resource management practices in the modern enterprise: evidence from Britain. *Personnel Review*, 26(5), 333-356.

Purcell, J., & Hutchinson, S. (2007). Front‐line managers as agents in the HRM‐performance causal chain: theory, analysis and evidence. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *17*(1), 3-20.

Renwick, D. (2000). HR‐line work relations: a review, pilot case and research agenda. *Employee Relations*, *22*(2), 179-201.

Renwick, D. (2003). Line manager involvement in HRM: an inside view. *Employee Relations*, 25, 262-280.

Rhoades, L., Eisenberger, R., & Armeli, S. (2001). Affective commitment to the organization: the contribution of perceived organizational support. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*, 825.

Rupp, D. E., Shao, R., Jones, K. S., & Liao, H. (2014). The utility of a multifoci approach to the study of organizational justice: A meta-analytic investigation into the consideration of normative rules, moral accountability, bandwidth-fidelity, and social exchange. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, *123*(2), 159-185.

Ryu, S., & Kim, S. (2013). First‐line managers' HR involvement and HR effectiveness: The case of South Korea. *Human Resource Management*, *52*(6), 947-966.

Salvador-Gómez, A., Bou-Llusar, J. C., & Beltrán-Martín, I. (2023). A multi-actor perspective on the effectiveness of human resource management implementation: an empirical analysis based on the ability-motivation-opportunity framework. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *34*(20), 3963-4002.

Sanders, K., & Frenkel, S. (2011). HR-line management relations: Characteristics and effects. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *22*, 1611-1617.

Sanders, K., & Yang, H. (2016). The HRM process approach: The influence of employees’ attribution to explain the HRM‐performance relationship. *Human Resource Management*, *55*, 201-217.

Shipton, H., Sanders, K., Atkinson, C., & Frenkel, S. (2016). Sense‐giving in health care: the relationship between the HR roles of line managers and employee commitment. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *26*, 29-45.

Sikora, D. M., & Ferris, G. R. (2014). Strategic human resource practice implementation: The critical role of line management. *Human Resource Management Review*, 24, 271-281.

Solberg, E., Lai, L., & Dysvik, A. (2021). When midway won't do: the curvilinear relationship between intrinsic motivation and willingness to be flexible. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 36,156-169.

Stinglhamber, F., & Vandenberghe, C. (2003). Organizations and supervisors as sources of support and targets of commitment: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, *24*, 251-270.

Sun, L.-Y., Aryee, S., & Law, K. S. (2007). High-performance human resource practices, citizenship behavior, and organizational performance: A relational perspective. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*(3), 558–577.

Teague, P., & Roche, W. K. (2012). Line managers and the management of workplace conflict: evidence from Ireland. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *22*, 235-251.

Townsend, K., Dundon, T., Cafferkey, K., & Kilroy, J. (2022). Victim or master of HRM implementation: The frontline manager conundrum. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources, 60*(1), 79-96.

Townsend, K., Wilkinson, A., Bamber, G., & Allan, C. (2012). Mixed signals in human resources management: The HRM role of hospital line managers. *Human Resource Management Journal, 22*(3), 267–282.

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*, 449-470.

Van De Voorde, K., Veldhoven, M.V. and Veld, M. (2016), “Connecting empowerment focused HRM and labor productivity to work engagement: The mediating role of job demands and resources”, *Human Resource Management Journal*, 26 (2),192-210.

Van Waeyenberg, T., & Decramer, A. (2018). Line managers’ AMO to manage employees’ performance: the route to effective and satisfying performance management. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *29*(22), 3093-3114.

Vermeeren, B. (2014). Variability in HRM implementation among line managers and its effect on performance: A 2-1-2 mediational multilevel approach. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *25*, 3039-3059.

Vossaert, L., Anseel, F., Collewaert, V., & Foss, N. J. (2022). ‘There’s Many a Slip “Twixt the Cup and the Lip”’: HR Management Practices and Firm Performance. *Journal of Management Studies*, *59*(3), 660-694.

Vossaert, L., Anseel, F., Collewaert, V., & Foss, N. J. (2022). ‘There’s Many a Slip “Twixt the Cup and the Lip”’: HR Management Practices and Firm Performance. *Journal of Management Studies*, *59*(3), 660-694.

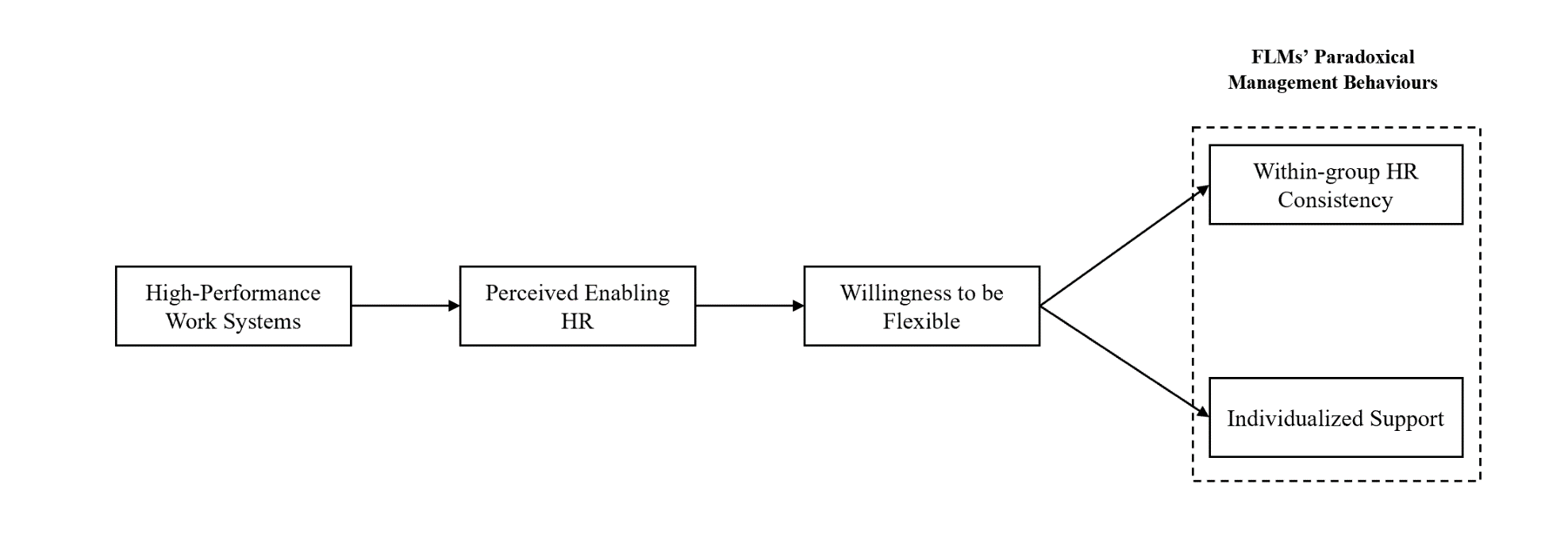
Wang, Z., Xing, L., & Zhang, Y. (2021). Do high-performance work systems harm employees’ health? An investigation of service-oriented HPWS in the Chinese healthcare sector. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *32*, 2264-2297.

Yang, J., & Arthur, J. B. (2021). Implementing commitment HR practices: line manager attributions and employee reactions. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *32*(16), 3339-3369.

Yao, Y. A., & Ma, Z. (2022). Toward a holistic perspective of congruence research with the polynomial regression model. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 108*(3), 446-465.

Yin, Y., Wang, Y., & Lu, Y. (2019). Antecedents and outcomes of employee empowerment practices: A theoretical extension with empirical evidence. *Human Resource Management Journal*, *29*(4), 564-584.

**Figure1**. Research Model



**Table 1.** Comparison of measurement models.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Model quality criteria** | | | | | |  | **Evaluation of the structural part of the model** | | | | | |
| **Model** | SRMR | D\_ULS | D\_G | Chi-square | NFI | RMS Theta | Q2  Average | | R2 Average | F2  Average | VIF  Average | GOF |
| Five-factor model | .150 | .336 | .079 | 64.46 | .855\* | .486 | .336 | | .349 | .915 | 1.53 | .730 |
| Four-factor model | .185 | .511 | .342 | 223.01 | .497 | .486 | .248 | | .258 | .367 | 1.34 | .589 |
| Three-factor model | .206 | .638 | .366 | 249.43 | .437 | .486 | .217 | | .230 | .204 | 1.29 | .546 |
| Two-factor model | .261 | 1.027 | .432 | 276.73 | .375 | .486 | .217 | | .189 | .209 | 1.23 | .482 |
| One-factor model | .275 | 1. 133 | .461 | 321.555 | .274 | .486 | .141 | | .147 | .189 | 1.172 | .455 |
| Note: SRMR<0.12 , VIF= 1/1-R2, NFI > 0.80, Q2 > 0, GOF > 0.366, F2 Range > -0.35 (Strong), GOF =*Average \* Average VIF* | | | | | | | | | | | | |

***Note***: \*p<0.05; Five-factor model: High-performance work systems, Perceived enabling HR, Willingness to be flexible, HR consistency, Individualized support; Four-factor model: High-performance work systems + Perceived enabling HR, Willingness to be flexible, HR consistency, Individualized support; Three-factor model: High-performance work systems + Perceived enabling HR, Willingness to be flexible, Individualized support, + HR consistency; Two-factor model: High-performance work systems + Perceived enabling HR, Willingness to be flexible + Individualized support + HR consistency; One-Factor Model: High-performance work systems + Perceived enabling HR + Willingness to be flexible+ Individualized support + HR consistency

**Table 2**. Means, standard deviations, and correlations.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Variables** | **Mean** | **SD** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| 1. Tenure | 5.92 | 2.94 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Gender | 1.41 | 0.49 | .044 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. HPWS | 3.39 | 1.22 | .081 | .057 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. Perceived enabling HR | 3.51 | 1.18 | .100 | .033 | .449\*\* |  |  |  |  |
| 1. WTBF | 3.53 | 1.08 | .047 | .012 | .337\*\* | .344\*\* |  |  |  |
| 1. HR consistency | 3.09 | 1.02 | .019 | .099 | .397\*\* | .291\* | .175\* |  |  |
| 1. Individualized support | 3.80 | 1.08 | -.003 | -.046 | .300\* | .317\*\* | .501\*\* | .096 |  |

***Note*:** \**p ≤ 0.05, \*\*p ≤ 0.01 (two-tailed);* *HPWS=High-performance work systems; WTBF= Willingness to be flexible*

**Table 3**. Path Coefficient and Hypothesis Results

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Paths** | **Path Coefficient** | **t-value** | **P-value** | **Confidence Interval** | | **Effect Size**  **(F2)** | **R2 Adjusted** |
| **2.5%** | **97.5%** |
| **H1**: HPWS 🡪 FLMs’ Perceived enabling HR 🡪 WTBF | 0.292\* | 6.581 | 0.000 | 0.197 | 0.385 | 0.630 | 0.217 |
| **H2**: FLMs’ Perceived enabling HR 🡪 WTBF 🡪 HR consistency | 0.117\* | 2.820 | 0.005 | 0.046 | 0.194 | 0.056 | 0.066 |
| **H3**: FLMs’ Perceived enabling HR 🡪 WTBF 🡪 Individualized Support | 0.402\* | 8.039 | 0.000 | 0.287 | 0.497 | 0.683 | 0.727 |
| **Serial Mediation:**  HPWS 🡪 FLMs’ Perceived enabling HR 🡪 WTBF 🡪 HR consistency | 0.072\* | 2.639 | 0.009 | 0.027 | 0.126 | 0.066 | 0.056 |
| **Serial Mediation:**  HPWS 🡪 FLMs’ Perceived enabling HR 🡪 WTBF🡪Individualized Support | 0.245\* | 5.868 | 0.000 | 0.172 | 0.318 | 2.352 | 0.700 |

***Note****: NFLMs=181, Nemployees=311; \*p<0.05 (two-tailed); HPWS=High-performance work systems; WTBF= Willingness to be flexible; Individualized Support; FLMs = Frontline Managers.*

**Appendix A**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Survey items** | | **EFA** | | | **CFA** | | | | |
|  | | **Factor Loading** | **Total Variance Extracted** | | **Factor Loadings**  **(β & T)** | **AVE** | **CR** | **Cronbach’s alpha** | **VIF** |
| ***High-performance work systems*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Selective Staffing | Great effort is taken to select the right person. | .826 | | 14.55 | .742 (22.17) | .80 | .92 | .87 | 2.47 |
| Long-term employee potential is emphasized. | .885 | |
| Considerable importance is placed on the staffing process | .906 | |
| Very extensive efforts are made in selection | .866 | |
| Training | Extensive training programs are provided for individuals in customer contact or frontline jobs | .891 | | 13.63 | .667 (16.77) |
| Employees in customer contact jobs will normally go through training programs every few years | .868 | |
| There are formal training programs to teach new hires the skills they need to perform their job. | .884 | |
| Formal training programs are offered to employees in order to increase their promotability in this organization | .920 | |
| Internal mobility | Employees have few opportunities for upward mobility | .858 | | 12.28 | .628 (14.23) |
| Employees do not have any future in this organization | .864 | |
| Promotion in this organization is based on seniority | .834 | |
| employees have clear career paths in this organization. | .871 | |
| Employees in customer contact jobs who desire promotion have more than one potential position they could be promoted to | .822 | |
| Job Security | Employees in this job can be expected to stay with this organization for as long as they wish. | .866 | | 12.16 | .602 (13.28) |
| Job security is almost guaranteed to employees in this job. | .853 | |  |  |  |
| Job Description | The duties in this job are clearly defined | .847 | | 11.83 | .659 (16.43) |
| This job has an up-to-date description | .881 | |
| The job description for a position accurately describes all of the duties performed by individual employees | .891 | |
| Performance oriented appraisal | Performance is more often measured with objective quantifiable results. | .822 | | 7.95 | .663 (17.15) |
| Performance appraisals are based on objective quantifiable results | .892 | |
| Employee appraisals emphasize long term and group-based achievement | .886 | |
| Incentive rewards | Individuals in this job receive bonuses based on the profit of the organization | .824 | | 6.13 | .580 (12.49) |
| Close tie or matching of pay to individual/group performance | .916 | |
| Participation | Employees in this job are often asked by their supervisor to participate in decisions | .926 | | 2.058 | .620 (15.17) |
| Individuals in this job are allowed to make decisions. | .893 | |
| Employees are provided the opportunity to suggest improvements in the way things are done | .877 | |
| Supervisors keep open communications with employees in this job. | .875 | |
| ***Perceived enabling HR*** | | | | | | | | | |
| All in all, the various HR tools and HR systems in my organization are adjusted to the local and specific needs I have as a leader when it comes to getting the ‘best’ out of my employees. | | .879 | | 78.27 | .911 (68.59) | .78 | .94 | .93 | 3.18 |
| All in all, the various HR tools and HR systems in my organization are flexible enough to be adapted to my personal leadership style. | | .806 | | .887 (64.06) |
| All in all, the various HR tools and HR systems in my organization are flexible enough to be adapted to the individual needs of my employees. | | .977 | | .886 (49.99) |
| All in all, the various HR tools and systems in my organization help me perform my leadership duties in a successful way. | | .876 | | .859 (43.10) |
| All in all, the various HR tools and HR systems in my organization have increased my satisfaction with my managerial responsibilities. | | .792 | | .880 (47.78) |
| ***Willingness to be flexible*** | | | | | | | | | |
| If there is no longer a need for what I do today, I am willing to take on new work tasks | | .885 | | 76.09 | .860 (44.14) | .76 | .94 | .92 | 3.18 |
| I am willing to do things differently than usual, if my leader or the organization wants it | | .900 | | .907 (70.26) |
| If we are organized in another way, I am willing to work with other tasks than I do today | | .835 | | .878 (57.00) |
| If we get new technologies/IT solutions, I am willing to adapt my way of working to them | | .886 | | .876 (49.52) |
| I am willing to accept new tasks or responsibility areas if circumstances require it | | .796 | | .839 (35.80) |
| ***HR consistency*** | | | | | | | | | |
| Treatment consistency | Employees have equal internal opportunities for promotion | .536 | | 36.18 | .747 (22.24) | .74 | .93 | .91 | 2.7 |
| The same management practices are applied to all employees with the same job positions | .578 | |
| The same reward and penalty policies are applied to all employees | .523 | |
| Employees get the rewards that they deserve | .561 | |
| All employees have equal opportunities | .724 | |
| Temporal  Consistency | Employees worry that management might change policies someday (Reverse). | .795 | | 23.88 | .806 (26.61) |
| The management’s philosophy has not changed since I started working for this company | .661 | |
| In general, this company has maintained good management policies and systems | .896 | |
| Overall, the HR systems and policies in this company are predictable. | .886 | |
| The recruitment and selection system are complemented by HR planning. Complementary consistency | .870 | |
| Complementary consistency | The training system is complemented by promotion policies. | .858 | | 16.46 | .771 (26.63) |
| The reward and compensation system is complemented by performance appraisal policies | .893 | |
| The promotion system is complemented by performance appraisal policies | .889 | |
| The reward and penalty system is complemented by internal audit policies | .874 | |
| Overall, the philosophy of each HR system is consistent with the others. | .861 | |
| ***Individualized support*** | | | | | | | | | |
| My supervisor cares about my opinions | | .845 | | 74.71 | .864 (36.59) | .78 | .935 | .90 | 2.9 |
| My supervisor cares about my well-being | | .874 | | .889 (53.48) |
| My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values | | .888 | | .925 (95.61) |
| My supervisor shows very little concern for me | | .830 | | .857 (34.94) |