

Building an HR architecture: a case study in the healthcare sector in the East of the Netherlands

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NoaberZorg
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Building an HR architecture: A case study in the healthcare sector in the East of the Netherlands

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Management summary

The explorative multiple case study was conducted among one nursing home and three elderly people's homes in the East of the Netherlands. The four organizations, Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, form an alliance association, called NoaberZorg. The goal of this alliance is collaboration in the professional field of elderly care. Although the four organizations started collaborating, there is no yet a clearly defined structural basis to do so. Such a structural basis is to be built, once NoaberZorg is aware of its HR and workforce architecture: which of the HR policies/practices can be shared, which HR policies/practices not; and which employees can be shared, and which employees not. Therefore, this study aimed at examining the *appropriate* HR architecture to manage the workforce and the HR policies/practices in the alliance association of NoaberZorg.

No study in previous research has examined the structural possibilities for the existence of HR alliances in depth. The concept of independent organizations cooperating in the management of human resources, is counterintuitive and contrary to the fundamental views of HRM, because employees are believed to be temporarily captive and propriety assets, not shared with other organizations.

This study builds on four theoretical concepts: transaction cost economics theory, the resource dependency theory, the resource based view theory, and the agency cost theory. A research model is centered around four strategic determinants: uniqueness, information asymmetry, value and discretion over an important resource. The internal impact factor in this study is the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function. The external impact factor is the external labor market for employees in the healthcare sector in the East of the Netherlands.

In order to determine the *appropriate* HR architecture, in each organization interviews were conducted with the managing director, the management team members, a representative of the works council, the HR manager and the quality official, totaling in 29 interviews. The interview protocol contained 31 open questions. Explicitly for the workforce architecture 177 functions were analyzed. The functions were divided into managerial functions, coordinating functions, team leader functions, healthcare functions and operational functions. For the HR policies/practices architecture 49 HR policies/practices were analyzed.

This study found a direct relation between the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function, and the workforce and HR policies/practices architecture of the HR alliance. Regarding the workforce architecture, it was found that the managerial functions, the coordinating functions, and the team leader functions cannot be exchanged among the organizations. Yet, the employees who fulfill these functions can exchange knowledge and work together in a project form. The workforce of most of the analyzed healthcare functions and operational functions can be exchanged among the organizations. From the workforce architecture of the functions that can be developed in the alliance, a direct relation was found to the internal labor market. Besides, a direct relation was discovered from the external labor market to the internal labor market. Concerning the HR policies/practices architecture this study found that the organizations can collaborate in the operational execution of all analyzed HR policies/practices.

Based on the results of this study, an advice for the appropriate HR architecture for the HR alliance NoaberZorg is that in order to enhance the inter-alliance collaboration, the HR departments should jointly develop the healthcare functions and operational functions, and share the operational execution of the HR policies/practices. When this is done, the HR architecture is likely to meet the strategic goals of the HR alliance NoaberZorg.

An internal labor market can be developed to provide employees variety, new challenges, possibilities to brush up their knowledge and experience, or employees may be given a new chance to work at another NoaberZorg organization. Employees find it important to have development opportunities, and an internal labor market protects the employees from the external labor market: the employees are preserved in the association. When the workforce of the healthcare functions are exchanged, a long period of time has the preference. The clients get familiar with the employees and built a trusting relationship.

Concerning the operational execution of the HR policies/practices, each organization must in the recruitment and selection stage indicate the competitive advantage the Noabers have as being

combined employers and in the introduction period the organizations must mention to the employees what NoaberZorg can mean for them in the form of concrete examples.

A NoaberZorg broad trainee policy needs to be developed. The organizations can offer students/trainees the complete breath of traineeships in the healthcare functions. Doing this, will have a positive radiation on the education institutions and future employees.

It is desired to collaborate in the courses that the employees need to follow in the framework of the training policy, and reintegrating employees in the NoaberZorg organizations must be better and more utilized, because a clear financial incentive is present.

A pilot for a flexpool must be developed to have a decent buffer in times of absenteeism and holidays. Pertaining to the external labor market it is viable to make agreements with the municipalities of Enschede and Oldenzaal to train people who keep their payment fees. The people who are attracted must be able to provide care of good quality. New advent employees can be attracted and be trained in the association of NoaberZorg. After the training is completed, the employees can be employed in the flexpool.

Finally, although the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function shows that the HR managers have different positions and decision making authority in the organizations, it is relevant that all HR managers are present in the management team meetings that are held in the NoaberZorg association. When topics are discussed in the management team meetings the HR managers are directly involved and can respond to the topics that are elaborated, and the HR managers can make the decision who leads a certain project. As mentioned, an advice is to collaborate in managing the operational functions and healthcare functions in the association, and in the operational execution of the HR policies/practices. Therefore, it is relevant that every management team meeting in NoaberZorg attention is paid on the positive and challenging aspects of the collaboration in these two areas.

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Preface

In September 2008, I started with my master thesis to finish the master study Human Resource Management at the University of Twente. This master thesis is executed on behalf of Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, who together collaborate in the association NoaberZorg. The topic of this master thesis is to determine the *appropriate* HR architecture for NoaberZorg.

The creation of this master thesis has been a long, and especially a challenging process, which would not have been possible without the help and participation of a lot of persons. First of all, I would like to thank Mr. J.T. Bosma, the HR manager of Bruggerbosch, Mrs. E. Gosselink, the HR manager of Zorgcentrum de Posten, Mr. W. Susanna, the HR manager of Zorggroep Manna, and Mr. B. van Veen, the HR manager of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, for the opportunity they gave me to execute this study and for their useful comments, information, flexibility, and participation in the interviews.

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I hope that this study provides the HR managers with javelin points were to focus on in their collaboration.

Enschede, June 25th 2009
Melanie ter Riet

1. Introduction

This study is conducted at one nursing home and three elderly people's homes in the East of the Netherlands, namely Bruggerbosch, Zorgentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. The four organizations collaborate in the association of NoaberZorg (Meijling, 2007). The *appropriate* manner in which the HR departments of the four organizations can work together to manage the workforce and the HR policies/practices is elaborated in this study. HR policies represent the organization stated intentions about the HR programs that should be carried out in the organization (Wright, McMahan, 1992; Wright, Boswell, 2002). HR practices can be defined as HR tools that are used in the organization to manage the workforce (Wright, Dunford, Snell, 2001).

1.1 Nursing homes and elderly people's homes

In the Netherlands, nursing homes have an important role in the healthcare sector (Ribbe, 1993). A nursing home focuses on people who are not able to live independently anymore, and need the help of experts for a short or long period of time (Actiz, 2008). Activities of daily living assistance and mobility, 24 hours nursing care, psychosocial, personal and paramedical care is provided mainly to elderly people with chronic diseases, disabilities, either physical, mental or both (Ribbe, 1993; Meijer, Campen, Kerkstra, 2000; Veer, Kerkstra, 2001). Compared to an elderly people's home more activities are provided to groups of clients. The clients live for example in common spaces. For admission in a nursing home an indication of Centrum Indicatiestelling Zorg is needed (Actiz, 2008).

People living in an elderly people's home live in principle independently in an apartment of the organization. The workforce at the elderly people's home provides care, nursing and guidance to the clients. When necessary the service is provided 24 hours a day. For admission in an elderly people's home an indication of Centrum Indicatiestelling Zorg is needed (Actiz, 2008). The elderly people's home in this study provide thuiszorg. Thuiszorg includes household care; helping clients with cleaning their apartment, and personal care; washing clients and assisting the clients to go to bed (Actiz, 2008).

1.2 The healthcare sector

The organizational context differentiates the healthcare sector from other sectors (Prins, Henderickx, 2007). Organizations in the healthcare sector have the social responsibility to deliver care to citizens that are eligible. This means that the work processes must be organized to meet the needs of the clients (Wijk, 2007).

In recent years, it has been increasingly recognized that HRM is important in the healthcare sector (Prins, Henderickx, 2007). HRM refers to management practices, such as recruitment, selection, introduction, training, appraisal and the design and application of reward systems, which all aim to enhance the performance of the organization, by improving the performance of the workforce (Michie, West, 2004). In sum, HRM is concerned with managing the workforce (Boxall, Purcell, 2003). The workforce in the healthcare sector is large and diverse, and comprises separate occupations often represented by powerful professional trade unions (Buchan, 2004; Prins, Henderickx, 2007).

The healthcare sector is primarily a people oriented, labor intensive sector, since the workforce in most healthcare organizations directly provides the services to the clients, making the workforce the most critical organizational input (Zairi, 1998; Buchan, 2004; Wijk, 2007; Prins, Henderickx, 2007; Bokeloh, 2008). The workforce diagnoses problems and determines which services will be provided, when, where, and how. Thus, healthcare organizations are highly dependent on the workforce (Dussault, Dubois, 2003). As a result, HRM is particularly important, because HRM can encourage the performance of the workforce (Prins, Henderickx, 2007; Wijk, 2007), and a well motivated and appropriately skilled and deployed workforce is crucial to the success of the delivery of healthcare (Buchan, 2004). HR practices directly impact the skills of the workforce that can provide value to the organization and are levers by which the organization acquires the commitment of the workforce to stay with the organization (Barney, Wright, 1998). Shields and Ward (2001) study found that nurses who report overall dissatisfaction with their job have a 65% higher probability of intending to quit, than those who report to be satisfied.

1.3 Research problem and research site

Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal collaborate in the association of NoaberZorg. The goal of the association is collaboration in the professional field of elderly care. This goal is achieved by joint action of the four organizations against other agencies, government institutions, making agreements, and supporting the organizations in their own businesses (Meijling, 2007).

The four organizations have their own identity and want to maintain their own identity in order to reflect the diversity that exists in society. The client must be able to choose an organization with which the client feels connectedness. Since, 2007 the four organizations deliver care in the municipalities of Oldenzaal, Dinkelland, Losser, Enschede and Hengelo (Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, 2007). The organizations want to exploit the strength and eliminate the weaknesses of each organization, achieve reduction of costs, and warrant the independence and continuity of the organizations. Exploiting the strength of each organization means exchanging knowledge, expertise and learning from each other. This makes it possible to eliminate the weaknesses of each organization (Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, 2007).

The problem is that the HR departments of the four organizations have no knowledge in how to manage the workforce in collaboration with each other. This is relevant to know, because since January 2009 the financing of healthcare organizations has changed. In the past, healthcare organizations got money for the available capacity (number of beds). Nowadays, the budget of these organizations is dependent upon the level of care the client needs. This is written in a *Zorgzwaartepakket*. There are ten *Zorgzwaartepakketten* to be distinguished, see Appendix 1. The consequence of the change in the financing of healthcare organizations is that the *Zorgzwaartepakketten* increase the pressure to deliver efficient healthcare with as few employees as possible (Bokeloh, 2008). Windt, Smeets and Arnold (2008) point out that organizations need to be more flexible in the usage of the workforce.

The HR departments of the four organizations also have no knowledge in how to collaborate in managing the HR policies/practices in the association. This is significant to determine, because HRM is an area in which the organizations can share knowledge through collaboration. This makes it possible that not every organization needs to have the specialist knowledge in-house and so optimal gains can be achieved by the collaboration (Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, 2007). The most important characteristic of a successful organization is that the organization specializes in the qualities in which she can excel, and that the organization on other areas seeks collaboration with other organizations. Specialization proves to be effective in network relations with partners that specialize in other areas (Bokeloh, 2008). However, there are certain strategic criteria which determine when collaboration of HR policies/practices is feasible and when collaboration is not appropriate (Lepak, Snell, 1998; Lepak, Snell, 1999).

In sum, this study focuses on determining the *appropriate* manner in which the HR departments of the four organizations can work together to manage the workforce and the HR policies/practices. When possible a workforce architecture and an HR policies/practices architecture is designed. An architecture can be defined as various components of HR that fit together and are managed to meet the strategic objectives of HR (Nadler, Gerstein, Shaw, 1992; Lepak, Snell, 1998).

The four organizations want to collaborate in managing the workforce and the HR policies/practices, but want to do this with explicit preservation of the autonomy and identity of the individual organizations (Meijling, 2007). This means that the collaboration of NoaberZorg can be conceived as an alliance. In an alliance the individual partners maintain their separate identity, and in doing so protect their self interests (Doz, Hamel, 1998). Since, this study focuses on HR, the term HR alliance is used.

1.4 Research question

The main goal of this study is to design the *appropriate* workforce and HR policies/practices architecture for NoaberZorg. Therefore, the following research question has been developed:

What is the appropriate HR architecture for the HR alliance NoaberZorg?

It is difficult to determine the appropriate HR architecture, because no study has examined the structural possibilities for the existence of HR alliances in depth (Gardner, 2005). The concept of independent organizations cooperating in the management of human resources, is counterintuitive and contrary to the fundamental views of HRM (Gardner, 2005), because employees are believed to be temporarily captive and propriety assets, not shared with other organizations (Cappelli, 2000). In this study, the following theories that influence the likelihood of organizations to form an HR alliance are discussed: the transaction cost economics theory, the resource dependency theory, the resource based view theory and the agency cost theory.

In order to answer the research question several sub questions need to be developed. The characteristics of the workforce and HR policies/practices architecture must be determined. When an HR architecture is developed, it is possible to draw inferences about the form and function of it (Nadler *et al*, 1992; Becker, Gerhart, 1996). The HR architecture highlights the locus of value creation (Becker, Huselid, 2006) in the HR alliance NoaberZorg.

Since, there are four organizations analyzed in this study, there are also four different HR departments or HR functions to be discerned. Mohrman and Lawler (1997) specify that the HR department must be a valued member of the management team of the organization by contributing to the business strategy and operations decision making. The managing of the workforce and HR policies/practices in collaboration with other organizations, can be seen as an integral part of the business strategy, so it is useful to determine the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR department of every organization. The degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR department is the internal impact factor that is investigated in this study. The external impact factor is the regional labor market of employees in the healthcare sector in the East of the Netherlands. Many reports indicate that in the future severe labor shortages are expected and cooperation can be one of the most effective ways of dealing with workforce shortages (Cappelli, 2000; Dijk, Paauwe, Wijk, 2007; Windt *et al*, 2008).

The empirical research at the four organizations should reveal the appropriate workforce and HR policies/practices architecture and indicate if there are possibilities to collaborate in these two areas. Finally, the results of this empirical research will be discussed and advices will be given to Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, based on the outcomes of this study.

Based upon the foregoing the following sub questions have been formulated:

- 1. What are the characteristics of the HR polices/practices architecture?**
- 2. What are the characteristics of the workforce architecture?**
- 3. What is the internal and external impact factor that influences the HR architecture of NoaberZorg?**

2. HR alliance and it's HR architecture

Strategic alliances among organizations are a ubiquitous phenomenon (Gulati,1998). Nowadays, organizations are even forming an HR alliance with other organizations to manage the workforce (Gardner, 2005). To reveal the proper definition of an HR alliance, the alliance literature is examined. Gulati (1995a) defines an alliance as any voluntary initiated interfirm cooperative agreement, that involves exchange, sharing, or co development, and it can include contributions by partners of firm specific assets. Doz and Hamel (1998) mention that an alliance is perhaps best formulated as an evolving relationship, punctuated by a series of commitments, steps and bargains explicitly negotiated or implicitly accepted over time. Gardner (2005) states that an HR alliance is a voluntary agreement between two or more organizations, that involves the exchange or sharing of resources or services for the purpose of improving the selection, management, and retention of the workforce. The definition used in this study of an HR alliance is a voluntary negotiated agreement between two or more organizations, who maintain their separate identity and autonomy, involving the commitment to exchange, share or co develop HR policies/practices and the workforce, for the purpose of improving the selection, management, and retention of the workforce (Gulati, 1995a; Doz, Hamel, 1998; Gardner, 2005). The last three mentioned aspects, selection, management and retention, refer to the HR practices of the organization.

Although the concept of independent organizations cooperating in the management of human resources is counterintuitive and contrary to the fundamental views of HRM (Gardner, 2005), the study of Brush and Chaganti (1997) among a sample of 97 non high tech organizations showed that 27% of the organizations shared personnel with competitors. The study of Brush and Chaganti (1997) provides evidence that the practice of forming an HR alliance is worth to investigate. Moreover, it is in tune with the current reality of the market driven workforce. Managers are challenged to dispose of their old ways of thinking and adopt more creative ways to manage, retain and release the workforce (Cappelli, 2000).

Cooperation in the management of the workforce has numerous advantages. It avoids layoffs, the experience of the leased employee is broadened, the organization retains its investment in key employees (Cappelli, 2000), resource disadvantages can be overcome (Doz, Hamel, 1998) and the costs and risks associated with managing the workforce can be reduced through collaborative relationships with other organizations (Gardner, 2005). More advantages and disadvantages of an HR alliance are mentioned in Table 1.

Potential advantages of an HR alliance	Potential disadvantages of an HR alliance
Gain access to skills and knowledge	Loss of proprietary information
Achieve economies of scale	Complexities of managing the alliance (combined effort of more organizations)
Risk and cost sharing among partners	Financial and organizational risks (failure rate, opportunistic behavior partner)
Learning from partner	Risk becoming dependent on a partner
Flexibility of the relationship	Partial loss of decision autonomy
Collective lobbying (governments)	Partners culture may clash
Neutralizing and blocking competitors	Loss of organizational flexibility (possibility of acting independently)

Table 1: Potential advantages and disadvantages of an HR alliance (Adapted from Barringer & Harrison, 2000)

The organizations in an alliance are concerned with what the organizations can achieve together, but also gain for themselves (Doz, Hamel, 1998).

2.1 Theories influencing the likelihood of an organization to form an HR alliance

In this paragraph the transaction cost economics theory, the resource dependency theory, the resource based view theory and the agency cost theory are discussed. These four theoretical perspectives are explored, because each perspective offers a different lens for understanding why organizations may form an HR alliance.

2.1.1 The transaction cost economics perspective

The transaction cost economics perspective has significantly been extended by Williamson (1975, 1981, 1991). This perspective regards the transaction as the basic unit of analysis (Williamson, 1981, 1991). According to Williamson (1981), transactions can be defined as the exchange of goods or services between economic actors, who are separate units, inside or outside the organization. Transaction costs include the costs of negotiating and writing contingent contracts, managing and evaluating transactions, monitoring contractual performance, enforcing contractual promises, and addressing breaches of contractual promises (Wright, McMahan, 1992; Gulati, 1995b; Barringer, Harrison, 2000).

Williamson (1975, 1985) identifies two modes of organizing: hierarchies and markets. When the activity is provided in house the hierarchy mode is utilized, and when an external organization provides the activity the market mode applies. Later, Williamson (1991) acknowledged inter-organizational forms (alliance), also called intermediate governance (Gulati, 1995a, Barney, 1999). This means that there are three options of organizing: make, buy or partner (Barringer, Harrison, 2000). All exchanges managed through markets and intermediate forms of governance are outside the boundary of the organization, and all exchanges managed through hierarchical forms of governance are within the boundary of the organization (Barney, 1999).

The transaction cost economics perspective focuses on how the organization should organize its boundary spanning activities, so as to minimize the sum of transaction and production costs (Barney, 1999; Barringer, Harrison, 2000). Williamson (1985) discusses two human and three environmental factors that lead to higher transaction costs. The two human factors are (Williamson, 1985, 1991; Wright, McMahan, 1992):

1. **Opportunism:** People will act with self interest and guile in pursuing their own goals. Opportunism exists when the organization to an exchange takes unfair advantage of another organization to that exchange;
2. **Bounded rationality:** People are not likely to have the abilities to consider every possible outcome associated with a transaction: people are subject to information processing limits.

The three environmental factors are (Williamson, 1985, 1991; Boxall, Purcell, 2003):

1. **Uncertainty:** The extent to which the transaction performed can be easily defined, structured, and made predictable, or involves uncertainty;
2. **Small numbers:** If only a few organizations exist in the marketplace, the organization may have problems in influencing the other organization to the transaction, because the other organization can threaten with a withdrawal of the deal and use of an alternative organization in the marketplace;
3. **Asset specificity:** The value of an asset may be connected with a particular transaction that supports it. The organization who has invested in the asset will incur a loss if the other organization who has not invested withdraws from the transaction. In other words, asset specificity has references to the ease with which an asset can be redeployed to alternative uses, and by alternative users without loss of productive value.

2.1.2 Relevance of the transaction cost economics perspective

The rationale for forming an HR alliance from the transaction cost economics perspective is to minimize the sum of transaction costs. In the sphere of HRM a variety of costs are incurred in managing the workforce, namely e.g. recruiting, selecting, training, and retaining employees (Williamson, 1981, Gardner, 2005).

Many HR activities require an asset specific investment in order to be provided (Lepak, Snell, 1999). When the organization makes an asset specific investment to receive the HR activity, the discipline offered by market competition is of limited effectiveness (Riordan, Williamson, 1985). This is the case because an asset specific investment limits the ability of the organization who has made the asset specific investment to switch partners. In other words, it makes the organization dependent on the other organization.

An asset specific investment increases the likelihood of opportunistic behavior by the other organization, because it is assumed that people are economically motivated and will act in a way that benefits the organization that they represent (Williamson, 1975; Walker, Weber, 1984; Williamson,

1996). Opportunism can appear during original negotiations, during contract execution, and at contract renewal stages (Williamson, Wachter, Harrison, 1975). A consequence of opportunism can be that the other organization requires the organization to tolerate cost increases to receive the HR activity, or accept reductions in service quality (Walker, Weber, 1984; Shelanski, Klein, 1995; Williamson, 1996).

Contractual mechanisms can be used to control opportunistic behavior (Hart, 1988; Joskow, 1988). However, to control opportunistic behavior the organization must be able to specify all the needs and contingencies in the contract (Klaas, 2003). When there is uncertainty, the organizations will write a contract that is incomplete and contains gaps. A result of this incompleteness is that events will occur which make it desirable for the organizations to act differently from the way specified in the contract and act opportunistically (Hart, 1988; Klaas, 2008). As a consequence, the organizations will want to revise the contract (Hart, 1988).

The chance for opportunism is reduced when the organization does not need to make an asset specific investment and the condition of small numbers is not present, in other terms, there are many potential organizations who can provide the service (Shelanski, Klein, 1995). Nevertheless, when it turns out that the transaction with the other organization is highly problematic for the organization, considerably more time and effort must be spent to harmonize the relationship. In the long run, it may be more efficient to integrate the transaction into the operations of the own organization (Williamson, 1981).

Over time, organizations may develop relationships that are characterized by open and frequent communication and a willingness to adjust to the needs of each other (Ring, Ven, 1992; Gulati, 1995b). Organizations are more likely to collaborate with each other to manage human resources when there is trust among the organizations (Gardner, 2005). Trust is formulated in the alliance literature as the expectation that the other organization will not act opportunistically (Gulati, 1995b). It is the belief comprising the deliberate intention to render the organization vulnerable to another organization based on confident positive expectations (Dietz, 2004). Trust emerges from interpersonal relationships. In order for trust to develop, the same set of individuals must interact extensively over time (Gulati, 1995b). Barringer and Harrison (2000) state that mutual trust emerges when organizations have successfully completed transactions in the past and perceive each other as acting in good faith and complying with norms of equity. Trust counteracts fear of opportunistic behavior and as a result is likely to limit the transaction costs. The consequence is that trust can substitute for contracts in many transactions and can serve as an alternative control mechanism (Gulati, 1995b). Lievens and Corte (2008) identify that a shared vision can help organizations to believe that their goals are cooperatively related, so that the organizations do not feel threatened by opportunistic behavior. If the alliance is perceived as positive, a desire to remain in the network discourages organizations from engaging in narrow, self-serving opportunistic behavior (Barringer, Harrison, 2000).

2.1.3 The resource based view perspective

The prominence of the resource based view is on the link between the strategy of the organization and the internal resources of the organization (Wright, McMahan, 1992). The internal resources of the organization include all assets, capabilities, organizational processes, information and knowledge that the organization controls. The internal resources enable the organization to conceive of and implement a strategy that improves its efficiency and effectiveness (Barney, 1991).

This perspective assumes that the organization in an industry may be heterogeneous in controlling strategic resources and that this heterogeneity can be long lasting. This is the case, because the second assumption of this perspective is that the strategic resources may not be perfectly mobile across different organizations (Barney, 1991).

According to Barney (1991) the organization can achieve a sustained competitive advantage when the organization is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors, and when these current or potential competitors are unable to duplicate the benefits of the strategy. For the organization to achieve a sustained competitive advantage the resources must be valuable, rare, inimitable and not have substitutes (Barney, 1991).

Resources are valuable when the resources enable the organization to conceive of, or implement a strategy that improves its efficiency and effectiveness. If a particular valuable resource is possessed

by many organizations, then every organization has the capability of exploiting the resource in the same way. This means that it is possible for all the organizations to implement a common strategy. The result is that no organization has a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991).

Resources are rare when the resource is absolutely unique among a set of current or potential competitors (Barney, 1991). When the resource is not rare, current or potential competitors can obtain the resource, and the advantage will not be sustained (Wright, McMahan, 1992, Rundquist, 2007). In general, the number of organizations that possess the resource must be less than the amount of organizations that are needed to generate perfect competition dynamics in an industry (Barney, 1991).

Resources can be inimitable when the organization has unique historical conditions. These unique historical conditions can provide the organization with resources that are not controlled or imitable by current or potential competitors. The link between the resources possessed by the organization and the sustained competitive advantage of the organization must not be understood or understood only very imperfectly. This is called causal ambiguity. When the link between the organization's resources and its sustained competitive advantage is not clear, it is difficult for current or potential competitors to determine which resources must be imitated (Barney, 1991, Wright, McMahan, 1992).

Lastly, there must be no substitutes of the resource. When there are strategically equivalent resources the current or potential competitors can implement the same strategy in a different way using different resources and the strategy will not generate a sustained competitive advantage. This will be the case even though the resources are valuable, rare and imperfectly imitable (Barney, 1991).

2.1.4 Relevance of the resourced based view perspective

The resource based view perspective suggests that the rationale for forming an HR alliance is the value creation potential of the organizational resources that are pooled together. An HR alliance often brings together a larger brain trust than any one organization could muster (Das, Teng, 2000; Barringer, Harrison, 2000) and may help retain the resources that are currently under utilized internally in the organizations (Das, Teng, 2000). In contrast, organizations are not only interested in accessing or acquiring the valuable resources of the other organizations through an alliance, but also in protecting their own valuable resources during the alliance making process (Das, Teng, 2000).

To achieve a sustained competitive advantage there must be a heterogeneous demand and supply of labor. A heterogeneous demand means that the organization has jobs that require different types of skills. A heterogeneous supply of labor means that the workforce differs in their skills and level of skills. Under these circumstances, human resources can add value to the organization (Wright, McMahan, 1992).

Research has argued that the development of the workforce of the organization through integrated HR policies and practices can be a sustainable source of competitive advantage for the organization (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Wright, McMahan, 1992; Lado, Wilson, 1994; Becker, Gerhart, 1996; Barney, Wright, 1998; Olson, Schwab, 2000). This is the case, because while knowledge of the individual HR practices is not rare, the knowledge of how to create a positively reinforcing combination of the HR philosophy and the HR practices within a particular context is likely to be very rare (Boxall, Purcell, 2003). In addition, HR policies are shaped through unique historical conditions (Wright, McMahan, 1992; Wright, Boswell, 2002). The condition that must be fulfilled is that both the organization that possesses the highly integrated HR practices and the organization who is seeking to imitate these integrated HR practices, face the same level of causal ambiguity (Barney, 1991, 1998). Otherwise, the current and potential competitors can hire away knowledgeable managers and the knowledge is diffused throughout the organizations of the current and potential competitors. When this happens the causal ambiguity no longer exists (Barney, 1991) and the current and potential competitors can imitate the strategy. In the healthcare sector the philosophy of care is central in determining the HR practices (Eaton, 2000).

Although an alliance may be able to create unique resources, it may undermine the ability of the individual organization to create an own sustainable competitive advantage, since the unique resource is not rare and imperfectly imitable from the perspective of the organization (Barringer, Harrison, 2000). Unanticipated changes in the economic structure of an industry may make what was once a source of sustained competitive advantage no longer applicable (Barney, 1991).

2.1.5 The resource dependency perspective

The resource dependency perspective has its roots in the article of Emerson (1962), where he discussed the connection between power and dependence in forms of social relationships. Emerson (1962) argued that the dependence of organization B on organization A, is directly comparable to the power of organization A over organization B. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) developed the theory of Emerson (1962) to analyze the relationship between the organization and the external environment, because no organization is completely self contained, or in other words, is in complete control of all the components the organization needs to operate (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978). This perspective focuses exclusively on the resources that must be obtained and maintained from the environment for the organization to survive (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978; Barringer, Harrison, 2000). The organization depends on the environment for information, human resources, money and customers (Ven, 1976; Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978; Barringer, Harrison, 2000).

The primary challenge for the organization is to gain and secure a reliable and dependable access to the needed resources in the environment through negotiating exchanges (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978; Jaffee, 2001). The overarching concern in situations of resource dependence is uncertainty (Jaffee, 2001). Given that the organization does not control the resources the organization needs, resource acquisition may be problematic and uncertain. The organization who controls the resource has its own interests and constraints, and may be undependable, particularly when the resources are scarce (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978; Jaffee, 2001). Therefore, the coordination of resource allocation is a central objective of organizations in the resource dependency perspective (Jaffee, 2001).

Three factors are critical in determining the dependence of one organization on another. First, it is relevant to determine how important externally controlled resources are to the success of the organization, or in other words, the extent to which the organization requires the resource for continued operation and survival. The criticality of a resource measures the ability of the organization to survive in the absence of the resource. A resource may be critical to the organization, even though it comprises only a small proportion of the total input. The criticality of a resource for the organization may vary from time to time, as conditions in the environment of the organization change (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978).

The second factor is the degree of discretion that the external environment has over the resource allocation, which is the capacity to determine the allocation or use of the resource. Discretion over a resource is a major source of power and is more important when the resource is more scarce (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978). To the extent that the valued resource is scarce, the power of the organization that controls that resource increases (Wright, McMahan, 1992). In an environment dense with organizations and interest groups with a variety of laws and norms, discretion is rarely absolute (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978).

The third factor is the number of alternatives the organization has to that particular resource, or the extent of control over the resource by the external environment (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978; Rundquist, 2007). The relative number of alternatives available, as well as the size or importance of these alternatives, has consequences for the extent to which organizational behavior is constrained. This means that regardless of how important the resource is to the organization, unless it is controlled by few organizations, the organization will not be dependent (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978).

2.1.6 Relevance of the resource dependency perspective

The resource dependency perspective suggests that the rationale for organizations to form an HR alliance is to obtain access to critical resources, plug a skill or resource gap, take advantage of complementary assets, and increase the power of the organizations in the alliance relative to other organizations (Barringer, Harrison, 2000). In all cases, the individual organizations do not perceive that they have the necessary resources to optimize their own competitive position and forming an alliance to gain access to the needed resource is often the most practical alternative (Barringer, Harrison, 2000).

The viability of an HR alliance requires that the balance of benefits and contributions is seen as relatively fair, especially as organizations are asked to increase their stakes in the alliance and make

increasingly irreversible commitments and become dependent on each other (Doz, Hamel, 1998). The power of the organization in an HR alliance is a function of the dependence of the other organizations on the contributions, activities and capabilities of the organization (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978). Not all alliance partners provide contributions that are equally valued: some are valued more, others less. Those alliance partners who provide resources and capabilities that are most needed or desired by the other organizations come to have more influence and control over the alliance (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978). Barringer and Harrison (2000) indicate that the organization can manage the dependence by acquiring control over resources that increases the dependence of the other organizations on the organization. Yet, it is important to realize that the amount of interdependence that exists among organizations is not a given, but can change over time as organizations become more or less self contained (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978). One-sided specialization makes the specialized organization dependent for example by giving up key competencies and there is the risk of being subsequently dumped by the other organizations when the other organizations have found better alternatives or lost interest (Doz, Hamel, 1998). Individuals and not organizations are committed to staying or quit working with another organization and its employees, and these individuals have all individual desires and agendas when creating, developing and maintaining an HR alliance (Lievens, Corte, 2008).

In the Netherlands, the healthcare sector is characterized by a strong institutional context, that in a forceful way has an influence on the strategic policy of the organization (Wijk, 2007). The healthcare sector is changing to a demand market, so the focus shifts to the client (Bokeloh, 2008). It is nowadays legitimate that the individual client pursues its own interest (Harten, Schuring, 2003). Brush and Chaganti (1997) found that governmental regulations or policies motivate usage of cooperative strategies. Implemented government policy and regulation changes have forced healthcare organizations to adjust the way the organizations conduct their business (Wijk, 2007). Healthcare organizations wishing to be able to do their work well must constantly adjust their internal structure and procedures to meet the external demands being placed upon them, even more so because the government is broaching the subject of a free-market system and in the future severe labor shortages are expected (Buchan, 2000; Wijk, 2007, Windt *et al*, 2008).

As human resources are a critical input factor to healthcare organizations, it is not unexpected that the organizations will form an HR alliance to ensure the availability and quality of its supply when facing scarcity or uncertainty of human resources (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978; Oliver, 1990; Brush, Chaganti, 1997; Barringer, Harrison, 2000; Gardner, 2005). When this is the case, the organizations face scarcity or uncertainty in the supply or quality of a critical resource, the organizations will seek to change the internal demand for the resource or attempt to influence the external environment (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978). Internal responses to shortages of employees with needed skills, include adjusting human capital requirements by investing in the training of currently employed employees, instituting apprenticeship programs and utilizing labor market intermediaries, such as temporary service organizations (Gardner, 2005). Actions directed towards influencing the external environment include attempting to influence the quality of training provided by educational institutions, increasing recruiting efforts and increasing wages to attract a more steady supply of necessary employees (Gardner, 2005).

2.1.7 The agency cost perspective

The agency cost perspective was discussed and formed by Ross (1973), Mitnick (1975) and Jensen and Meckling (1976). The agency cost perspective investigates the effective contract regulation on the relationship between the principal, the organization who receives the service, and the agent, the organization who provides the service (Eisenhardt, 1988). This means that the principal engages the agent to perform some services on behalf of the principal, which involves delegating some decision making authority and work to the agent, who performs that work. It is associated with a commitment of the agent to service deliveries to the principal (Jensen, Meckling, 1976; Eisenhardt, 1988). However, if the principal and the agent are utility maximizers, there is the rationale that the agent will not always act in the best interests of the principal. There will be some divergence between the decisions the agent makes and those decisions that would maximize the welfare of the principal (Jensen, Meckling, 1976).

The principal can limit divergence from those decisions that would maximize the welfare of the principal by establishing appropriate incentives for the agent and by monitoring the performance of the agent through incurring monitoring costs to limit opportunistic behavior by the agent (Jensen,

Meckling, 1976; Eisenhardt, 1988; Hill, Jones, 1992). When the divergence reduces the welfare of the principal, it can be viewed as a residual loss (Hill, Jones, 1992).

The agency cost perspective differentiates between outcome based contracts and behavior based contracts (Eisenhardt, 1988). An outcome based contract is a contract which stipulates payment by results. A behavior based contract is a contract which states that the organization should do certain things at stipulated time, or spend a specified amount of time on specific functions (Rundquist, 2007). If the organization distrusts the agent, then the extent of monitoring required will be greater for the organization, than it would be if the organization could wholly trust the agent to deliver quality services (Rundquist, 2007). If one cannot trust the other organization to deliver a service according to the agreement, an outcome based contract can ensure that at least the detailed actions are conducted (Rundquist, 2007). A behavior based contract allows the agent to claim that the organization did spend a specific amount of hours on the activity, even if the outcome could not be achieved as originally intended by the principal. When the principal and the agent engage in a long term relationship, it is likely that the principal will learn about the agent and so will be able to assess the behavior of the agent more readily. Conversely, in short term agency relationships, the information asymmetry between the principal and the agent is likely to be greater, thus making outcome based contracts more attractive (Eisenhardt, 1989). The consequence is that the agency cost perspective helps to distinguish the most productive and fairest method of minimizing the risks for both the principal and the agent (Rundquist, 2007).

2.1.8 Relevance of the agency cost perspective

The relationship among the organizations in an alliance can be viewed as a principal-agent relationship. It is in the best interest of every organization that the other organizations in the alliance who possess valuable capabilities contribute to the competence development of the alliance. However, there can be potential asymmetry among the goals of the organizations, so that not every organization is acting according to the interests of the other organizations (Björkman, Barner-Rasmussen, Li, 2004).

The organizations in an alliance have the freedom to enter or exit from the alliance. If an organization of the alliance does not like the terms of the contract offered by the other organizations, the organization can always seek a better alternative. When it is important to keep the 'leaving' organization in the alliance, the other organizations will be compelled by market forces to adopt more acceptable incentive mechanisms for the organization who wants to leave (Hill, Jones, 1992).

There can also be a situation of information asymmetry among the HR departments of the organizations in the alliance. An HR department may because of information asymmetry be reluctant to transfer its knowledge of HR practices to the other organizations, even though this will enhance the overall performance of the alliance (Björkman *et al*, 2004). Possible reasons are the fear of losing a position of superiority, or because the organization is insufficiently compensated for the efforts and costs involved in the process of the transfer of the knowledge of the HR practices (Björkman *et al*, 2004).

The relationship between the organization and the workforce can also be conceived as an principal-agent relationship. The power shifts to the employer, when the workforce is unable to exit from the contractual relationship with the employer, because better alternatives are not available or the supply of the workforce exceeds the demand for the workforce. Similarly, the power shifts to the workforce when the employer is unable to dismiss the workforce or if there is a shortage of the workforce (Hill, Jones, 1992).

In Table 2 an overview is provided of the four elaborated theoretical perspectives.

	Transaction cost economics perspective	Resource based view perspective	Resource dependency perspective	Agency cost perspective
Main goal	TCE focuses on how the organization should organize its boundary spanning activities, so as to minimize the sum of transaction and production costs	The emphasis of the RBV is on the link between the strategy of the organization and the internal resources of the organization	Organizations depend on the environment for resources and need to gain and secure a reliable and dependable access to the needed resources in the environment	The agency cost perspective investigates the relationship between the principal and the agent
Rationale for forming an HR alliance	Minimize transaction costs through an HR alliance (costs for recruiting, selecting, training and retaining employees)	Value creation potential of resources that are pooled together Larger brain trust Retain those resources that are currently under utilized internally	Obtain access to critical resources Increase power relative to other organizations Plug a skill or resource gap Take advantage of complementary assets	Aligning incentives: It is in the best interest of all the organizations in the alliance to contribute to the competence development of the alliance
Relevant topics	Many HR activities require an asset specific investment An asset specific investment makes the organization dependent on the other organization and increases the chance for opportunism Contractual mechanism can control opportunism Trust counteracts fear of opportunistic behavior Shared vision and a desire to remain in the network discourage opportunism	Organizations protect their own valuable resources in the alliance making process Heterogeneous demand of labor Heterogeneous supply of labor Highly integrated HR practices are inimitable Possibility of the individual organization to achieve a sustained competitive advantage may be undermined A sustained competitive advantages does not need to last forever	Importance of resource to the organization The degree of discretion that the external environment has over the resource allocation and use of the resource The number of alternatives to a particular resource Danger of one sided specialization Balance of contributions and benefits must be relatively fair Not all alliance partners provide contributions that are equally valued Individuals are committed to work with partner The interdependence of organizations can change over time	Relationship among the organizations in an alliance: principal-agent relationship The relationship between the organization and the workforce: principal- agent relationship Conflict of goals Alignment of goals through incentives Outcome based contract/behavior based contract Information asymmetry Reluctance to transfer knowledge to the alliance Utility maximizers: agent acts not in interest of principal

Table 2: The main goal, rationale and relevant topics of the four theoretical perspectives: transaction cost economics (TCE), resource based view (RBV), resource dependency (RD) and agency cost (AC)

2.2 HR architecture

As elaborated in the introduction chapter of this study, an HR architecture can be defined as various components of HR that fit together and are managed to meet the strategic objectives of HR (Nadler *et al.*, 1992; Lepak, Snell, 1998). The HR architecture can potentially be a strategic asset of the organization (Becker, Huselid, Pickus, Spratt, 1997), and be a source of sustainable competitive advantage (Monks, McMackin, 2001). In paragraph 2.2.1 the workforce architecture is developed and in paragraph 2.2.2 the HR policies/practices architecture is discussed.

2.2.1 Workforce architecture

Employees are the most important asset of the organization (Lepak, Snell, 1998) and organizations have increasingly recognized the potential of the workforce to be a source of competitive advantage (Wright, Gardner, Moynihan, 2003). Lepak and Snell (1999) combine the transaction cost economics theory, the resource based view theory, and the human capital theory to determine the appropriate workforce architecture for the organization. The root proposition of the human capital theory is that the organization will invest in employee skills only when it is justifiable in terms of future productivity (Boxall, Purcell, 2003). Lepak and Snell (1999) note that the workforce of the organization is not homogeneous and differs in value and uniqueness. The value and uniqueness of the workforce function as strategic determinants of alternative employment modes (Lepak, Snell, 1999), and are discussed in the following two sub paragraphs.

2.2.1.1 Value of the workforce

Lepak and Snell (1999) define the value of the workforce as the ratio of strategic benefits an employee provides to customers, derived from skills, relative to the costs incurred in managing and retaining the employee with these skills.

Employee groups that score high in the value creating spectrum include top managers and top technical employees. It is unlikely that these employees are managed in cooperation with other organizations. There are likely to be few employees that score high in the value creating spectrum, and these employees have inside information about the value creation process of the organization. Losing this information when collaborating with other organizations is too valuable. The knowledge that these employees have is likely to be highly firm specific and therefore there are mostly not enough overlapping activities to collaborate with other organizations (Gardner, 2005).

There are benefits to be distinguished when internal employment is used for the employee groups that score high in the value creating spectrum: a greater stability and predictability of the skills and capabilities of the employees in the organization, better coordination and control. On the other side, internalization incurs bureaucratic costs that stem from administering the employment relationship and internalization limits the ability of the organization to adapt to environmental changes, particularly those that influence the demand for labor (Lepak, Snell, 1999).

An employee group that is more likely to be managed in cooperation with other organizations Gardner (2005) calls medial value creating employees. Medial value creating employees include core employees and also professional and supervisory employees that support the value creation process (Gardner, 2005). Core employees are the largest group of non supervisory, non managerial workers, directly involved in providing the service of the organization (Osterman, 1994). Organizations are more likely to manage these employees in cooperation with other organizations. There are a larger number of these employees, which implies that when these employees are managed in collaboration, the potential of economies of scale increases. Since, these employees contribute to the value creating process there are benefits associated with investments to improve or maintain the performance of the employees (Gardner, 2005), and because these employees possess a mix of firm specific and general skills, it is more likely to find overlapping needs in other organizations (Oliver, 1990).

Cooperating with other organizations to manage medial value creating employees has certain benefits: it may enable the organization to decrease overhead and administrative costs (Davis-Blake, Uzzi, 1993; Hippel, Mangum, Greenberger, Heneman, Skoglund, 1997), balance workforce requirements (Lepak, Snell, 1999) enhance organizational flexibility (Snow, Miles, Coleman, 1992)

and provide the organization with more discretion in the number and types of employees used (Davis-Blake, Uzzi, 1993). However, when the organization relies too much on cooperation with other organizations it may mitigate the development of core skills and capabilities which are necessary for long-term firm performance (Bettis, Bradley, Hamel, 1992).

2.2.1.2 Uniqueness of the workforce

The uniqueness of the workforce refers to the degree to which an employee has rare, specialized or firm specific skills (Williamson, 1975; Barney, 1991). In this study, the workforce is unique when the workforce possesses firm specific skills (Lepak, Snell, 1999). In the healthcare sector, some employees have sector specific skills, but others can readily move from the healthcare sector to employment in other sectors (Buchan, 2004; Prins, Henderickx 2007).

Becker (1962) distinguishes between specific and general training. Specific training is a training that has no effect on the productivity of the employee that is useful in another organization, but employees with firm specific training are more valuable to the organization who provides the training (Becker, 1962). In line with that, Lepak and Snell (1999) indicate that the degree in which employees possess firm specific skills will affect the choice of how employees are managed. When the skills of the employee become more firm specific, both the employee and the employer will seek to reduce the risks of firm specificity through the use of stronger employment relationships (Becker, 1962; Williamson, 1981; Bridges, Villemez, 1991; Lepak, Snell, 1998). The employee with firm specific skills has fewer options in the outside labor market. This reduces the incentive for the employee to quit and increases the dependence of the employee on the employer (Becker, 1962; Williamson *et al*, 1975; Williamson, 1981). The employer has invested in the employee to develop firm specific skills, so the employer has less motivation to fire the employee. This would be different if the employee has no firm specific skills (Becker, 1962). The employer also faces when the employee leaves the organization heavy replacements costs to hire and train a new employee who can perform at the same level as the employee who leaves the organization, because firm specific skills are not widely available in the external labor market (Becker, 1962; Williamson *et al*, 1975; Williamson, 1981; Pfeffer, Cohen, 1984; Barney, 1991; Lado, Wilson, 1994). Overall, the organization has an incentive to try to retain employees with firm specific skills (Pfeffer, Cohen, 1984).

If the employees skills are general valued by organizations in the broader labor market employees can act opportunistically. When an employee namely receives a general training, the employee tries to capture the full value of this training and the employee can do that in different ways: the employee can leave the organization for another organization who will pay higher wages, or the employee negotiates for higher wages with the organization (Gardner, 2005). Competitors will as well try to poach employees with general skills (Gardner, 2002). The costs associated with this behavior can be quite high, because the organization faces the costs of selecting and recruiting replacements, the costs for formal and on the job training what the organization has invested in the employee is lost and before a new employee is hired the organization must deal with a loss of productivity (Gardner, 2005).

The above discussion shows that it is unlikely that an HR alliance will be used to manage all types of employees (Gardner, 2005). Some employees are more valuable to the organization and more available in the open market than others (Wright, Smart, McMahan, 1995) and the value and uniqueness of the workforce changes and evolves (Lepak, Snell, 1999). In reality, the organization utilizes a variety of approaches to allocate the workforce (Davis-Blake, Uzzi, 1993). Based on the value and uniqueness of the workforce, Lepak and Snell (1999) develop a workforce architecture of four different employment modes: (1) internal development, (2) acquisition, (3) contracting and (4) alliance (Lepak, Snell, 1999).

1) Internal development

In this employment mode the employees score high on both value and uniqueness. This means that the strategic benefits exceed the managerial and bureaucratic costs that the organization incurs in developing and deploying these employees (Lepak, Snell, 1999). The employees score high on uniqueness, which means that the employees have firm specific skills and this makes it more likely that the employees are developed internally in the organization (Lepak, Snell, 1998; Klaas, 2008), since internal development will be less likely to result in a capital loss (Lepak, Snell, 1999). Besides, the firm specific skills are not available in the labor market (Lepak, Snell, 1999) and internally developing these employees helps the organization to realize the benefits of these employees in terms

of their value-creating potential and will enable the organization to develop organizational resources that will allow for sustainable competitive advantage to be achieved (Klaas, 2008).

2) Acquisition

The employees in this employment mode score high on value and low on uniqueness. Since, the skills of the employees are valuable, organizations have an incentive to internalize employment. Yet, the skills of the employees are not unique or specific to the organization, and managers might therefore be hesitant to invest in internal development (Lepak, Snell, 1999). Remember that employees with generic skills may leave the organization and because the skills of the employees are not particularly unique to the organization, the employees cannot serve as a differentiating source of competitiveness. In other words, employees within this quadrant are able to make significant contributions to the organization, while possessing skills that are widely transferable (Lepak, Snell, 2002). The consequence is that the organization buys employees from the market that do not require further investment. The acquiring organization simply pays the value reflected in the market price and realizes immediate benefits of productivity (Lepak, Snell, 1999).

3) Contracting

Contractual employment is justified when the skills of the employees are not unique to the organization and offer less potential for value creation (Lepak, Snell, 1999). Again, the limited uniqueness of the skills of the employees make the employer cautious to invest significant resources towards employee development (Lepak, Snell, 1999). In this category temporary employees and leasing arrangements can be found (Lepak, Snell, 1999). Relevant is to state that the organization achieves a significant degree of flexibility to the number of employees employed when making use of contractual employment, as well as when the employees are employed (Lepak, Snell, 1999).

4) Alliance

In this employment mode the employees are unique, but have low value. The uniqueness of the employees might at first glance appear to be optimized through internal development. However, the resource based view perspective suggests that given limited value-creating potential, minimal benefit may be gained from outright ownership of these types of skills, so an alliance is used as employment mode (Lepak, Snell, 1999).

The employment modes are supported by previous research. Davis-Blake and Uzzi (1993) found that jobs with firm specific skills are less likely to be filled with temporary employees. This is also true in the employment modes discussed above, temporary employees are used when the employees have low uniqueness, so few firm specific skills.

Given that this study is concerned with designing a workforce architecture for four organizations working together in an alliance to manage employees, it can be argued that the employees from employment mode 2, employment mode 3 and employment mode 4 can all be managed in the alliance. Employees in employment mode 1 cannot be managed in cooperation with other organizations, since these employees score both high on the strategic determinants value and uniqueness and enable the organization to develop organizational resources that will allow for a sustainable competitive advantage to be achieved. The characteristic of an alliance is that it is a voluntary negotiated agreement among organizations who maintain their separate identity (Gulati, 1995a; Doz, Hamel, 1998). This means that this study distinguishes four individual organizations and it is possible through the strong institutional context of the healthcare sector in the Netherlands (Wijk, 2007), that at a certain point in time, the organizations are forced to become competitors of each other, so it is not wise to share employees in employment mode 1 with other organizations in the alliance, valuable knowledge is then maybe lost to a 'future' competitor.

Employees in employment mode 2 are normally employed using the employment mode acquisition. The organization buys employees that do not require further investment and the organization realizes immediate benefits. The employees in this employment mode can be exchanged among the organizations. In employment mode 3, the employer uses temporary employees and these temporary employees can also be exchanged among the organizations. Finally, Lepak and Snell (1999) already advised using an alliance for employees that fall in employment mode 4. Figure 1 displays the workforce architecture.

High Uniqueness of the workforce	<u>HR alliance</u>	<u>Internal development</u>
	<u>HR alliance</u>	<u>HR alliance</u>
Low	Low	High
	Value of the workforce	

Figure 1: Improved version of the workforce architecture of Lepak, Snell, 1999

The improved workforce architecture has numerous benefits. Through the increasing resource pressures in the healthcare sector the organization seeks ways of managing labor more efficiently, and flexibility in the management of labor is seen primarily as a mechanism to do this. Flexibility makes the organization capable to accommodate to changes in the organizational environment. Efficiency improvements are achieved by matching the supply and demand for labor more efficiently (Desombre, Kelliher, Macfarlane, Ozbilgin, 2006). The workforce architecture in Figure 1 makes it possible for the four organizations to manage the workforce more efficiently, since the employees from employment mode 2, employment mode 3 and employment mode 4, can be exchanged among the four organizations. For the organization to collaborate by exchanging employees with other organizations, the needs among the organizations for employees must be a-synchronous. Employees can only be in one place at the time. This means that organizations are likely to partner with organizations whose need to loan out employees temporarily coincides with organizations needing to borrow employees temporarily (Gardner, 2005). Exchanging employees can be an advantage, because when the organization builds an in house workforce large enough to meet peak demand, there is the possibility that some of the employees who are hired are idle during slow periods. The consequence is that the organization incurs significant hiring and firing costs to adjust the level of employment to increases and decreases in demand (Davis-Blake, Uzzi, 1993; Abraham, Taylor, 1996).

Davis-Blake and Uzzi (1993) found that organizations with highly variable employment needs are likely to be dependent on a continual flow of new employees. Since January 2009, the *Zorgzwaartepakketten* are introduced in the healthcare sector and it is unclear how much employees the employers can mobilize the next years (Windt *et al*, 2008). So, the use of other organizations to meet peak period demand may be cost effective (Abraham, Taylor, 1996). Further, Abraham and Taylor (1996) point out that whether an organization with volatile demand can be expected to be more or less likely to use other organizations, depends on whether the production could be rescheduled for off-peak periods. In the nursing and elderly people's homes, the employees who directly provide the service to a client, cannot reschedule the service to an off-peak period. This could be possible in a production setting, when products are developed, but not in this context, in the healthcare sector. One method of managing the dependence on the available supply of new employees is to rely on external rather than permanent employees (Davis-Blake, Uzzi, 1993).

It could be argued that heavy use of externalized employees destabilizes the core workforce. The presence of a large externalized workforce may lead internalized employees to question whether the organization is committed to their continued employment, and, consequently, lead the employees to reduce their commitments to the organization (Davis-Blake, Uzzi, 1993). In this study, all employees that are exchanged among the four organizations belong to the four organizations, and so to the core workforce of the association NoaberZorg. This means that the use of externalized employees that do not belong to the four organizations is reduced. The avowed first loyalty of those employees with sector-specific skills and qualifications in the healthcare sector tends to be to their profession and their patients, rather than to their employer (Buchan, 2004; Prins, Henderickx, 2007).

An internal labor market may be developed among the four organizations. An internal labor market has the following characteristics: a job ladder with entry only at the bottom and movement up this ladder based on understood criteria such as seniority, qualifications or promotion panels, which is associated with a progressive development of knowledge or skills, higher wages, work rules protecting employees right, promotion ladders, generous fringe benefits and policies that favor promotion and transfer from within (Bills, 1987; Althausser, 1989; Boxall, Purcell, 2003; Gardner, 2005). Further,

Gardner (2005) also mentions that an HR alliance can take the form of quasi-internal labor markets. It is possible that employees are trained and work in one organization, and then the employees can be promoted to a position of higher responsibility in a partner firm. Also, it is possible that an employee is temporarily loaned from one employer to another, and then returns to his or her original employer. This is called an employee sharing HR alliance. In turn, temporary assignments offer an employee variety and growth (Hippel *et al*, 1997).

In the literature, it is stated that a tight labor market, a scarcity of appropriately skilled employees, can affect the development of an internal labor market, because organizations are likely to take action to manage critical resources when the resources are difficult to obtain (Pfeffer Salancik, 1978; Bills, 1987; Boxall, Purcell, 2003). In the healthcare sector many reports indicate a structural tightness of the labor market (Dijk *et al*, 2007; Bokeloh, 2008; Windt *et al*, 2008) and the healthcare organizations face competition and the pressure to deliver quality care at reasonable and competitive costs (Dijk *et al*, 2007). This means that employees are more and more a success factor for the ability to deliver quality care. Employers who are not capable of attracting and retaining motivated and qualified employees face difficulties in a tight labor market (Dijk *et al*, 2007). Through an internal labor market the four organizations can protect their employees from the competition in the external labor market. An internal labor market offers the employees a variety of work experiences and systematic promotion and development opportunities in the different organizations (Gardner, 2005).

In a tight labor market it is wise for organizations to cooperate in the initial training for future employees in the sector, and to determine labor agreements together (Dijk *et al*, 2007). Since training and developing employees involve fixed costs; developing the training and training materials, small organizations cannot spread these fixed costs over a large group of employees, making the cost of training per employee much higher (Gardner, 2005). When working together with other organizations to provide training, the costs per employee decreases. Organizations can recoup firm specific training costs by amortizing the costs over the time during which the employee is employed (Williamson, 1981). Therefore, organizations tend to ensure that employees with firm-specific skills remain with the organization. By providing an employee with mobility opportunities, an internal labor market encourages an employee to remain with the organization long enough for the organization to recoup its training cost (Davis-Blake, Uzzi, 1993). Moreover, since the employees receive similar training, the chance for internal labor market opportunities increases. When coupled to the employment modes of Lepak and Snell (1999), when the employees receive generic skills the employees can act opportunistically, but since the employees receive many opportunities for internal development among the organizations, it is expected that the employees will want to remain in the network and do not act opportunistically. In an internal labor market, an employee sees internal promotion as the principal means of improving his or her position (Williamson *et al*, 1975).

2.2.2 HR policies/practices architecture

Creating sustainable competitive advantage through the workforce requires careful attention to the HR practices that best leverage the workforce (Wright, Gardner, Moynihan, 2003). There are numerous HR practices: recruitment and selection, job description, working conditions, labor agreements, sickness absence, training, internal career opportunities, performance planning and appraisal, employees' participation, reintegration, remuneration and other rewards, and the outflow of employees (Wright, McMahan, 1992; Delery, Doty 1996; Wright, Dunford, Snell, 2001; Guest, 1997; Boxall, Purcell, 2003; Wright *et al*, 2003; Osa, 2004).

Lepak and Snell (1998) suggest that organizations have three modes of delivery for their HR practices. The HR departments may retain and perform these services (1) internally or the HR departments may rely on an outsourcing relationship ranging from (2) strict contractual arrangements to (3) ongoing partnerships. Partnerships typically involve a longer time frame and a greater degree of customization in the application of the skills of the partner (Lepak, Bartol, Erhardt, 2005). The dimensions value and uniqueness serve as strategic criteria for determining which HR practices are candidates to be externalized and which are not (Lepak, Snell, 1999).

2.2.2.1 Value of the HR practices

The value of an HR practice can be defined as the strategic benefits derived from a particular HR activity, relative to the costs associated with the deployment of the HR activity (Lepak, Snell, 1998).

The value of an HR practice depends on its ability to help the organization achieve its objectives. HR practices that are not valuable to the competitiveness of the organization are candidates to be externalized, while those HR practices that are valuable are likely to be retained internally (Chesbrough, Teece, 1996; Saunders, Gebelt, Hu, 1997). The extent to which an HR practice such as recruitment, training, compensation or appraisal is valuable, is likely to vary from organization to organization depending on the strategic context of the organization (Lepak, Snell, 1998).

2.2.2.2 Uniqueness of the HR practices

Combining the transaction cost economics perspective and the resource based view perspective, uniqueness can be defined in terms of firm specificity (Williamson, 1991) or scarcity in the external market (Barney, 1991). When the HR practices become more unique to the organization, relying upon an external arrangement may prove infeasible and/or incur excessive costs, since these HR practices are not likely to be readily available in the open market, diminishing the potential value. However, when the HR practices are generic or standardized across organizations, internalization may not be justified. If another organization can provide the HR practices more efficiently, then externalization is appropriate for the HR practices (Lepak, Snell, 1998).

Based on the strategic determinants value and uniqueness, Lepak and Snell (1998) distinguish four different HR practices: (1) core HR practices, (2) traditional HR practices, (3) peripheral HR practices and (4) idiosyncratic HR practices.

1) Core HR practices

Core HR practices have high value and high uniqueness, and will be developed internally in the organization to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Core HR practices are not available in the external market, so externalization is not possible. Moreover, since core HR practices are valuable, organizations have strategic incentives to retain and internally deploy these core HR practices (Reed, DeFillippi 1990; Prahalad, Hamel, 1990).

2) Traditional HR practices

Traditional HR practices have high value, but low uniqueness, and are more generic and widely spread throughout the industry. The traditional HR practices are important for the organization, but very standardized. The result is that the traditional HR practices are not developed internally, but are purchased from external sources (Lepak, Snell, 1998).

3) Peripheral HR practices

Peripheral HR practices have low value and low uniqueness, and contribute little to the competitiveness of the organization. Therefore, the peripheral HR practices are candidates to be externalized to other organizations, also called outsourcing (Lepak, Snell, 1998; Rundquist, 2007). Most definitions of outsourcing contain three parts (1) transferring an activity to an external organization, (2) which was previously accomplished internally, (3) under a contractual agreement, time schedule and cost agreement (Saunders, Gebelt, 1997; Shaw, Fairhurst 1997, Rundquist, 2007). HR outsourcing takes place when the organization contracts with another organization to perform an HR activity previously performed by the organization, and delegates the day to day management responsibilities to the other organization (Marinaccio, 1994; Cooke, Shen, McBride, 2005; Belcourt, 2006). The outsourcing of HR practices is a rapidly increasing phenomenon (Cooke *et al*, 2005; Ordanini, Silvestri, 2008). A survey identified that expertise of the other organization, along with time savings, are the most frequently cited rationales for outsourcing HR practices (Greer, Youngblood, Gray, 1999). Using other organizations, the organization can also reduce its overhead costs, since the other organization can perform the HR practice more efficiently (Lepak, Snell, 1998), and mostly the organization does not need to make an asset specific investment in order to obtain the necessary services from the other organization, making the organization less vulnerable to opportunistic behavior (Klaas, 2008). Further, outsourcing enables the organization to focus on core competencies and improved service levels can be achieved (Byham, Riddle, 1999; Belcourt, 2006). There are also some potential adverse consequences of outsourcing, namely: loss of in house knowledge and capacity, discontinuity of skills supply, reduction in quality, higher total cost, loss of employee morale, and loss of long term competitiveness (Cooke *et al*, 2005). Managing the outsourcing agreement is critical (Belcourt, 2006). When done successfully, the organization is able to simultaneously increase efficiency, flexibility and responsiveness (Lepak, Snell, 1998).

4) *Idiosyncratic HR practices*

Idiosyncratic HR practices have low value, but high uniqueness, and are managed through a partnership. The organization can capitalize on the specialized knowledge of the other organization, without incurring the costs of internal development (Lepak, Snell, 1998). When the organizations work together over a long period of time, the HR practices can be designed to meet the unique needs of the organization, so firm specific knowledge is necessary (Lepak, Snell, 1998; Klaas, 2003). If the HR practice is not tailored to the needs of the organization, the quality of the HR practice may be limited (Klaas, McClendon, Gainey, 1999).

An organization who enters a contract or a partnership with another organization may find that the organization is locked into specific arrangements, making it difficult for the organization to adapt to changing organizational needs (Lepak, Snell, 1998) and it is also possible that the organization is not able to deliver the HR practices anymore that are critical to the strategic objectives of the organization, when it is using external sources (Bettis *et al*, 1992). In these cases, HR may actually decrease its ability to meet and support the strategic objectives of the organization (Lepak, Snell, 1998). For employers to collaborate in HR practices, like training, the needs for labor usage and for employee development must be synchronic. Collaborating organizations must need skill improvements at similar times and must be able to take employees away from their positions at similar times (Gardner, 2005).

Given that this study is concerned with designing an HR policies/practices architecture for four organizations working together in an alliance, it can be argued that the same logic as with the workforce architecture applies, namely that the organizations can collaborate in the (2) traditional, (3) peripheral and (4) idiosyncratic HR practices. Collaborating in HR policies/practices makes it possible for the organization to specialize in the HR policies/practices in which the organization excels, and the organization can share the expertise about these HR policies/practices with the other organizations. In the HR policies/practices in which the organization does not excel it is possible for the organization to collaborate with other organizations in the alliance who excel in these specific HR policies/practices. Specialization is namely effective in an alliance with partners that specialize in other areas (Bokeloh, 2008). Moreover, the literature suggests different classifications of HR practices and these have implications on the outsourcing decisions. When the HR practices are core practices, the HR practices should be retained in house, and when the HR practices are more transactional or non strategic, the HR practices should be outsourced, so collaboration is appropriate (Cooke *et al*, 2005, Ordani, Silvestri, 2008). In Figure 2 the HR practices/policies architecture is depicted.

High Uniqueness of the HR policy/practice	<u>HR alliance</u>	<u>Internal development</u>
	<u>HR alliance</u>	<u>HR alliance</u>
Low	Low	High
	Value of the HR policy/practice	

Figure 2: Improved version of the HR policies/practices architecture of Lepak, Snell, 1998

It is not possible to depict an ideal architecture (Lepak, Snell, 1998). This is the case because the HR architecture of each organization will differ as to what is core in one organization may be peripheral in another organization (Lepak, Snell, 1998). What constitutes core HR practices is not static. Organizations are constantly reassessing what constitutes core and noncore aspects of their business and readjusting the way these HR practices can be sourced either in-house or externally (Cooke *et al*, 2005).

Conway and Monks (2008) studied three healthcare organizations and found that employees are concerned with the HR practices rewards and work life balance. These HR practices are linked to outcomes such as commitment and job satisfaction that have been associated with high performance (Conway, Monks, 2008). The largest positive effect on job satisfaction is achieved when an employee works in an organization where training and other forms of human capital development are encouraged, and the organization should focus in particular on the elements of recognition and duties and shift preferences of the nurses (Shields, Ward, 2001). An interesting point is that the employers in the

healthcare sector in the Netherlands are fairly positive about the quality of their HR policy. The mean figure is a 7.4. The top three practices with a high priority in the HR policy are: workforce planning, sickness absence, and working conditions. Training falls just outside the top 3 (Osa, 2004).

2.3 Degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function

Research by Mohrman and Lawler (1997) indicates that the HR function must be a valued member of the management team of the organization by contributing to the business strategy and operations decision making. Buller (2004) identifies four categories to describe the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function: administrative linkage, one way linkage, two way linkage and integrative linkage. The characteristics of each category are shown in Table 3.

Administrative linkage	One way linkage	Two way linkage	Integrative linkage
The HR function plays the traditional personnel role: provides day to day operational support	Sequential relationship between the strategic planning function and the HR function. Usually from strategic planning to the HR function	A reciprocal and interdependent relationship between the strategic planning and the HR function	A dynamic, interactive relationship between the strategic planning function and the HR function
The HR function is primarily involved in handling the paperwork and logistical aspects of the employment function	The HR function designs programs to support the strategic objectives of the organization	Top management recognizes that business plans affect and are affected by HR activities	There is frequent formal and informal interaction between the strategic planning function and the HR function
Top management generally considers the HR function to be relatively unimportant	The HR function reacts to strategic initiatives, but does not influence the strategic initiatives	The HR function is viewed as credible and important, and HR personnel are proactive in responding to and helping to determine the strategic direction of the organization	The senior HR executive is viewed as a true strategic business partner with other senior executives, and is involved in strategic decisions even when they may not directly involve HR concerns
	Top management finds HR important to success of organization, but top management does not see the HR function as a strategic business partner	Strategic partner	

Table 3: Characteristics of the administrative linkage, one way linkage, two way linkage, integrative linkage (Buller, 2004)

The administrative linkage has a low degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function. In contrast, the integrative linkage has a high degree of integration between the strategic planning function and HR function (Buller, 2004).

2.4 Analysis of the external labor market

The last few years there is an increasing tension on the labor market for healthcare employees. Until 2008 it took more time for healthcare organizations to get vacancies filled (Windt *et al*, 2008). In the meanwhile, the employees are less concerned of looming labor shortages. Employees face as a consequence of the looming labor shortages, many options for employment, more career opportunities, more chances on suitable working hours, better fringe benefits and maybe even an increase in income (Dijk *et al*, 2007). In contrast, employers face higher labor costs, but worse, shortages of employees which can deteriorate the quality of the healthcare that is provided (Dijk *et al*, 2007).

The regional labor market determines if employers face shortages or surpluses of healthcare employees (Dijk *et al*, 2007), because the demand for care will develop regionally (Windt *et al*, 2008). In their exploration study of the labor market Windt *et al* (2008) used two scenarios: one in which the demand for employees is estimated low, and one scenario in which there is a higher demand for employees. As elaborated before, in January 2009 the Zorgzwaartepakketten were introduced in the healthcare sector and it is unclear how much employees the employers can mobilize the next years. In the low scenario Windt *et al* (2008) expect an average annual growth of demand for employees of 2,4%. In the high scenario an average annual growth of 4% is expected.

The supply of employees is less uncertain. The effects of the ageing workforce does not lead to an extra replacement demand in the next five years. The number of students following an education to get employed in the healthcare sector is increasing, but will on the longer term decrease (Windt *et al*, 2008). This is partly the result of an increase in the number of students following a MBO education. Relatively many people who start an education to get employed in the healthcare sector, work eventually in this sector (Windt *et al*, 2008) and the turnover of nurses and caretakers to leave the healthcare sector is relatively low. When nurses and caretakers leave an employer, they find a job elsewhere in the healthcare sector (Windt *et al*, 2008).

In Table 4 the characteristics of the employees working in the thuiszorg and the nursing and elderly people's homes are noted.

	Thuiszorg	Nursing and elderly people's homes
Average age	44,8	43,5
% women	98,2%	95,7%
% age 50+	36,6%	32,5%
Parttime factor	0,54	0,63
Years working for employer	10,2	10,9
Years working in sector zorg en welzijn	15,5	17,3

Table 4: Characteristics of the employees in the thuiszorg and the nursing and elderly people's homes (Windt *et al*, 2008; p. 22)

In 2012 there will be no shortage of employees in the region of Twente. There is a surplus of 2,8% in the low scenario and a surplus of 1,6% in the high scenario (Windt *et al*, 2008). Except for the regions Arnhem, Flevoland and Zeeland, the other 22 regions distinguished in the study of Windt *et al* (2008) face severe labor shortages. When all the regions are taken together the low scenario indicates a shortage of employees of 4,4% and the high scenario a shortage of 5,7% in 2012.

It is relevant to distinguish the employee groups that are mostly affected. For the nursing and elderly people's homes in the low scenario there will be a shortage of caretakers level 3 (-5200) and nurses level 4 (-2000). There is a surplus of assistants level 2 (800). In the high scenario the categories stay the same, but the shortage of caretakers level 3 (-7700) and nurses level 4 (-2500) increases and the surplus of assistants level 2 (600) decreases (Windt *et al*, 2008).

In the thuiszorg there will also be shortages of caretakers level 3 (-2100), nurses level 4 (-800), and a surplus of assistants level 2 (1400) and assistants level 1 (2200). In the high scenario this will be a shortage of caretakers level 3 (-4500), nurses level 4 (-1100) and a surplus of assistants level 2 (700) and assistant level 1 (700) (Windt *et al*, 2008).

The need for extra healthcare employees is clear and the organizations need to compete with each other to secure talented staff (Boxall, Purcell, 2003). The new employees do not only have to be students who have followed an education to get employed in the healthcare sector, but other groups can also be targeted by the organization, namely: various population groups, especially Turks, Moroccans and the unemployed (Windt *et al*, 2008). The organization must as well focus on people who want to change their career, because they want to work in the healthcare sector (new advent employees). This group will be more important over time. It is assumed that the supply of people who in the past have been working in the healthcare sector and want to go back to work in the healthcare sector, will reduce due to ageing. In the last ten years, these people fulfilled 60% of the increase in employment, or vacancies, in the healthcare sector. In the period 2008-2012 this will be reduced with 25% (Windt *et al*, 2008). In addition, in the healthcare sector there are relatively few low educated people employed, this indicates a possibility for the future (Dijk *et al*, 2007). From the past decades it

became clear that employers benefit when they cooperate regionally to make people interested to follow an education program to get employed in the healthcare sector and also the creation of internship opportunities are crucial (Dijk *et al*, 2007). Current employees should receive training, so that the employees can flow to other jobs. Research has shown that employees have an interest in training. Employers need to exploit this interest (Windt *et al*, 2008). Yet, 14,8% of the nurses and caretakers report in 2007 that their function is lower, than what they are educated for. In the thuiszorg this percentage is 22,6%. 78,8% of the nurses and caretakers have a function that corresponds to their level of education, and 6,4% have a higher function. For the thuiszorg employees that is respectively 72,9% and 4,4% (Windt *et al*, 2008).

Limiting the turnover of current employees, in other words retain employees, can be an important contribution to solve the staff supplies difficulties (Rondeau, Wagar, 2006; Windt *et al*, 2008) and there is another consideration overlooked in theories of employment which is crucial, namely the expectations of the employees themselves (Boxall, Purcell, 2003). Therefore, the expectations of employees in the nursing and elderly people's homes and in the thuiszorg are elaborated by investigating the reasons that cause these employees to turnover.

Turnover nursing and elderly people's homes

The turnover of employees in the nursing and elderly people's homes can according to 50% of the employees be avoided. In Table 5 the most common turnover reasons for employees in the nursing and elderly people's homes are mentioned.

Reasons turnover	Percentage
Insufficient satisfied with the care that is provided	12,2%
No pleasant work environment at the department	11,9%
Workload is too high	11,3%
Contact direct supervisor	9,7%
Insufficient development opportunities	8,0%
Decision making and consultation at the department	7,7%
Insufficient career perspectives/opportunities	7,4%
Not enough autonomy	7,4%

Table 5: Turnover reasons employees in the nursing and elderly people's homes in 2007 that can be avoided (Windt *et al*, 2008; p. 76)

The following reasons climbed namely the possibilities to work less, and too much or not enough responsibilities and autonomy (Windt *et al*, 2008). By preventing the turnover of employees not only providing career opportunities is important, but also the content of the work and the regulation of workload is relevant. An example of a change in the work process is the introduction of flex pools: employees are not working at a specific department, but in a pool and can be deployed in every department. For employees the content of the work increases (Windt *et al*, 2008).

Turnover thuiszorg

The turnover of employees working in the thuiszorg can according to 50% of the employees be avoided. In Table 6 the most common turnover reasons for employees in the thuiszorg are mentioned.

Reasons turnover	Percentage
Insufficient career opportunities	12,8%
Insufficient development opportunities	12,0%
Work time and roster are unfavorable	11,4%
Insufficient satisfied with the care that is provided	11,3%
Workload is too high	11,3%
Decision making and consultation at the department	10,7%
No pleasant work environment at the department	10,3%
Contact direct supervisor	9,8%

Table 6: Turnover reasons employees in the thuiszorg in 2007 that can be avoided (Windt *et al*, 2008; p. 79)

The following reasons climbed namely insufficient satisfied with the care that is provided, a too high workload, and a unpleasant work environment at the department (Windt *et al*, 2008)

The research by Windt *et al* (2008) has similarities with an earlier study that is conducted by Dijk (2004). In this study it was pointed out that the content of the work is viewed as one of the most important factors of the employees in the healthcare sector. Further, it is important for people under the 35 years to have enough development possibilities. Also, working part time and at times that are favorable are important for employees working in this sector. Wijk (2007) found that satisfaction with the organization depends on the possibility of the employee to deliver demand care, have opportunities for personal development, get good rewards, have an adequate job description, a good work roster and small physical burden.

2.5 Towards the research model

After discussing the most important literature, the research model can be developed. It must be mentioned that no study has examined structurally the possibilities for HR alliances in depth (Gardner, 2005). The concept of independent organizations cooperating in the management of human resources, is counterintuitive and contrary to the fundamental views of HRM (Gardner, 2005), because employees are believed to be temporarily captive and propriety assets, not shared with other organizations (Cappelli, 2000). This means that this is the first study that examines HR alliances in depth. In Figure 3 the research framework of this study is depicted.

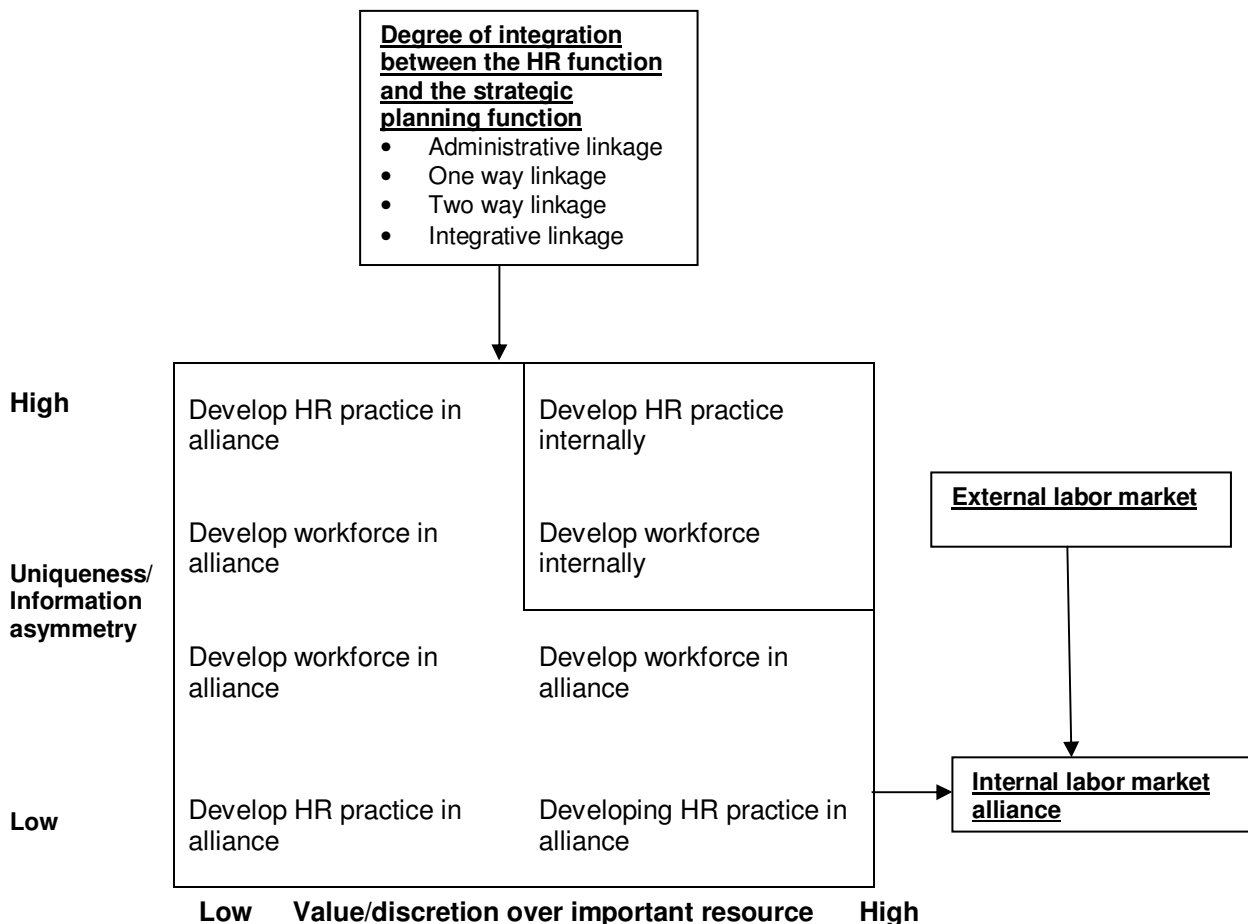


Figure 3: Research framework

There is expected to be a direct relation between the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function, and the HR architecture of the alliance. The HR architecture of an organization consists of various components of HR that fit together and are managed to meet the strategic objectives of HR (Nadler *et al*, 1992; Lepak, Snell, 1998). The strategic objectives of the HR function are partly based on the integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function, since the linkage determines what the HR department does in the organization. Managing the workforce and the HR policies/practices in collaboration with other organizations can be seen as an integral part of the business strategy.

In the centre of the research framework the HR architecture for the workforce and HR policies/practices is depicted. Figure 1 in this study, the workforce architecture, and Figure 2, the HR policies/practices architecture, are combined into one HR architecture together with the two strategic determinants value and uniqueness.

New in this HR architecture are the strategic determinants information asymmetry and discretion over an important resource. The determinant information asymmetry is inferred from the agency cost theory, and the determinant discretion over an important resource is derived from the resource dependence theory. These two strategic determinants need explanation and have not yet been investigated in previous research.

As discussed, an organization depends on the environment for information, human resources, money, and customers (Ven, 1976; Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978; Barringer, Harrison, 2000). The primary challenge for an organization is to gain and secure a reliable access to the needed resources (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978; Jaffee, 2001). The individual organizations in an alliance have discretion over their own important HR policies/practices and workforce and there can be information asymmetry among the organizations in the alliance about the workforce and the HR policies/practices. Because of information asymmetry an organization in an alliance maybe reluctant to transfer its knowledge of the HR policies/practices to the other organizations in the alliance, even though this will enhance the performance of the alliance. The organization can fear losing a position of superiority, or the organization is insufficiently compensated for the efforts and costs involved in the process of the transfer of the knowledge of the HR practice (Björkman *et al*, 2004). Since, all organizations have their own interests and are utility maximizers the organizations in the alliance will not always act in the best interests of each other (Jensen, Meckling, 1976).

It is expected that when an organization in an alliance has high discretion over an important resource and possesses information asymmetry, the organization wants to retain the resource internally in the organization and is reluctant to share this resource with the other organizations in the alliance. Organizations are not only interested in acquiring valuable resources of organizations in the alliance, but also in protecting the valuable resources of the organization in the alliance (Das, Teng, 2000). There is still a change for being dumped by the other organizations in the alliance (Doz, Hamel, 1998), or the strong institutional context of the healthcare sector (Wijk, 2007) forces the organizations to become competitors of each other.

In contrast, when the organization does not has both high discretion over an important resource and possesses information asymmetry, it is expected that the organization will use an HR alliance to manage the workforce and the HR policies/practices. Working together to manage the HR policies/practices and the workforce brings a larger brain trust than any one organization could muster (Das, Teng, 2000; Barringer, Harrison, 2000), there is a value creating potential of organizational resources that are pooled together, resources that are currently under utilized internally in the organizations can be used (Das, Teng, 2000), access is provided to relevant resources and it reduces the dependence of the organizations in the alliance on other organizations (Barringer, Harrison, 2000) in the environment. If the alliance is perceived as positive, a desire to remain in the network discourages organizations from engaging in narrow, self-serving opportunistic behavior (Barringer, Harrison, 2000).

When the workforce must be developed in the alliance, there is expected to be a direct relation to the internal labor market. The internal labor market makes it possible for the organization to be more flexible in the usage of the workforce, one important aspect that was indicated by Windt *et al* (2008). In the future many reports indicate that severe labor shortages are expected and cooperation can be one of the most effective ways of dealing with workforce shortages (Cappelli, 2000; Dijk *et al*, 2007; Windt *et al*, 2008). Using the internal labor market gives the employee a variety of work experiences, systematic promotion and development opportunities (Hippel *et al*, 1997; Gardner, 2005) and in doing so protects the employee from the external labor market.

The external labor market is expected to have a direct relation to the internal labor market. Scarcity of appropriately skilled employees, or a tight labor market, effects the development of an internal labor market, because an organization is likely to take action to manage critical resources when the resources are difficult to obtain (Pfeffer Salancik, 1978; Bills, 1987; Boxall, Purcell, 2003). Through an internal labor market the organizations in an alliance protect the employees from external labor market

competition. In an internal labor market an employee sees internal promotion as the principal means of improving his or her position (Williamson *et al*, 1975).

3. Method

Having conceptualized the research framework, the choice for using a case study approach should be justified. A case study is a detailed study of a single social unit (Babbie, 2004; Myers, 2009), and empirical evidence from one or more organizations is used to study the subject matter in context (Myers, 2009). This case study focuses on designing the *appropriate* HR architecture for the HR alliance NoaberZorg. In a case study multiple sources of evidence are used, although most evidence comes from interviews and document analysis (Marsick, Watkins, 1997; Myers, 2009). That is also the method used in this case study.

This study can be characterized as a single explorative case study, with multiple cases (Yin, 2003). An exploratory study is typically used when the topic of the study itself is relatively new (Babbie, 2004; Myers 2009). As argued, no study has examined the possibilities for HR alliances in depth. Gardner (2005) indicates that future case study research of HR alliances should involve face to face interviews with participants. The purpose of this study is to explore, unfold, test and refine the research framework in Figure 3. The unit of analysis (Yin, 2003) in this study is the association of NoaberZorg. In the association of NoaberZorg four organizations collaborate: Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal.

It is desirable in case study research to have an iterative process of data collection and analysis (Walsham, 1995). In the first two weeks of October 2008, one interview was conducted with the HR manager of Bruggerbosch, the HR manager of Zorgcentrum de Posten, the HR manager of Zorggroep Manna and the HR manager of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. The four interviews lasted between 32 minutes and 44 minutes, and totaling 153 minutes. The topics of the interviews were twofold. First, detailed information needed to be obtained of each HR department: the persons working at the HR department, the core tasks and the priorities of the HR department, and the congruence between the priorities of the HR department and the strategic policy of the organization (Bartram, Stanton, Leggat, Casimir, Fraser, 2007). Second, for the association of NoaberZorg questions were formulated concerning the purpose of the collaboration, the advantages and disadvantages in the collaboration among the HR departments, the positive aspects and challenges in the collaboration among the HR departments, the contribution of each HR department in the association, the HR domains in which the HR departments already collaborated, why and how collaboration started in these HR domains, how the ideal collaboration among the HR departments must look like, and lastly if there were special aspects that needed to be present in the collaboration among the HR departments. The interviews were tape recorded and translated verbatim and send to the interviewees to check if the content of the data reflected the interviewees viewpoints. Memberchecks help to ensure that the data reported reflect the interviewees viewpoints (Marsick, Watkins, 1997). After analyzing the interviews and investigating the relevant theory the final research framework was developed, see Figure 3.

3.1 Research instruments

To test the developed research framework interviews were conducted and documents were analyzed. The use of interviews in case study research has some strengths. The interviewees can be observed while questions are asked which directly focus on the case study topic, there are fewer incomplete responses, and if the interviewee misunderstands the intent of the question or indicates that he or she does not understand it, the interviewer can clarify matters, thereby obtaining relevant responses and obtaining insightful information (Bratthall, Jorgensen, 2002; Babbie, 2004). Using interviews has also some weaknesses. There is a possibility of bias due to poorly constructed questions, there is a possibility of response bias and the issue of reflexivity, when the interviewee provides the interviewer with information the interviewer wants to hear (Bratthall, Jorgensen, 2002). Considering the weaknesses, much time was spent on formulating the interview questions and on the order of the interview questions, since the order of the interview questions has an effect on the response given (Dijkstra, Smit, 1999; Babbie, 2004). When possible, questions that were used in previous research were selected to be part of the interview protocol. To limit reflexivity the interviewer placed herself as a neutral medium through which questions and answers were transmitted (Babbie, 2004). Attention was given to the interviewing style, since there must be a balance between excessive passivity and over direction (Walsham, 1995). The interviewees were allowed to express their own views, so it became

clear that the interviewer was interested in their views and when the interviewee followed some new direction the interviewer was not passive, and prompted new questions.

3.2 Sample

The HR manager of Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal provided a list of persons that needed to be interviewed. Comparing the lists of persons, it became clear that the HR manager of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten wanted the following persons to be interviewed: the managing director, the members of the management team, the representative of the company council and the quality official. In contrast, the HR manager of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal wanted the following persons to be interviewed: the managing director, the members of the management team and the representative of the company council. To make the sample equally the quality official of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal was also included in the sample. Therefore, the sample in every organization consisted of the managing director, the members of the management team, a representative of the company council, the quality official and the HR manager.

In total 29 persons needed to be interviewed. The people who were interviewed in this case study satisfy the criteria as being key informants (Myers, 2009). Key informants are those people who know the most about the topic in the organization and have decision making authority for the area of interest. According to Myers (2009) key informants need to be identified and interviewed. All the interviewees in this case study can advise the managing director of each individual NoaberZorg organization. The decision is then made in the management team meeting of the organization.

On January 14th all the interviewees received an invitation letter to participate in the interviews. In an invitation letter some aspects must be included: the name of the research institution, the purpose and relevance of the research, the length of the interview, the manner in which the name of the interviewee is obtained, degree of confidentiality, and finally the interviewee must be able to contact the interviewer (Dijkstra, Smit, 1999). In this study confidentiality of responses was assured.

A week after the invitation letters were send an appointment was made with every person to conduct an interview. The HR manager of Zorgcentrum de Posten made an appointment with the interviewees of Zorgcentrum de Posten. For the other three organizations, Bruggerbosch, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, 14 interviewees were personally contacted and 7 appointments were made with the secretary of the interviewees. Everyone agreed to participate, so a high response rate was obtained; another advantage of conducting interviews (Babbie, 2004).

After the interview questions were formulated the protocol was send to the HR managers for additional suggestions. Two useful suggestions were provided. Before asking questions to the interviewees about NoaberZorg, it was pointed out that it was relevant to ask the interviewee if the interviewee was familiar with the strategic goals of NoaberZorg and what the specific strategic goals are in the collaboration among the HR departments. The second suggestion was a supplement to the question that was formulated regarding the successful activities that the HR departments had achieved in the collaboration. The idea was not only to ask which successful activities were achieved and if these successful activities were visible in the organization, but also if no successful activities were mentioned, which successful activities the interviewees wanted to see. The two remarks were processed in the interview protocol. Yet, because the interview questions were send to the HR managers before the interviews were conducted, there is the risk of testing (Shadish, Cool, Campbell, 2002). The interview questions were later used in the interviews with the HR managers. It is possible, because the HR managers were familiar with the interview questions, that the answers that the HR managers gave to the interview questions were prepared. The interview questions were pretested to make sure that the questions were clear and relevant information was obtained from the questions.

In Table 7 the function of the interviewees, the number of interviewees of each function, and the duration of the interviews is depicted. This is the same for respectively Zorgcentrum de Posten in Table 8, Zorggroep Manna in Table 9, and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal in Table 10.

Function	Number	Time
Managing director	1	1h.19
Management team member	4	4h.28
Representative of the company council	1	52 min
Quality official	1	1h.15
HR manager (part of management team)	1	1h.3
Total	8	8h.57

Table 7: The function of the interviewee, the number of interviewees of each function, and the duration of the interview with the participants of Bruggerbosch

Function	Number	Time
Managing director	1	58 min
Management team member	4	3h.23
Representative of the company council	1	1h.1
Quality official	1	1h.17
HR manager (part of management team)	1	1h.12
Total	8	7h.51

Table 8: The function of the interviewee, the number of interviewees of each function, and the duration of the interview with the participants of Zorgcentrum de Posten

Function	Number	Time
Managing director	1	1h.19
Management team member	2	1h.52
Representative of the company council	1	41 min
Quality official	1	1h.13
HR manager (not part of management team)	1	57 min
Total	6	6h.2

Table 9: The function of the interviewee, the number of interviewees of each function, and the duration of the interview with the participants of Zorggroep Manna

Function	Number	Time
Managing director	1	52 min
Management team member	3	2h.52
Representative of the company council	1	1h.16
Quality official	1	50 min
HR manager (not part of management team)	1	1h.4
Total	7	6h.54

Table 10: The function of the interviewee, the number of interviewees of each function, and the duration of the interview with the participants of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

The interviews took place in the month February and the first week of March. The interviews lasted from 41 minutes to 79 minutes. In total the interviews lasted 1784 minutes, or approximately 30 hours. All interviews were tape recorded and translated verbatim. The advantage of this is that it provides a full description of what was said (Walsham, 1995) and it makes it possible for the interviewer to focus on what the interviewee says and respond to that adequately, without being concerned of making extensive notes. The main disadvantage is that in the case of confidential or sensitive information, the interviewee may be inhibited by the presence of the tape recording machine (Walsham, 1995), and a lot of time needs to be spent in transcribing the interview (Walsham, 1995). After the interviews were translated a copy was sent to the interviewees.

3.3 Measures

In this paragraph the interview questions are examined in detail. At the start of the interview the following points were mentioned: the purpose of the interview, the topics of the interview, the duration of the interview, confidentiality of the responses was again assured, and permission was asked to use the tape recording machine. The interview format consisted of open questions and when the interviewees gave inappropriate or incomplete answers, a probe or request for elaboration was asked (Babbie, 2004). The same probes were used in all the interviews: could you elaborate on that, can you give an example.

Reliance on theoretical concepts to guide the data collection for a case study remains one of the most important strategies for completing successful case studies (Yin, 2003), so when possible questions were developed that were used in previous research or derived from the theoretical chapter of this study.

Employee characteristics

Two items were used. The function that the interviewee fulfills in the organization (item 1), and since when the person fulfills the function (item 2).

Integration between the strategic planning function and HR function

Six items were used. The tasks of the HR department in the organization (Buller, 2004) (item 3), the future of the HR department in the organization (item 4), the pro activity of the HR department in determining the strategic policy of the organization (Wright, McMahan, McCormick, Sherman, 1998b; Buller, 2004) (item 5), the degree in which the HR department develops activities or programs to support the strategic policy of the organization (Buller, 2004) (item 6), the degree to which the HR department is involved in strategic matters that do not directly affect the HRM field (Klaas *et al*, 1999, 2001; Buller, 2004) (item 7), and the participation of the HR department in the management team consultation (Mohrman, Lawler, 1997; Kathri, Budhwar, 2002) (item 8).

HR alliance NoaberZorg

Thirteen items were used. Familiarity with the strategic goals of NoaberZorg (item 9), and the goals for the HR departments in the collaboration in particular (item 10), the advantages (item 11) and disadvantages/risks (item 12) in the collaboration among the HR departments in the association, the contribution of the HR department of the interviewee in the alliance (item 13), the ambition of the organization in the collaboration among the HR departments (Doz, Hamel, 1998) (item 14), the characteristics of the ideal collaboration among the HR departments (item 15), the successful activities in the collaboration among the HR departments (item 16), the degree of visibility of the successful activities in the organization (item 17), which desirable successful activities the interviewees liked to see (item 18), the degree to which the HR departments develop activities together (item 19), challenges in the collaboration among the HR departments (item 20) and a mark from 1 to 10 with the satisfaction of the collaboration among the HR departments over the year 2008 (Saxton, 1997) (item 21).

Workforce architecture and HR policies/practices architecture

Becker and Huselid (2006) mention that the locus of differentiation is the job/function, not the employee. Document analysis was conducted to determine the functions and HR policies/practices in each of the four organizations that could be used in this study.

The appropriate functions were revealed by analyzing the organization chart and the telephone list in each organization. In addition, a document of Bruggerbosch with an overview of the cost placement of employees per function was analyzed.

The HR policies/practices were determined by analyzing the information documents about the HR policies/practices that were present on the intranet of each organization, and the HR manager of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal provided a document with the work domains of the HR department. When the list of functions and HR policies/practices was completed, the list was sent to the HR managers to check if important aspects were missing and for additional suggestions.

The HR manager of Bruggerbosch had no comments on the list of functions and HR policies/practices. In addition, the list of functions was discussed with a secretary employee of the HR department and an internal advisor trainer. In the discussion a suggestion was provided, namely that the student assistant level 2 was also a function that was present in the organization. This function was later processed in the lists of functions.

The HR manager of Zorgcentrum de Posten had some suggestions about the functions that were present in the organization. For the operational functions it was mostly a change in the name of the function, for example PR official into communication advisor, quality official into policy employee quality, and head administration into controller. It must be mentioned that the original names of the functions, respectively PR official, quality official and head administration were the names used for the functions in the telephone list and organization chart of the organization. The medical secretary and administrative secretary were removed from the list of functions by the HR manager, although these

were present in the telephone list of the organization. Regarding the healthcare functions, most healthcare functions were not present in the organization chart and telephone list of the organization. The HR manager was sent a list of functions that were already used in the other organizations, to make sure that as much as possible the same functions were analyzed in each organization. In total three functions were removed from the list, because these functions were not currently present at Zorgcentrum de Posten: the evening and night head employee (function Bruggerbosch), the caretaker in education in the thuiszorg (function Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal) and the contact caretaker thuiszorg (function Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal). Pertaining to the HR policies/practices analyzed in this case study the HR manager of Zorgcentrum de Posten changed three HR policies/practices from the list to be investigated: the attention policy, the personal development plan, and the guidance route employees. These HR policies/practices were changed to reward and labor agreements policy, safety health and welfare and reintegration policy, and the appraisal and function policy. In addition, three extra HR policies/practices were put on the list: guidance in change processes, the personnel planning and staff management.

The HR manager of Zorggroep Manna had no comments on the list of functions and HR policies/practices.

The HR manager of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal provided a list of functions that were present in the organization. Further, the HR manager of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal had no additional comments on the functions and HR policies/practices used in the interviews.

The plan was to have an interactive interview in which the interviewees were provided with a list of all the functions and HR policies/practices that were present in the own organization, and a table of four quadrants with two strategic determinants, namely value and uniqueness, see the research framework of this study. The strategic determinants can score high and low and the interviewee is given a description of the term value and uniqueness based on Lepak and Snell (1999, 2002). Then, the interviewee is asked to put every function in a quadrant and provide the interviewer with reasons for putting the function in one of the four quadrants. Later, the same procedure was planned for the HR policies/practices. Although, this categorization was pretested, it turned out that the interviewees experienced problems in putting functions in certain quadrants, and especially with the terms low and high used by Lepak and Snell (1999, 2002). Even when the terms low and high used by Lepak and Snell (1999, 2002) were changed in the numerical figures 1,2,3,4 the interviewees indicated that they had difficulty with the categorization, so during the interviews the approach changed. An advantage of qualitative interviewing is that the design is flexible and iterative (Babbie, 2004).

From that moment, the interviewee was provided with a list of all the functions in the organization and was asked to discuss if the function could be exchanged among the four NoaberZorg organizations: yes or no (item 22). When the function could be exchanged, the interviewee was asked if it was possible for a short period, or also a long period (item 23) and the period of time a person in that function needs to master the function (item 24). It was expected that in the provided reasons of the interviewees, items were present that correspond to the strategic determinants in the research framework: uniqueness, information asymmetry, value and discretion over a resource.

For the HR policies/practices the same categorization was used, namely are there possibilities to collaborate in the HR policies/practices, or are the HR policies/practices unique to the organization (Klaas *et al*, 2001) (item 27). This categorization worked well and the rest of the interviews were conducted this way.

The internal labor market

Two items were used. To what extent have the HR departments successfully exchanged employees among the organizations (Gardner, 2005) (item 25) and have the employees successfully been promoted to a higher function in another organization (Gardner, 2005) (item 26). The questions of the internal labor market were asked after the list of functions for the workforce architecture were discussed, and before the interviewee was asked about the HR policies/practices.

The external labor market

Three items were used. How the organization is planning to respond to labor shortages (item 28). The degree in which the organizations of NoaberZorg work together to attract new employees (item 29) and are there possibilities to work together and attract: various population groups, the unemployed and new advent employees (Windt *et al*, 2008) (item 30).

After the last question was discussed the interviewee was asked if he or she had additional comments that were relevant for the study, which had not been discussed (item 31).

3.4 Interview analysis

The opinions of the interviewees in this study are analyzed as opinions of the individual NoaberZorg organizations: Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. A characteristic of an alliance is that every organization is treated as an individual organization and has its own autonomy.

When a decision is made in the collaboration the HR manager and the quality official can be invited at the management team meeting to advise the management team members and the managing director of the organization. At Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten this is not applicable, because at these two organizations the HR manager is already a member of the management team, and the same holds for the quality official of Zorggroep Manna. The company council must in certain decisions that are made in the collaboration have the opportunity to advise the managing director in his decision, this is called "adviesrecht" (OR-online). The decision is then made at the management team meeting. In short, this means that all the interviewees of this study can advise the managing director of the individual organizations. This is the reason that the opinions of the interviewees are assimilated to opinions of an individual NoaberZorg organization.

The degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function was determined for each organization by examining the transcripts of the interviews. The characteristics of the administrative linkage, one way linkage, two way linkage and integrative linkage were compared with the responses of the interviewees. In the reflection paragraph a table was made to provide a clear overview about which characteristics of each linkage were found in each organization.

The responses to the questions concerning the HR alliance were analyzed per interview question. First, the responses of the interviewees of Bruggerbosch were analyzed, followed by the responses of the interviewees of Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. Subsequently, 13 tables were made in which an overview was given about the opinions of the interviewees to the different interview questions. In this case study for item 16 and item 19 no separate tables were made. The responses to these questions were already processed in the 13 tables of this case study. Then, the responses of the interviewees were again analyzed to make sure that all the comments of the interviewees were integrated in the tables. The responses of the interviewees to the interview questions concerning the strategic goals and ambitions of the organization in the collaboration among the HR departments, were compared to the four theoretical perspectives discussed in this case study: the transaction cost economics perspective, the resource based view perspective, the resource dependency perspective, and the agency cost perspective. The four theoretical perspectives provide different lenses to form an alliance. For the advantages and disadvantages mentioned by the interviewees a comparison was made with the advantages and disadvantages mentioned in the theoretical framework of this study, and when applicable to the four theoretical perspectives and other literature mentioned in the theoretical chapter of this study.

To determine the workforce architecture of NoaberZorg 177 functions were analyzed: 52 functions of Bruggerbosch, 54 functions of Zorgcentrum de Posten, 35 functions of Zorggroep Manna and 36 functions of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. The functions can be found in the Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5. The functions were individually analyzed to determine if exchanging the function was possible. For this categorization the opinion of every interviewee was treated equally. When there was an equal score in opinions, the opinion of the managing director was decisive. When the function could be exchanged, the time to master the function, and the period of time in which the function could be exchanged was determined. Then, the functions were divided into five groups: managerial functions, coordinating functions, team leader functions, healthcare functions, and operational functions.

Subsequently, a workforce architecture of each organization was developed, which contained the functions that can be developed in the alliance, and the functions that need to be developed internally in the organization, see Appendices 6, 7, 8 and 9. The similarities and differences between the workforce architecture of each organization were identified per function, and reasons were mentioned why the functions could be exchanged or not. After that, an overview was made about the exchangeability of the functions in the HR alliance NoaberZorg. When the interviewees of the organizations had different opinions concerning the exchangeability of a function, the function was

removed from the overview, to prevent confusion about the form and functioning of the workforce architecture. The period of time an employee needs to master the function and the period of time the workforce can be exchanged among the organizations was determined. In the reflection paragraph the workforce architecture of NoaberZorg was determined and discussed.

To clarify the HR policies/practices architecture of NoaberZorg 49 HR policies/practices were analyzed: 14 HR policies/practices of Bruggerbosch, 11 HR policies/practices of Zorgcentrum de Posten, 11 HR policies/practices of Zorggroep Manna and 13 HR policies/practices of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, see Appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Investors in People was only discussed with the interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorggroep Manna do not have the certificate.

In a consultation with the HR manager of Zorggroep Manna it was decided to exclude the introduction policy from the list of HR policies/practices of the organization, since it was not yet developed in the organization.

After analyzing the work domains of the HR department of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, the decision was made to exclude the HR policies/practices reintegration and personal development plan of the list of HR policies/practices of the organization. In that document was mentioned that the reintegration policy and the career policy at Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal were not yet developed. However, during the interviews the interviewees provided comments about reintegration. Subsequently, the decision was made to include the reintegration policy in the HR architecture.

Regarding the HR policies/practices guidance in change processes, personnel planning and staff management, analyzed only at Zorgcentrum de Posten, the decision was made to exclude the three HR policies/practices from the HR architecture of NoaberZorg. No new information was obtained that had already been indicated in the interviews and elaborated in this study. In addition, the safety health and welfare policy and the guidance rout employee (reintegration) were discussed separately for the HR architecture.

The possibility of collaboration among the HR departments in a certain HR policy/practice was first elaborated per organization, and later the architecture of that certain HR policy/practice was discussed. It was not feasible to develop an HR policies/practices architecture. In the reflection, the reasons therefore are elaborated.

For the internal labor market the employees that were exchanged among the organizations and the employees who have been promoted were analyzed. After that, the opportunities to develop a flexpool were investigated.

Concerning the external labor market, the interview analysis was examined to determine how the organizations are planning to respond to labor shortages. The opportunities to collaborate in attracting employees were discussed per employee group: various population groups, the unemployed and new advent employees.

4. Four organizations in this case study

Paragraph 4.1 describes the main characteristics of the organizations analyzed in this study. Paragraph 4.2 elaborates on the utilization and tasks of the HR department of each organization.

4.1 Description of the organizations

Bruggerbosch

Bruggerbosch is a nursing home where 203 clients with dementia reside. The organization has 72 day treatment places where people with dementia, who still live at their own home, are helped through diverse therapies to live independently as long as possible. Approximately 450 employees are employed in the organization, with a total fte of 277. The organization has 217 volunteers (document analysis).

Zorgcentrum de Posten

Zorgcentrum de Posten is an elderly people's home and provides thuiszorg, nursing home care, elderly people's home care and day nursery. The organization has 90 nursing home places, and 237 elderly people's home places. Approximately 525 employees are employed in the organization, with a total fte of 250. The organization has 220 volunteers (document analysis).

Zorggroep Manna

Zorggroep Manna is an elderly people's home and provides thuiszorg. The organization has a Protestant Christian identity. Zorggroep Manna has 78 intramural places. Approximately 292 employees are employed in the organization, with a total fte of 99.2. The organization has 129 volunteers (document analysis).

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal is an elderly people's home and provides thuiszorg and day nursery. There are two elderly people's home to be distinguished: Scholtenhof, which has 66 places and a Protestant signature, and Mariahof which has 46 places and a Roman Catholic signature. The organization employs approximately 224 employees, with a total fte of 89.66. The organization has 200 volunteers (document analysis).

4.2 Description of the HR departments

Bruggerbosch has an HR department since the eighties. Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal since 2002, 2004 and 2001. The utilization of the HR department in the four organizations is deployed in Table 11, Table 12, Table 13 and Table 14.

Function	Workload
HR manager	36 hours
HR employee	36 hours
Coordinator secretary HR department	28 hours
Secretary HR department	22 hours
Administrative employee	12 hours
Coordinator training department	30 hours
Internal advisor trainer-1	36 hours
Internal advisor trainer-2	20 hours
Internal advisor trainer-3	36 hours
Employee training department-1	12 hours
Employee training department-2	15 hours
Employee flexbureau-1	20 hours
Employee flexbureau-2	36 hours
Employee absenteeism bureau	20 hours

Table 11: Utilization HR department Bruggerbosch

Function	Workload
HR manager	36 hours
AVR employee	16 hours
HR employee	20 hours
Secretary HR	8 hours

Table 12: Utilization HR department Zorgcentrum de Posten

Function	Workload
HR manager	32 hours
Training employee	24 hours

Table 13: Utilization HR department Zorggroep Manna

Function	Workload
HR manager	36 hours
HR employee	16 hours
Training employee	18 hours

Table 14: Utilization HR department Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Comparing the four tables in terms of workload, the HR department of Bruggerbosch has the largest department in the collaboration and Zorggroep Manna has the smallest HR department. At Bruggerbosch, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal a training employee is employed and at Zorgcentrum de Posten, the HR manager fulfills this function. At Zorggroep Manna the training employee is formally not linked to the HR department. The HR manager is supervised by the managing director, and the manager care and welfare is the supervisor of the training employee.

The tasks that the HR departments have in the organizations can be found in Table 15.

Tasks HR department	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
Personnel administration	X	X	X	X
Labor agreements	X	X	X	X
Safety, health and welfare policy	X	X	X	X
Policy making	X	X	X	X
Contact with third parties (e.g. safety, health and welfare service)	X	X	X	X
Contract management	X	X	X	X
Exit interview	X	X	X	X
Function appreciation	X	X	X	X
Introduction policy	X	X	X	X
Investors in People	X			X
Supporting supervisors and management team members	X	X	X	X
Supporting employees	X	X	X	X
Training policy	X	X		X
Reintegration	X	X	X	X
Subsidy regulation	X	X	X	X
Recruitment and selection	X	X	X	X
Law and legislation	X	X	X	X
Absenteeism policy	X	X	X	X

Table 15: The tasks of the HR department of Bruggerbosch (BB), Zorgcentrum de Posten (ZdP), Zorggroep Manna (ZM) and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal (ZO) (Based on interview analysis and document analysis)

There is one difference to be discerned in the tasks of the HR departments among the organizations. The employees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal need to perform tasks that are related to the Investors in People certificate, and the other two organizations in this study do not have this certificate. The training employee at Zorggroep Manna is responsible for the training policy of the organization.

Except for the HR manager of Zorggroep Manna, the HR managers of Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal are present in the management team meetings that are held in the NoaberZorg association.

5. Findings of the case study

The findings of this case study are discussed per construct of the research framework. Paragraph 5.1 elaborates on the degree of integration between the HR function and the strategic planning function of each NoaberZorg organization. Paragraph 5.2 discusses the HR alliance NoaberZorg. In paragraph 5.3 the workforce architecture for the HR alliance NoaberZorg is determined, and paragraph 5.4 considers the HR policies/practices architecture. The internal labor market is deliberated in paragraph 5.5 and the external labor market in paragraph 5.6.

5.1 The degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function

In this paragraph the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function is discussed per organization.

Bruggerbosch

Bruggerbosch has an integrative linkage between the strategic planning function and the HR function. The HR manager of Bruggerbosch is involved in strategic decisions that do not directly affect the HR field, because the HR manager is since the end of the eighties a member of the management team of the organization. Involvement in strategic decisions that do not directly affect the HR field is not a characteristic of the two way linkage.

The management team of Bruggerbosch consists of the managing director, the HR manager, the facilitating manager, the first nursing home doctor, the manager of the economic and administrative service, and the manager care service.

The interviewees mentioned different reasons why the HR manager is a member of the management team of the organization. It is relevant to take the personnel component in consideration at all the stages of policy development, and when decisions are made about a strategic issue there is always a personnel component to be distinguished.

"I think to be able to provide direct support, knowing what is determined and why, and directly overlook the consequences for the employees, and think about this from the first moment and have input in the determination, knowing what it can mean for employees, or what they can contribute for schooling, training. All the consequences you are involved in from the start, not afterwards, I did not think about that" (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

For Bruggerbosch to be able to actively respond to the questions of society and the clients, the HR manager must be a member of the management team, and considering the costs, the personnel costs are the largest expenses of the organization.

The HR function provides operational support to the employees, the supervisors and the management team members of the organization. The secretary of the HR function is responsible for the administration and the employment contracts. The HR manager is mostly involved in policy issues, and can mainly self determine the priorities of the HR function. The HR manager looks at what is relevant for the organization and where employees are involved. That is determinative and is put on the agenda of the HR manager.

There is frequent formal and informal interaction between the strategic planning function and the HR function. The HR manager has a discussion of progress with the managing director of the organization.

In the management team meetings the strategic policy plan of Bruggerbosch is determined. Every management team member of Bruggerbosch discusses about all the categories of subjects that are elaborated in the management team meeting.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

Zorgcentrum de Posten has an integrative linkage between the strategic planning function and the HR function. The HR manager of Zorgcentrum de Posten is involved in strategic decisions that are not directly related to HR concerns, because the HR manager is since January 2008 a member of the

management team of the organization. Involvement in strategic decisions that do not directly affect HR concerns is not a characteristic of the two way linkage.

The management team of Zorgcentrum de Posten consists of the managing director, the HR manager, the facilitating manager, the manager thuiszorg, the manager nursing and caring, and the controller. Before the HR manager was formally a member of the management team, the HR manager was informally present at the management team meetings of the organization.

The interviewees gave different reasons why the HR manager is a member of the management team.

“Because I find it one of the primary departments in the scope of realizing the goals of the organization. There were 75% of our costs are personnel costs, they are the largest booster of all kinds of activities in that domain and have a substantial role in that game” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

“I also think, let I say it this way, many decisions that are made at the management team level have one way or another a relation with people, with employees, so with HR. Then it is always good that someone of HR is represented in the management team, that is very important. The capital of an healthcare organization is personnel” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

The management team members of Zorgcentrum de Posten need to receive the ‘umbrella’ of the HR policy and that is another reason why the HR function is represented in the management team.

Operational support is given by the HR function to the employees, the supervisors and the management team members of the organization. The HR employee is responsible for the administration and the employment contracts. The HR manager is involved in the determination of the strategic policy plan of the organization, and has the specific task to make a translation from the general framework and goals to the personnel components.

“We have a long range plan, inferred from that a managing director letter is written every year, and inferred from the managing director letter all management team members write their own year plan and activities plan, so they are inferred from the coordinated strategic part” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

There is frequent formal and informal interaction between the strategic planning function and the HR function. The HR manager has a discussion of progress with the managing director of the organization.

A relevant observation in the interview analysis is that when the HR manager started working at Zorgcentrum de Posten the organization had an administrative linkage between the strategic planning function and the HR function.

“Until a few years ago, meanwhile maybe six years... we did not have any HR function, everything was done at the salary administration, and then we employed an HR manager, that was more HR matters, really employment contracts, and that kind of matters, the last years it is really used as a fully-fledged function in the organization” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

The degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function at Zorgcentrum de Posten gradually developed over time to the largest degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function, the integrative linkage.

Zorggroep Manna

Zorggroep Manna has an administrative linkage between the strategic planning function and the HR function. The HR manager is not a member of the management team of the organization. The management team of Zorggroep Manna consists of the managing director, the controller, the manager healthcare and welfare and the quality official. The supervisor of the HR manager is the managing director and the managing director is a member of the management team.

“The HR manager is always supportive to our core tasks, that is care and service to vulnerable elderly people” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

The HR function is considered to be a too concise department to involve in the management team meeting: the HR function only focuses on personnel, whereas in the management team meeting all the plans and ideas that embrace the whole organization are discussed. Zorggroep Manna is a relative small organization, and that is another reason why the HR function is not a member of the management team.

“We are a small organization, that is why the HR function is not a member of the management team. Otherwise, the management team will proportionally be too large, that it does not fit with the size of the organization. When you have a much larger organization, I can imagine that it happens. We have 230 employees. Where lies that turning point, I cannot tell that well. Yes, I think you have to be two or maybe three times larger” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

The HR manager is mainly busy with carrying out supportive tasks. One interviewee mentioned that the rate of circulation of making and sending employment contracts is a core task of the HR manager. The consequence is that the daily supportive tasks full most of the hours the HR manager has available, and few time is left to develop programs like a life cycle policy note.

In the near future, the intention is that the HR manager is no longer responsible for making employment contracts. The HR manager then has more time available to develop programs to support the strategic objectives of the organization. The result is that the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function at Zorggroep Manna moves from the administrative linkage to the one way linkage.

Currently, the HR manager is informed, but not involved in the determination of the strategic policy plan of the organization, and in strategic decisions that do not directly affect the HR field. The HR manager has a discussion of progress with the managing director of the organization. When the HR manager has own notes that the HR manager wants to discuss, the HR manager is invited as an advisor in the management team meeting. This happens mostly on request of the management team.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has a two way linkage between the strategic planning function and the HR function. The HR manager is not a member of the management team of the organization. The management team of the organization consists of the managing director, the manager internal care and facilitating, the manager thuiszorg and welfare, and the manager of the service bureau called the manager finance, information and personnel, in short the manager FIP. The supervisor of the HR manager is the manager FIP and the manager FIP is a member of the management team.

“Here we have chosen for a gradual representation, so HR falls under the manager FIP, and he is a member of the management team” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

“The philosophy is that principally the management team and the managing director have the responsibility and authority and HR is a supportive staff function. A staff function which comes with ideas and policy development in the form of notes to the management team and the managing director. The notes are discussed in the management team meeting” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

At Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal there is a distinction among three management team meetings: the policy development, the operational and the strategic management team meeting. The policy development meeting is a brainstorm session: where does the organization stand, what are the goals and priorities, policy plans are discussed and input is asked from all the attendant employees. The HR manager is present at this meeting, which takes places once a month.

The operational management team meeting takes place twice a month, and running projects, management information and complaints are discussed in this meeting. During the strategic management team meeting, which takes place once a month, the strategic goals of the organization are elaborated, does the strategy needs to change, and what are the consequences for the priorities of the organization. At the operational and strategic management team meeting the HR manager can be present as guest, that depends on the topic that is discussed. A guest in the management team does not make decisions, but discusses about the topic. The HR manager fulfills as guest three roles:

the HR manager has a contribution in opinion forming about the topic, content expert of the management team on the topic, and the HR manager gives an explanation of the policy matters.

The HR function provides operational support to the employees, the supervisors and the management team members of the organization. The HR employee is responsible for the administration and the employment contracts. The HR manager has a discussion of progress with the managing director and another discussion of progress with the manager FIP. In the discussion of progress with the managing director strategic issues are prepared. The HR manager makes under the responsibility of the manager FIP a year plan for the HR function. The manager FIP has decision making authority over the year plan of the HR function and brings the advices of the HR manager into the management team meeting. The HR manager gives the various supervisors and the management team members of the organization asked and uncalled advice.

5.1.1 Reflection

Table 16 summarizes the findings discussed in paragraph 5.1. The content of the table is based on the findings of Mohrman and Lawler (1997) and the different characteristics of each linkage that are mentioned in Table 3 of this study: the administrative linkage, one way linkage, two way linkage and integrative linkage.

Characteristics of the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
The HR function is represented in the management team	++	++	++	++
An employee of the HR function is a member of the management team (Mohrman, Lawler, 1997)	++	++	--	--
The HR function provides day to day operational support (administrative linkage)	++	++	++	++
The HR function is primarily involved in handling the paperwork and logistical aspects of the employment function (administrative linkage)	±	±	++	±
The HR function is generally viewed as relatively <i>unimportant</i> by top management (administrative linkage)	--	--	--	--
A sequential relationship from the strategic planning function to the HR function (one way linkage)	±	±	++	±
The HR function designs programs and systems to support the strategic objectives of the organization (one way linkage)	++	++	±	++
The HR function has <i>no</i> influence on strategic initiatives (one way linkage)	--	--	++	±
Top management finds the HR function important to success of the organization (one way linkage)	++	++	±	±
The HR function is <i>not</i> viewed as a strategic business partner (one way linkage)	--	--	++	±
A reciprocal and interdependent relationship between the strategic planning function and the HR function (two way linkage)	++	++	--	±
Top management acknowledges that business plans affect and are affected by HR activities (two way linkage)	++	++	±	++
The HR function is proactive in determining the strategic direction of the organization (two way linkage)	++	++	--	±
A dynamic, interactive relationship between the strategic planning function and the HR function (integrative linkage)	++	++	--	--
Frequent formal interaction between the strategic planning function and the HR function (integrative linkage)	++	++	±	±
Frequent informal interaction between the strategic planning function and the HR function (integrative linkage)	++	++	±	±
The HR function is involved in decisions that do <i>not</i> directly involve HR concerns (integrative linkage)	++	++	--	±

Table 16: Characteristics of the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function at Bruggerbosch (BB), Zorgcentrum de Posten (ZdP), Zorggroep Manna (ZM) and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal (ZO) (Based on interview analysis) Legend: ++ = strongly present, ± = partly present, -- = not present

Table 16 shows that although Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten can be characterized as having an integrative linkage, the two organizations still have strongly characteristics present that

correspond to the administrative linkage, one way linkage and two way linkage, and partly characteristics present that correspond to the administrative linkage and one way linkage. Zorggroep Manna has characteristics present that correspond strongly to the one way linkage, and partly to the one way linkage, two way linkage and integrative linkage. Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has characteristics present in the organization that correspond strongly to the administrative linkage, one way linkage and two way linkage and has characteristics partly present in accordance with the administrative linkage, one way linkage, and integrative linkage. As elaborated before, an HR department of an organization can gradually move from having an administrative linkage to an integrative linkage, and then still the characteristics of the administrative linkage can be found in the organization.

5.2 HR alliance NoaberZorg

In eleven subparagraphs broader insight is obtained about the opinions of the interviewees concerning the collaboration among the HR departments.

5.2.1 Strategic goals in the collaboration among the HR departments

The interview analysis showed that there are no concrete strategic goals formulated in the collaboration among the HR departments.

"I am familiar with the strategic goals (of NoaberZorg). For the HR departments there are none (strategic goals) formulated" (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

"I do not know what the strategic goals are for the HR departments, I have no answer to that" (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

"When you are now going to ask me what they (the strategic goals) are, then I do not know. I have an idea what a little bit the intentions are" (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

"I think we do not have concrete agreements for specific departments. What I know, is that we pronounced that we want to collaborate with each other to be able to respond to the larger healthcare organizations in our environment, but I think that there are no specific agreements made about how a controller must collaborate with another controller, or how an HR manager must collaborate with another HR manager" (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

During the interviews the interviewees of the four organizations invented five common strategic goals: (1) the HR managers do not need to invent the same wheel, (2) share knowledge, (3) collaborate in the domain of training, (4) exchanging employees during sickness absence, and (5) provide a competitive offer of labor agreements. These five common strategic goals can be compared to the four theoretical perspectives that are explored in Chapter 2 of this study as perspectives that offer different lenses for understanding why organizations may form an HR alliance.

The first three common strategic goals correspond to the rationale for forming an HR alliance from the transaction cost economics perspective. The transaction costs can be minimized when the HR managers do not need to invent the same wheel. This can happen by letting one HR manager of one NoaberZorg organization be the hamper trigger and investigate a certain topic for all the organizations. Sharing knowledge in the form of exchanging protocols, policy notes and cases, and when the Noabers collaborate in the domain of training will also reduce the transaction costs. Exchanging employees during sickness absence and providing a competitive offer of secondary and tertiary labor agreements correspond to the resource dependency perspective. When an organization is confronted with a shortage of employees, the organization will take action, since employees are a critical resource for the organization. The resource dependency perspective explains that a response to the shortage of employees is that the organization will look for employees in another organization. When the Noabers together can offer a good package of secondary and tertiary labor agreements to the employees, the power of the Noabers can increase in comparison to the other organizations in the environment.

The interviewees of Bruggerbosch consider the preservation of employees in the NoaberZorg association a strategic goal. One interviewee commented:

"We are of course four small organizations, so the chance of satisfying all employees in their career ambitions, horizontal or vertical, is smaller than in a large healthcare organization... That is I think very important, that together a scale is developed of personnel mobility were we together have more possibilities than individually" (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

The comment of the interviewee of Bruggerbosch is consisted with what Cappelli (2000) indicated: managers are challenged to dispose of their old ways of thinking and adopt more creative ways to manage, retain and release the workforce. Internal mobility allows the NoaberZorg organizations to manage and retain the employees in the alliance, and the employees can be released to another NoaberZorg organization, since the employees are still managed and retained in the collaboration.

The interviewees of Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal did not explicitly mention the preservation of employees in the NoaberZorg association, but the interviewees indicated that there are possibilities for employees to be exchanged to one of the Noabers. Offering employees a possibility to work at another NoaberZorg organization matches with the resource based view perspective. When the resources of the four Noabers are pooled together, there is a value creating potential, since the employees can be offered variety and new challenges at another NoaberZorg organization, and the employees can brush up their knowledge and experience. An employee can reintegrate at the Noabers or be given a new chance to work when the employee does not function very well in one of the NoaberZorg organizations. A reaction from the interviews:

"I also see, we are a small organization, we have few career opportunities for employees. If you want to become a management team member, we only have three management team members, if you are a manager and you want to develop yourself further, the chance that there is a vacancy here is not that large, but combining all the management teams together the chance is larger, but that is also the case for other functions, and for example Bruggerbosch and de Posten are larger, they have more differentiated functions than we have" (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

Reintegrating employees at another NoaberZorg organization can also be explained from the transaction cost perspective. The four organizations are WGA insured. This means that when an employee needs to do reintegration and the organization cannot find a suitable reintegration place, the organization must pay the employee a salary for ten years. When the employee reintegrates at another NoaberZorg organization, the transaction cost are minimized, since the employee works at the other organization.

When there is a vacancy at one NoaberZorg organization the HR managers need to contact each other to assure that the vacancy is published in the four organizations. Publishing vacancies in four organizations can reduce the transaction costs that are made in hiring a new employee. The vacancy is published in four organizations which enlarges the scope, and advertisements costs are saved when the vacancy does not need to be published externally. The publication of internal vacancies is developed to maintain the employees in the association, and the employees initially see the vacancies that are published.

Through specialization the Noabers can become profound and broader in their knowledge of the HR domain, since the organizations together have a larger brain trust, than the organizations individually have. When one HR manager has more experience, or the organization is more developed in a certain HR domain, the other Noabers can contact the organization for advice and support. Bokeloh (2008) mentioned that the most important characteristic of a successful organization is that the organization specializes in the qualities in which she can excel and that the organization on other areas seeks collaboration with other organizations. Specialization is effective in network relations with partners that specialize in other areas (Bokeloh, 2008).

Another mentioned strategic goal is that the HR managers need to focus on the policy of the own organization, and in the next step look for opportunities to collaborate in the association. This strategic goal can be explained from the alliance literature. Every Noaber organization is an independent organization, with an own identity, autonomy and a strategic policy plan, and it is relevant to minimize transaction costs, pool resources together, and take advantage of complementary assets, but there must be a relation with the strategic policy of the own organization.

The last mentioned strategic goal in the interviews was that the HR managers need to declare the philosophy of NoaberZorg: small scale organizations where clients and employees know each other and where the managing director knows its people. When all HR managers declare the same philosophy of NoaberZorg, the HR managers will believe that their goals are cooperatively related (Lievens, Corte, 2008).

Table 17 summarizes the strategic goals in the collaboration among the HR departments.

Strategic goals in the collaboration among the HR departments	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
The HR managers do not need to invent the same wheel	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sharing knowledge	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaborate in the domain of training	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exchanging employees during sickness absence	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide a competitive offer of labor agreements	✓	✓	✓	✓
Preserve employees in the NoaberZorg association	✓			
Exchanging employees for knowledge, experience development, variety			✓	✓
Options at the Noabers for employees who look for a new challenge	✓	✓		✓
Options at the Noabers for reintegration employees		✓		✓
Give employees a new chance at the Noabers	✓	✓		✓
Internal vacancy publication at the Noabers	✓	✓		✓
Specialization in HR domains		✓		✓
Focus on the policy of the own organization and then look for collaboration with the Noabers				✓
The philosophy behind NoaberZorg must be proclaimed by HR		✓		

Table 17: The strategic goals in the collaboration among the HR departments (Based on interview analysis)

5.2.2 Advantages in the collaboration among the HR departments

The interviewees indicated that an advantage in the collaboration among the HR departments is that it is possible to develop a flexpool. In a flexpool employees are employed and when there is a shortage of employees in one NoaberZorg organization, due to sickness absence, the employees that are part of the flexpool are employed in that specific NoaberZorg organization. This means that through the flexpool the Noabers gain access to the skills (Barringer, Harrison, 2000) of employees that are not necessarily employed in the own organization. For example, a pooler of Bruggerbosch can assist Zorggroep Manna in times of sickness absence. Developing a flexpool corresponds to the strategic goal of exchanging employees during sickness absence.

Collaborating in routes and projects is another advantage and corresponds to the strategic goal sharing knowledge. The mentioned routes and projects in the interviews are:

- The contract the Noabers have with the employment agency Start Medi Interim.
- The project "Nachtzorg" which allows Zorggroep Manna to assure 24 hours care in the thuiszorg. A nurse of Zorgcentrum de Posten can at night assist the thuiszorg clients of Zorggroep Manna.
- Collaboration in choosing an health and welfare service.
- Support of the HR manager of Zorgcentrum de Posten at Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal.

The contract that the Noabers have with the employment agency Start Medi Interim makes it possible for the Noabers to achieve economies of scale (Barringer, Harison, 2000). When the four organizations together have a contract with an employment agency, more favorable terms can be agreed upon, than if one NoaberZorg organization makes an agreement with an employment agency. Through the project "Nachtzorg" Zorggroep Manna gains access to the skills and knowledge of the nurse of Zorgcentrum de Posten. Collaborating in choosing an health and welfare service provides the Noabers with access to knowledge and the Noabers can learn from each other in deciding what is the best health and welfare service. Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has gained knowledge from the HR manager of Zorgcentrum de Posten, because the HR manager of Zorgcentrum de Posten has made a new function description and function appraisal for the HR employee of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal.

Combination contracts make it viable for the Noabers to offer employees a fulltime employment contract in the NoaberZorg association. At the same time, combination contracts preserve employees in the NoaberZorg association. With a combination contract the employees can provide temporary

support in the form of knowledge transfer to another NoaberZorg organization. The quality official of Zorggroep Manna for example has worked at Zorgcentrum de Posten for three months, eight hours a week to support the organization.

The interviewees indicated that the Noabers can work together in the following courses: HACCP, in-house emergency and first-aid service, and work guidance. Jointly organizing courses can be linked to the strategic goal collaboration in the domain of training.

The interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten pointed out that exchanging trainees and students in NoaberZorg is an advantage, because the trainees and students get broader educated and get more experience. This corresponds to strategic goal exchanging employees for knowledge, experience development and variety. Since February 2009, two students who follow the education nursing are exchanged between Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten. Exchanging trainees and students is not proposed by the interviewees of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal as an advantage. A likely reason is that at the moment there is no exchange of students and trainees at Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal.

Currently, the Noabers are busy with determining the secondary and tertiary labor agreements together in order to provide a competitive offer of labor agreements to the employees. The HR managers and representatives of the works council have had a meeting and in that meeting the Noabers observed that a caretaker does not have the same function appreciation in all NoaberZorg organizations. The consequence can be disorder in the organizations, so the Noabers have a common reason to investigate the function appreciation of the caretaker in each NoaberZorg organization. The opinion is that the Noabers must compete with each other on cultural elements, and not on labor agreements.

Being part of NoaberZorg as an individual organization is an advantage in recruiting employees, because employees have more options available in their employment. The Noabers carry out in their recruitment activities a common image of small scale, and the organizations have agreed to use the same layout in the vacancy publication. This corresponds to the strategic goal that the philosophy behind NoaberZorg must be proclaimed by the HR managers.

Table 18 summarizes the advantages in the collaboration among the HR departments.

Advantages of the collaboration among the HR departments	BB	ZDP	ZM	ZO
Develop a flexpool	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaborate in routes and projects	✓	✓	✓	✓
Combination contracts for employees	✓		✓	✓
Jointly organize courses	✓	✓	✓	
Exchange trainees and students in NoaberZorg	✓	✓		
Knowing the secondary and tertiary labor agreements	✓			
The Noabers are part of NoaberZorg		✓		
Together carry out the image of small-scale				✓

Table 18: Advantages in the collaboration among the HR departments (Based on interview analysis)

5.2.3 General disadvantages/risks in the collaboration of NoaberZorg

A general common disadvantage in the collaboration is that the organizations collectively collaborate in a route and that at the end the organizations make different choices. An example is the research that the HR managers and controllers together conducted concerning a salary administration system.

“Another disadvantage is broadly in NoaberZorg. Together you have a certain idea, you start working on that idea and then two or three outcomes are achieved. In the end every organization chooses its own way, that is actually also a disadvantage” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

“If you look for example at the concept you collectively start a project in NoaberZorg, than at a certain moment a process owner must be determined who is the hamper tragger of the project, but he finds I think soon interest antagonism of every individual organization. I think there lies the biggest problem. That has become clear in the e-hrm route I think.... there are too many interests, the organizations

sometimes are in a different development phase, so that causes problems that projects hardly get off the ground” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

The indicated disadvantage by the interviewees is also mentioned in Table 1 of this study, namely that managing an alliance is complex, because it is a combined effort of more organizations. The agency cost theory suggests that every organization in the alliance is an utility maximizer and this means that not every organization is acting according to the interests of the other organizations (Jensen, Meckling, 1976).

The interviewees mentioned that the organizations must not be too dependent on each other, that there is a deceleration at the speed in which bottlenecks can be solved in the individual organizations. This depends on the agreements that are made in the association. When there is much dependence among the organizations, then the deceleration speed in which bottlenecks in the organizations can be solved is reduced. Becoming to dependent on a partner is a disadvantage also mentioned in Table 1 of this study. In addition, the organization specific part of the organization must not be forgotten in the collaboration.

The interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten acknowledge that external developments can cause the NoaberZorg organizations to become competitors at a certain point in time. When this is the case the organizations have a lot of information of each other. This is also the case when the collaboration ends through a quarrel among the organizations. The shared knowledge can then be used against the organization. In Table 1 loss of proprietary information is considered as a potential disadvantage for an HR alliance.

The collaboration in NoaberZorg costs considerable time, since the Noabers must have the same vision. When one managing director leaves there is a risk. NoaberZorg is an association and the managing directors need to have a common vision, and willingness to work together must be present in order for the collaboration to be sustained. Individuals and not organizations are committed to staying or quit working with another organization (Lievens, Corte, 2008).

Concerning the openness of the organization to other NoaberZorg organizations there is a risk and a disadvantage to be recognized. The risk is that the openness of the organization makes it possible for the employees of another NoaberZorg organization to look and get deeper insight into the organization. Proprietary information may be lost. The disadvantage correlates with the risk, at the moment the management team members do not have a self evident attitude of openness to the NoaberZorg organizations.

Table 19 summarizes the general disadvantages/risks in the collaboration of NoaberZorg.

General disadvantages/risks in the collaboration of NoaberZorg	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
Collectively collaborate in a route and at the end the organizations make different choices	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agreements in NoaberZorg can have a deceleration at the speed in which bottlenecks can be solved	✓		✓	✓
Lose the organization specific part in the collaboration	✓			✓
External developments can cause the Noabers to be competitors in the future	✓	✓		
When the Noabers at a certain point in time have a quarrel and the collaboration stops the shared knowledge can be used against the organization	✓			
Through deliberation and adjustment situations the collaboration costs considerable time			✓	
When one managing director leaves there is a risk	✓			
Openness of the organizations to the Noabers is a risk		✓		
Openness of the organizations is not obvious for management team members		✓		

Table 19: General disadvantages/risks in the collaboration of NoaberZorg (Based on interview analysis)

5.2.4 Disadvantages/risks in the collaboration among the HR departments

Having a combined HR department has some disadvantages according to the interviewees. When everything is concentrated at one HR department, the distance is according to the interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal a disadvantage, and employees associate a concentrated HR department with a large-scale organization and that does not fit with the vision of the Noabers of small-scale organizations. The HR managers will also especially look after their own employees, in case of an one concentrated HR department.

A possible risk in the collaboration among the HR departments in NoaberZorg is that there is no balance in the contribution of each HR department in the collaboration: one HR department can invest much more than another HR department. The literature indicates that the viability of an HR alliance requires that the balance of benefits and contributions of each organization is seen as relatively fair, especially as the organizations are asked to increase their stakes in the alliance and make increasingly irreversible commitments and become dependent on each other (Doz, Hamel, 1998).

Currently, the HR departments have no concrete framework in which to collaborate. The result is that there is unclearness in what is allowed in the collaboration among the HR departments. A concrete framework with a shared vision can help the HR departments to believe that their goals are cooperatively related (Lievens, Corte, 2008). When the alliance is perceived as positive, a desire to remain in the network discourages organizations from engaging in narrow, self-serving, opportunistic behavior (Barringer, Harrison, 2000).

When an HR department in the collaboration is stronger, then the HR department can have a larger role in what is being determined. This is a risk, since the organization who is less strong has not the same influence in what is being determined. This comment matches with the resource dependency perspective. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) mention that alliance partners who provide resources and capabilities that are most needed or desired by the other organizations come to have more influence and control over the alliance.

Another disadvantage mentioned in the interviews is that the function appreciation is not the same at the Noabers. In paragraph 5.2.2 this has already been extensively elaborated.

When the HR department of every organization specializes in certain HR domains and the collaboration ends, the knowledge is lost. This is also indicated in the literature. One sided specialization makes the specialized organization dependent by giving up key competencies and there is the risk of being subsequently dumped by the organization who has found a better alternative or lost interest (Doz, Hamel, 1998).

Specialization has an extra threshold because an employee needs to contact another NoaberZorg organization, when the specialized HR domain is not present in the organization where the employee is employed. Lastly, when the HR departments collaborate actively there is a chance that the HR department is less utilized in the organization and that is a disadvantage of the collaboration.

Table 20 summarizes the disadvantages/risks of the collaboration among the HR departments.

Disadvantages/risks of the collaboration among the HR departments	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
A combined HR department		✓	✓	✓
No balance in the collaboration among the HR departments		✓		✓
The HR departments have no concrete framework for the collaboration		✓		✓
Function appreciation for the same function is different at the Noabers	✓			
HR department of one organization has a larger role in what is being determined		✓		
Loss of knowledge in case of specialization		✓		
Specialization has a extra threshold				✓
Less utilization of the HR department		✓		

Table 20: Disadvantages/risks of the collaboration among the HR departments (Based on interview analysis)

5.2.5 Contribution of the individual HR departments in the collaboration

Bruggerbosch

The interview analysis showed that the HR department of Bruggerbosch has a historical advantage in the domain of the training policy compared to the other three Noaber organizations: Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. The training department and the possibilities for training are decently developed. Bruggerbosch offers the other NoaberZorg organizations the opportunity for training, for example methodic acting in the healthcare or dementia and approach method. Initiating the collaboration, and exploiting the use of grants and work experience places are strong aspects of the HR department. As the interviewees of Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, and the research of Doz and Hamel (1998) pointed out, it is important to have a balance in the collaboration between the HR departments. Currently, not every interviewee of Bruggerbosch is convinced that there is a balance between the collaboration of the HR departments. The last three well developed aspects of the HR department are knowledge in the domain of labor agreements, the employment of multidisciplinary officials and the part on safety, health and welfare in the week bulletin. A reaction from the interviews:

“In what I think our department, I think training, how that is provided and in supplying grants, the academy, the way of financing, I think Bruggerbosch is powerful in that, but also work experience places, that kind of routes, I think that we have recruited many employees in that domain. At the moment we have one work experience place in the cleaning and nutrition service. We have someone of Activa in the linen service, in the healthcare there are many routes I think. Bruggerbosch has extra pair of hands, for the society, for the people really a work experience place, I think that our HR department is very proactive in that, to full places. Traineeships all that kind of routes” (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

Zorgcentrum de Posten

The interviewees of Zorgcentrum de Posten indicated that the policy notes that the HR department develops are viewed as useful by the Noaber organizations. The HR department is powerful in advising in personnel conflicts and function appreciation. A reaction from the interviews:

“I think advising in personnel conflicts, I find our HR department good in that, I think that is the most important” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

Zorggroep Manna

According to the interviewees of Zorggroep Manna the HR department is a relative small department and the HR manager has two years of experience. The HR department has several useful information documents and is vigorous in advising in using systems and automation. A reaction from the interviews:

“He thinks about systems and automation, and that is a strong side of him. I almost certainly know that in that domain he comes with ideas and proposals” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

The HR manager at Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has experience in safety, health and welfare related issues. The HR department is vigorous in advising in the domain of the absenteeism policy, reintegration and being an attractive employer. Currently, the HR manager is together with the managing director of Bruggerbosch busy with the labor agreements in NoaberZorg. One interviewee commented:

“I know that Ben now fortuitous is the project leader in the project about the labor agreements. And I think that our HR department is good in the sickness absence policy, we have that in order, probably we can mean something for the other organizations in providing information and how we have approached it” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

5.2.6 Ambitions in the collaboration among the HR departments

There is one common ambition to be distinguished in the collaboration among the HR departments: connecting the advantages of small-scale with the advantages of a certain large-scale in collaborating with four partners. In this ambition all four theoretical perspectives can be recognized. It is in the best interest of all the organizations in the association to contribute to the competence development of the alliance (agency cost perspective). When the organizations pool together their resources (resource based view perspective), the transaction costs of the organizations will be reduced (transaction cost economics perspective) and when the organizations achieve a certain large scale the power of the organizations increases relative to other organizations, and the organizations can obtain access to critical resources (resource dependency perspective).

The NoaberZorg organizations are small organizations and not all employees can find career development opportunities. Training and job rotation, that employees walk along or work at another NoaberZorg organization must be enhanced.

“More often look in the kitchen of each other, not only in the own organization, or department, but also in each other’s organizations, for example that an employee from Bruggerbosch walks along one day at de Posten, or at Oldenzaal, to get more involvement with each other’s organization, but also to see how the other organization works, to learn from each other” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

The Noabers must find each other at the operational level, and the collaboration must be self evident. In recruiting employees the Noabers can also collaborate more.

“I would say, looking at our strategic positions in recruiting employees to collaborate more with each other. And to indicate to the outside world that it is attractive to work at these institutions. Small organizations, more influence in the policy, positive work climate, short lines, I find that important. It is more difficult to get good employees, because fewer employees are available in the labor market. Then you must collaborate with each other, and stand strong together” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

Table 21 summarizes the ambitions in the collaboration among the HR departments.

Ambitions in the collaboration among the HR departments	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
Connecting the advantages of small scale with the advantages of a certain large-scale in collaborating with four partners	✓	✓	✓	✓
More opportunities for training and job rotation		✓		
The Noabers find each other at the operational level: collaboration must be self evident			✓	
Collaborate more in recruiting employees			✓	

Table 21: Ambitions in the collaboration among the HR departments (Based on interview analysis)

5.2.7 Characteristics of the ideal collaboration among the HR departments

The interviewees of the four organizations found four characteristics relevant in the ideal collaboration among the HR departments. First, every organization must have an HR department, and the presence of the HR manager of the own organization must be assured. The HR department must be an approachable department and the employees, the supervisors and the management team members need to be able to contact the HR department easily for questions. Second, the HR managers must frequently have discussions of progress with each other. Third, the HR managers must collaborate in a project form. This means that the HR managers must make use of each other’s expertise and/or that the HR managers divide tasks were each HR manager focuses on. For example, when one HR manager investigates a certain topic in the association, then the HR manager can make a short summary of that certain topic for the different management teams, and the management teams can develop from that aspect their own policy.

“I will find it very good that for example one HR manager notes that there is a change in the labor agreements, that the HR manager informs the other organizations.... and divides the tasks, very pragmatic. That the four HR managers are not busy with the same tasks. For example, when one HR

manager investigates this, the other investigates that. Then an advantage will be achieved” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

“I think that we could have added value when we can collaborate in a project form. That we as a whole Noaber organization investigate a problem, and invent a solution that is useful for all the organizations” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

The last aspect of the ideal collaboration is that the HR managers coordinate were the Noabers can ask questions about HR topics.

“I think that when we take into account the size of the organization, because that determines for a part the possibilities in the collaboration, that the organizations apply to each other at certain domains, provide support, so that you look which organization has on which domain the most expertise. Maybe there are more topics and themes to be determined, that you can say when there are issues in that domain, you need to approach that organization” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

Every HR manager must focus on the strategy and goals of the own organization, and when the Noabers have the same strategy and goals, the HR managers must use the expertise that exists in the organizations and determine who leads the project.

“It is not the intention, that you do not get the idea, they are busy with developing a flexpool, we are busy, that you coordinate it, that you say we are going to start a pilot somewhere” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

In the ideal collaboration all HR managers have decision making authority. Currently, the HR managers of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten have decision making authority. In contrast, the HR managers of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal do not have decision making authority. The result is that at Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal the HR managers are dependent upon their managers if certain ideas are discussed and which decisions are made in the management team meetings.

The interviewees of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal indicated that the organizations can make use of a flexpool in the ideal collaboration. An overview can be made about how many employees the Noaber organizations need, what every Noaber organization can offer, so that it is possible to quickly angle in a pool. These remarks have a relation with having a good collaboration on the domain of the employability of the employees in the most desirable way. When the HR managers know the strategic plans of each other on the domain of personnel, it is relevant to respond to it without competition forging.

Table 22 summarizes the characteristics of the ideal collaboration among the HR departments.

Characteristics of the ideal collaboration among the HR departments	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
Every organization must have an HR department	✓	✓	✓	✓
Frequently discussions of progress between the HR managers	✓	✓	✓	✓
Collaborate in a project form	✓	✓	✓	✓
Coordinate were the Noabers can ask questions about HR topics	✓	✓	✓	✓
A good collaboration on the domain of the employability of the employees in the most desirable way	✓			
Knowing the strategic plans of each organization on the domain of personnel and respond to that without competition forging	✓			
The HR department must look at the strategy and the goals of the own organization				✓
All HR managers need to have decision making authority	✓			
Make use of a flexpool			✓	✓

Table 22: Characteristics of the ideal collaboration among the HR departments (Based on interview analysis)

5.2.8 Successful activities in the collaboration among the HR departments

The HR departments have according to the interviewees of the four organizations achieved two common successful activities: the labor agreements route and the exchange of employees. The following exchanges of employees were mentioned in the interviews:

- Exchanging employees during sickness absence.
- Offering employees a new chance at the Noabers.
- The HR employee of Bruggerbosch has supported the HR manager of Zorggroep Manna.
- The paramedic team of Bruggerbosch is posted at the Noabers.

Providing a competitive offer of secondary and tertiary labor agreements and exchanging employees between the NoaberZorg organizations, are two of the strategic goals among the HR departments mentioned in Table 17.

Internal vacancy publication at the Noabers is viewed as a successful activity in the collaboration among the HR departments. In addition, internal vacancy publication is a strategic goal, and part of this strategic goal is that the Noabers have agreed to use a uniform lay-out for the vacancies.

Bruggerbosch has given Zorgcentrum de Posten a hint on utilizing the grants of training and has offered the organization support in training. These two successful activities and the organized in company courses can be related to the strategic goal collaboration in the domain of training.

The interviewees mentioned five successful activities that correspond to the strategic goal of knowledge sharing: the meetings among the HR managers in which the HR managers learn from each other and as a consequence contact each other quickly about issues, the project Nachtwacht, and the exchange of a task-function form, a digital mutation form, procedures and contracts.

Besides, the collaboration in the exchange of a task-function form, a digital mutation form, procedures, contracts, and the contract with the employment agency Start Medi Interim are successful activities that relate to the strategic goal that not every HR manager needs to invent the same wheel. For the contract with Start Medi Interim the HR manager of Bruggerbosch has been the hamper trigger of the project.

Table 23 summarizes the successful activities in the collaboration among the HR departments.

Successful activities in the collaboration among the HR departments	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
Labor agreements route	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exchanging employees	✓	✓	✓	✓
Internal vacancy publication at the Noabers	✓	✓		
Lay-out vacancies	✓			✓
Grants of training and support of training		✓		
In company courses			✓	
Meetings among the HR managers		✓	✓	
Project nachtwacht			✓	
Contract with employment agency			✓	
Exchanging task function forms, procedures and contracts				✓
Exchanging digital mutation form			✓	

Table 23: Successful activities in the collaboration among the HR departments (Based on interview analysis)

5.2.9 Desirable successful activities in the collaboration among the HR departments

It is desirable that the employees working at the department level have a click with NoaberZorg. This means that when a Noaber organization is confronted with sickness absence that the employees at the department level automatically make the click with NoaberZorg.

The managing directors have the task to reduce all procedural ballast that need to be processed before employees can be posted to the other organizations. When the employees need to fill in

endless forms to be posted at another NoaberZorg organization in periods of sickness absence, it is possible that in practice the employees will not think in posting solutions.

The employees must know the employment opportunities to work at the Noabers, and the opportunity to apply for a job and be treated as an internal candidate must be more emphasized, particularly to make clear to the employees that the grass at another Noaber organization is not always greener.

There is also a contradiction visible when analyzing the interviews. Some interviewees want NoaberZorg to have a brand feeling and be a lively concept in the organization, other interviewees disagree and find it sufficient that the employees know that there are possibilities for them at the Noabers. This contradiction is decently portrayed in the following comment:

“You see every management team meeting of the Noabers together, the discussion point is every time what are we doing now, what do we want which each other, do we all agree about this. This is lasting gradually 2.5 to 3 years and still the discussion comes forward” (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

There are five other desirable successful activities mentioned by interviewees of one NoaberZorg organization: work together in using a research centre, look in the archives of the Noabers for employees to reduce advertisements costs, collectively organize courses, look for opportunities for extra grants, collectively develop policies and carry out an image how it is to work in NoaberZorg: small scale organizations, and the employees do not function as a number, as is the case in large organizations like Livio.

Table 24 shows the desirable successful activities in the collaboration among the HR departments.

Desirable successful activities in the collaboration among the HR departments	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
Automatic collaboration among the HR departments	✓	✓		✓
Reducing procedural ballast in posting	✓			
Employees must know the possibilities to work at the Noabers	✓	✓		
Brand feeling NoaberZorg?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Make adjustments in the use of research centre	✓			
Reducing advertisements costs by looking in archives of the Noabers for employees		✓		
Collectively organize courses				✓
Collectively look for opportunities of extra grants	✓			
Collectively develop policies	✓			
Carry out an image how it is to work in NoaberZorg	✓			

Table 24: Desirable successful activities in the collaboration among the HR departments

5.2.10 Challenges in the collaboration among the HR departments

The interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten indicated that the HR managers have different positions in the organizations. At Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten the HR manager is a member of the management team and has decision making authority. In contrast, at Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal the HR manager is not a member of the management team, and has no decision making authority.

During the research between the HR managers and the controllers there was cockerels behavior present in two domains: expertise and size of the organization. Indicated was that until a few months ago, the mutual trust and competition was developed strongly in the collaboration in the negative sense of the word.

There is resistance to do something in NoaberZorg, because the collaboration has achieved few concrete results for the organizations, there are too few visible projects undertaken. The organizations are particularly focused on the own organization, and the projects are moved to a long term path or it stays with speaking out an intention, and no further action is undertaken.

Expectations differences are also present in the collaboration. A proactive attitude is expected of the HR managers and the HR managers sometimes have the feeling of floating. Concerning the project of

the labor agreements the managing directors have learned to make a concrete and clear assignment. The managing director of Bruggerbosch is appointed as a director of the project, so that for everyone involved it is clear what is agreed upon. There is a clear framework, guarding and guiding present.

When the HR departments collaborate in a route, like the labor agreements, it is relevant that the organizations have the same information before a route starts or action is undertaken and that is not always the case.

Table 25 summarizes the challenges in the collaboration among the HR departments.

Challenges in the collaboration among the HR departments	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
Differences between the HR departments	✓	✓		
Research HR managers and controllers	✓	✓		✓
Resistance to do things in NoaberZorg	✓	✓		
Speed of finishing projects		✓		
Expectations differences			✓	✓
Every Noaber must have the same information			✓	

Table 25: Challenges in the collaboration among the HR departments (Based on interview analysis)

5.2.11 Satisfaction with the collaboration among the HR departments over the year 2008

The interviewees of Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal respectively mention an average mark of 6.4, 6.8, 7.1 and 8 of their satisfaction with the collaboration among the HR departments over the year 2008.

In Table 26, Table 27, Table 28 and Table 29 the indicated reasons of the interviewees are depicted. The reasons are displayed in positive aspect and challenges.

Positive aspects	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness is present • Trusting relationship • HR managers find each other • Collaboration on the training domain • Posting employees • Vacancy policy: uniform advertisements, internal vacancy publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No clear goals are formulated • Hardly collaboration • Tension between choosing for the own organization or NoaberZorg: some have chosen the own organization • Must be equivalence and conformity among the positions of the HR departments in the organization

Table 26: Satisfaction of the interviewees of Bruggerbosch with the collaboration among the HR departments over the year 2008 portrayed in positive aspects and challenges (Based on interview analysis)

Positive aspects	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR managers find each other • Willingness is present • Exchanging protocols and regulations • 2009: posting and exchanging employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2008 focused mostly on practical part: exchanging protocols and regulations • Focus on specialization • Competitive advantage as combined employers can better be indicated in the recruitment and selection stage

Table 27: Satisfaction of the interviewees of Zorgcentrum de Posten with the collaboration among the HR departments over the year 2008 portrayed in positive aspects and challenges (Based on interview analysis)

Positive aspects	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness is present • Contract employment agency • Exchanging employees • HR managers find each other • Incompany course • Support of HR employee Bruggerbosch • Labor agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More structure must be provided: this needs to be facilitated from the top: indicate the direction of NoaberZorg and a framework must be determined were the HR departments can focus on • Investigate possibilities for a flexpool • Insufficient result collaboration HR departments • The adjustment between the controllers and the HR managers in the research was not optimal • Adjust to each other: 1 HR manager coordinates it centrally for all the managers • HR managers must be more proactive in the content of the collaboration

Table 28: Satisfaction of the interviewees of Zorggroep Manna with the collaboration among the HR departments over the year 2008 portrayed in positive aspects and challenges (Based on interview analysis)

Positive aspects	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The labor agreements • Knowledge sharing • Exchanging products and procedures • Exchanging employees • HR managers find each other • Trust is sufficiently present • Willingness is present • Exchanging task function descriptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results are not really visible • Specialization of HR departments

Table 29: Satisfaction of the interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal with the collaboration among the HR departments over the year 2008 portrayed in positive aspects and challenges (Based on interview analysis)

Concerning the positive aspects mentioned by the interviewees, the HR managers find each other in the case of questions and in the collaboration willingness is present. The interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal indicated that the presence of trust is a positive aspect in the collaboration. The other positive aspects mentioned in Table 26, Table 27, Table 28 and Table 29 have already been elaborated in paragraph 5.2.8 of this study.

Regarding the challenges, one challenge is that the HR departments must communicate the competitive advantage of the organizations as combined employers better in the recruitment and selection stage to the employees. The other challenges mentioned in Table 26, Table 27, Table 28, and Table 29 have already been elaborated in the following paragraphs: disadvantages/risks in the collaboration among the HR departments (5.2.4), characteristics of the ideal collaboration among the HR departments (5.2.7) and challenges in the collaboration among the HR departments (5.2.10).

5.3 Workforce architecture

Based on the interview analysis, the workforce architecture of Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal are portrayed in the Appendices 6, 7, 8, and 9. An overview of the workforce architecture of each organization is depicted in Table 30.

	BB	ZdP	ZM	ZO
Number of analyzed functions	52	54	35	36
Number of functions of which the workforce can be developed in the alliance	32	31	9	23
Managerial functions (mf)	-	-	-	-
Coordinating functions (cf)	-	-	-	-
Team leader functions (tf)	-	-	-	-
Healthcare functions (hf)	15	11	7	11
Operational functions (of)	16	19	2	12
Number of functions of which the workforce must be developed internally in the organization	20	23	26	13
Managerial functions (mf)	9	6	2	3
Coordinator functions (cf)	3	3	1	4
Team leader functions (tf)	-	7	4	2
Healthcare functions (hf)	5	1	4	1
Operational functions (of)	3	6	15	3

Table 30: Overview of the number of analyzed functions per organization and the number of exchangeable functions and not exchangeable functions categorized in managerial functions, coordinator functions, team leader functions, healthcare functions and operational functions (Based on interview analysis) Legend: Abbreviations of functions for further codification: (mf),(cf), (tf), (hf), and (of) * The pooler of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum cannot be specified into the above mentioned categories: those employees work both in the healthcare and operational functions

Table 30 shows that except for Zorggroep Manna, the other three NoaberZorg organizations have more functions of which the workforce can be developed in the alliance (exchangeable function), than that the workforce must be developed internally in the organization (not exchangeable function).

In the interviews some general comments were made by the interviewees:

- The employees can be exchanged, when the employees want to be exchanged.
- The employees must feel competent during and after the exchange.
- The organization may not suffer when the employees are exchanged in the form of having a shortage.
- The formation of employees that are employed in the four organizations are decently determined: the organizations do not have a surplus of employees.
- When the employees work part time in the organization and the employees want to work extra, it is possible for the employees to work at the Noabers.
- All employees can walk along in another NoaberZorg organization. The employees learn how the function is performed in the other NoaberZorg organization, it provides new insights, prohibits rusting, and the employees can reflect on their own functioning in the organization.
- The interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal specifically mention that the organization is established in Oldenzaal, and the other three organizations are established in Enschede, and that is a psychological barrier for the employees.
- Employees who fulfill a supportive function and work for the organization for a long period of time have much knowledge.
- When the organizations decide to exchange employees, good agreements must be made. There is a chance that the employees who are exchanged to one of the Noabers, do not want to go back to their original employer in the association.

5.3.1 Managerial functions

Table 30 shows that in the managerial functions there is a difference to be discerned in how many managerial functions are present in the organizations. Bruggerbosch has 9 managerial functions, Zorgcentrum de Posten 6, Zorggroep Manna 2 and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal 3. Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten have more differentiated functions at the managerial level than Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has combination functions. For example, the manager internal

care and facilitating, and the manager finance, information and personnel are two distinct functions at Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, but four distinct functions at Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten, see Appendices 6 and 7. The managerial functions can according to the interviewees of all four organizations not be exchanged among the NoaberZorg organizations.

The interviewees mentioned the following reasons why the managerial functions need to be developed internally in the organization:

- The function is a unique function, only present in one NoaberZorg organization.
- The knowledge that the managers need is different: knowledge about nursing homes and day treatment versus knowledge about elderly people's homes and thuiszorg.
- The management team functions are specifically adjusted to the organization.
- The managers are advisors of the managing director.
- The managers have knowledge about the organization: know all the ins and outs.
- The managers have a solo function and the continuity of the organization is not assured when the managers are exchanged: the information and knowledge of the managers are no longer present in the organization.
- Some managers are qualitatively stronger, than the managers employed at the other NoaberZorg organizations, and the organization would lose more than it will receive when the managers are exchanged.
- The managers are involved in the strategic policy determination of the organization.
- The managers have no knowledge about challenges and positive aspects of the other NoaberZorg organizations, and no knowledge about staff matters and knowing how to act, and that is important for managers to know.
- For the accessibility and the irradiation it is good to develop the managers internally: still an independent organization, with an own identity and then the managerial functions must not be exchanged.
- Managers have a recognizable function: employees know my supervisor is present. That is important for the peace in the organization.
- The time to master the function is long and too much time is lost when the managers are exchanged.
- The managers have a certain vision in managing the employees and it is difficult to replace that.

The interviewees found an inter vision meeting more useful, than exchanging the managers. The managers can work together in a project form and be posted to the NoaberZorg organizations on a temporary basis. This means that the managers are still managers in their own organization, but can assist another NoaberZorg organization next to their daily tasks. This is only possible for a short period of time, because of the impact posting has on the daily tasks the managers perform. For posting the managers to another NoaberZorg organization some conditions must be fulfilled: the managers must have the same function, position and responsibility, the determined policy must not change, and the management team must not be unsettled.

5.3.2 Coordinating functions and team leader functions

Concerning the coordinating functions Bruggerbosch has 3 coordinating functions, Zorgcentrum de Posten 3, Zorggroep Manna 1 and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal 4. Bruggerbosch has no team leader functions, Zorgcentrum de Posten has 7 team leader functions, Zorggroep Manna 4 and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal 2.

At Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal the workforce of the coordinating functions and team leader functions must be developed internally in the organization.

The coordinator living is an organization specific function of Bruggerbosch and therefore cannot be exchanged among the NoaberZorg organizations. The employee that fulfills this function can only be posted to the other Noabers when the employee is bogged down in the function and wants to make a new start at another NoaberZorg organization, or in the case of career planning. The coordinator Zeker Thuis Twente is an organization specific function of Zorgcentrum de Posten, and the supervisor welfare is an organization specific function of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal and the workforce of both functions can therefore not be exchanged among the NoaberZorg partners.

The interviewees of the four organizations agree that the coordinator volunteer work, at Zorgcentrum de Posten named the team leader volunteer work, cannot be exchanged among the NoaberZorg organizations. It is a solo function, the coordinator is the approachable point for the volunteers, and several interviewees indicated that it is a network function: the coordinator has contacts with other organizations to get volunteers.

The training coordinator can according to the interviewees of Bruggerbosch, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal not be exchanged among the NoaberZorg organizations. Currently, Zorgcentrum de Posten does not have a training coordinator, the HR manager is responsible for the training in the organization. The interviewees mentioned different reasons why the training coordinator cannot be exchanged among the organizations: the employee works in the organization for a long period of time and therefore has much knowledge, the training coordinator is a solo function and for the training coordinator to be exchangeable it is relevant that the training policies of the organizations are more uniform. Interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal indicated that Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal is busy with developing the training policy, while the training policy of Bruggerbosch is more ahead. The training coordinators can work together in a project form. Indicated is that there are much grants to be distinguished in providing training and that the Noabers can investigate that together. Also holding meetings together, just like the HR managers have, is viewed as useful. The focus of the interviewees is on knowledge sharing, instead of exchanging the workforce.

For the other coordinating functions and team leader functions analyzed in this study, the same argumentation applies, most interviewees indicated that exchanging knowledge, getting to know each other and walking along in the other organization is suitable for the employees fulfilling a coordinating and team leader function, but not being exchanged. Some interviewees indicated that for the coordinating functions and the team leader functions the same argumentation applies as for the managers.

5.3.3 Healthcare functions analyzed in one NoaberZorg organization

Appendix 10 provides an overview of the healthcare functions that were analyzed in only one NoaberZorg organization. In total 17 healthcare functions were analyzed in one NoaberZorg organization.

Bruggerbosch

The nursing home doctor, the ergo therapist, the physiotherapist, the music therapist, and the psychologist are nursing home disciplines. Since, the other organizations are elderly people's homes, the organizations do not have this type of multidisciplinary officials employed. At the moment, the employees who fulfill these functions are posted to the NoaberZorg organizations. The employees have had an education, are familiar with the task and function description, and possess the same skills.

The groups guidance day treatment employee can be posted to the NoaberZorg organizations. The Noabers provide day nursery and guidance in day activities. The groups guidance day treatment employee can provide the Noabers with expertise on the day treatment of people with dementia and in using the rest capacity of the client. The skills of the employees in this function are preserved in the same way. When the groups guidance day treatment employee is posted to the Noabers for a long period of time, the employee can be given a practice assignment.

The evening and night head employee can be posted to Zorgcentrum de Posten. Zorgcentrum de Posten has also clients with complex somatic problems and/or psychic problems.

The nursing home doctor in education cannot be posted to the other NoaberZorg organizations. The other organizations do not have a recognition as a training institution. The facilitating care employee can also not be exchanged among the organizations. The function is a combination of facilitating and providing care, and that is an organization specific function, not found at the other Noabers. The tasks will not be the same. The employees who fulfill this function have a basal function level, and this means that it is difficult for the employees to make a translation regarding the tasks the employees need to fulfill in the other organization, and in social skills these employees are vulnerable and need specific guidance. The same applies for the student assistant level 2 and the pooler student assistant level 2. With the pooler student assistant level 2 three difficult combinations are present: student,

assistant level 2 and pooler and that means few certainty and continuity, what is learned one day, the next day is forgotten, because the employee works in another situation.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

The employee day nursery suryoye is an organization specific function, and can be posted to the other Noabers, because the Noabers have day nursery and the employee who fulfills this function talks Armenian, but also Dutch. The tasks are largely uniform.

Zorggroep Manna

The living guide employee of Zorggroep Manna cannot be posted to the other organizations, because the employee is responsible for vulnerable clients and posting the employee to another organization is not useful for the continuity of the clients. The living guide employee can walk along in another NoaberZorg organization, with a focused task assignment.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

The caretaker in education in the thuiszorg can be posted to the NoaberZorg organizations Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorggroep Manna. Bruggerbosch does not provide thuiszorg. It is viewed as useful for people who follow an education to work in multiple organizations.

The sleep watch employee and the assistant activities guidance employee can be posted to the NoaberZorg organizations. It is relevant to determine what the other Noabers expect of a sleep watch employee. Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has sleep watch employees with an EHBO degree and a level 3 degree. The assistant activities guidance employee can be exchanged among the NoaberZorg partners. There are more employees with this function employed in the organization, and the employees work always under guidance of another employee.

The WMO mediator cannot be posted to the Noabers. The most frequently mentioned reasons are that it is a solo function and only present at Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. The interviewees indicated that exchanging knowledge is feasible and walking along in another NoaberZorg organization is also possible.

5.3.4 Operational functions analyzed in one NoaberZorg organization

Appendix 11 provides an overview of the operational functions that were analyzed in only one NoaberZorg organization. In total 9 functions were analyzed in only one NoaberZorg organization.

Bruggerbosch

The restaurant employee and the transport employee can be posted to the NoaberZorg organizations. For the restaurant employee it is relevant that there is a restaurant, and Zorgcentrum de Posten has a restaurant. The employees who fulfill these two functions have basic knowledge, there are more employees employed, and the tasks of the employees are the same.

The first cleaning employee can be posted to the Noabers on a temporary basis, for example to provide training. An inter vision meeting is also possible. Since, it is a concrete task domain, the organizations can learn from each other. It is not possible to post the employee for a long period of time, otherwise the continuity of Bruggerbosch is not assured. It is an important function in coordinating the cleaning employees.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

The AVR official, the communication advisor and the dietician can be posted to the other Noabers. The tasks of the AVR official, the communication advisor and the dietician are the same in each NoaberZorg organization. The pool director can be posted to Bruggerbosch, since Bruggerbosch works also with a pool. Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal do not have a pool in their organization. The assistant controller and the assistant facilitating service employee are organization specific functions of Zorgcentrum de Posten, and therefore cannot be posted to the other Noabers.

5.3.5 Healthcare functions analyzed across the organizations

The nurse and first responsible nurse internal care were analyzed for Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. The nurse can be exchanged among the NoaberZorg organizations. The nurse has enough capacity to work at another NoaberZorg organization. One interviewee indicated

that it is useful to give every nurse a specialism, for example decubitus and that the nurse is then employed among all the organizations. The first responsible nurse internal care at Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal is responsible for the clients and has a bond with the family of the client. This makes exchanging the employees among the organizations more difficult, but it is possible for a long period of time to be exchanged among the organizations.

The three elderly people's homes in this study provide thuiszorg and therefore have domestic employees employed and the employees who fulfill this function can be exchanged among the three organizations. The tasks that the employees need to fulfill are the same.

The functions that can be exchanged among the four organizations are: the first responsible caretaker, the caretaker, the assistant level 2, the activities guidance employee, the student/trainee care and the domestic service/cleaning employee. For all the mentioned functions, the tasks or the core function that the employees fulfill are the same among the organizations.

The first responsible caretaker has own clients for which he or she is responsible, and the employee who fulfills this function must not be exchanged during processes, continuity for the client must be assured. Exchanging a first responsible caretaker is only possible for a longer period. The employee has namely contact with the family of the client, the doctor, is responsible for the care plan and must know the specific problems of the client and must know the organization. The first responsible caretaker has followed the education for first responsible caretaker.

The caretaker is a function that is present at all the NoaberZorg organizations in huge numbers. The employees have followed an education and can work independently. Clearness about labor agreements is necessary. At the moment the caretakers have a different function appreciation, and it is indicated in the interviews that because of this it is possible that no willingness is present among the caretakers to be exchanged to the Noabers. Through the *Zorgzwaartepakketten* it is likely that at a certain moment the utilization of employees needs to be adjusted and is viewed as pleasant that the employees can work at another NoaberZorg organization.

The activities guidance employee has a group formation. The employees can work independently and have a determined expertise area. The capacity of the activities guidance employee makes it possible to work at another NoaberZorg organization. Organizing activities is business as usual for these employees. At Bruggerbosch the employees can reach a limit, because the dementia clients present at Bruggerbosch give less reaction than the clients present in the other NoaberZorg organizations. This makes exchanging the employees useful.

The assistant level 2 has followed an education, and has a clearly defined expertise domain. The tasks the employees fulfill the employees always do in recitation of the caretaker.

When a student/trainee care works in more small-scale organizations, the professionalism and the affinity with the culture of the organization will be more enhanced. The students/trainees are then broader employable, have more experience, and medical technical acts can better be learned in the organizations of the Noabers. Currently, not all medical technical acts that the students need to learn are present at Zorggroep Manna, for example probe feeding. For Bruggerbosch, the knowledge of the students in the somatic domain and the experience focused care: working at home by the clients, can be brushed up.

According to the interviewees of Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorggroep Manna the care vacation employee cannot be exchanged. Vacation employees are only working in the organization for a short period of time, and the care vacation employee needs all the time to get to know the organization. Making it more complex is not wise, because it is not efficient in terms of costs and productivity.

5.3.6 Differences among the healthcare functions analyzed across the organizations

The interviewees of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal found the social worker, care consultant and client advisor not exchangeable functions. The indicated reasons were that the care consultant is the view of Zorggroep Manna to the clients. The employee has much internal knowledge that is not taken over without a long period of time to master the function. It is possible that the employee walks along in another organization. At Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal the interviewees indicated that the client advisor is a new and solo function. The employee must know the organization, and the employee at Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal does not have an education in social work. The interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten indicated that it is possible to exchange the social worker.

The tasks of the social worker are the same among the organizations and all employees have followed a broad education in social work. The interviewees also indicated that exchanging the social worker must be decently organized, since the social worker is responsible for the input of the clients in the organization.

5.3.7 Operational functions analyzed across the organizations

Except for Zorggroep Manna, Table 30 reports that there are more functions in this category of which the workforce can be developed in the alliance than not.

The frequently mentioned reason of the interviewees of Zorggroep Manna not to exchange many operational functions is that the functions mentioned in the workforce architecture, except for the financial employee, the vacation employee, the volunteer and the receptionist, are solo functions, and cannot be exchanged in the association, because the continuity of the organization is not assured. The employees can walk along in another NoaberZorg organization with a focused task assignment. Other indicated reasons are that the function is a pivot function in the organization, for example the management assistant. The financial employees have a core task, and when the employees are exchanged the employees need a period to master the function. The system administrator is already posted in the collaboration and the catering employee working at Zorggroep Manna can be exchanged among the organizations with a focused practice assignment, since this is not a solo function, but has a group formation.

The following operational functions can according to the interviewees of Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal be exchanged among the organizations: the financial employee, the receptionist, the kitchen employee, the linen employee, the technical employee and the purchase employee.

The financial employee has specified tasks. When the systems differ among the organizations, the time to master the function is longer. When the employee works under supervision it is possible to exchange the employee for a short period of time. In contrast, the client administration employee can be exchanged only for a long period. The employee in this function has contact with clients, and it is not wise that the client every time is confronted with a different employee.

The purchasing employee and the receptionist have uniform tasks among the organizations. At the moment the purchasing employee is already exchanged among Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorggroep Manna.

The tasks are the same for the kitchen employee and the wash linen employee, and it is possible to learn from each other. Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten are the only two organizations in the collaboration that have an own kitchen. Just as the financial employee, the kitchen employee can be exchanged for a short period of time when the employee can work under supervision.

For the technical employee the quality level and the education level play a role, but the skill discretion must be present.

According to the interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten the internal advisor trainer/practice teacher, the warehouse employee, the pooler and the trainee administration can be exchanged.

The tasks of the internal advisor trainer/practice teacher are the same in every organization and the employees in this function need to work every time with new students and employees. Continuity is relevant and this means that during the guidance the employees must not be exchanged and persons of the same caliber must be exchanged.

For the trainee administration being exchanged has a view extended effect. The period must be long enough. The study and assignment determine if the trainee administration can be exchanged. Regarding the tasks of the warehouse employee, these are uniform. At Bruggerbosch the fixed employee cannot be missed, because then the organization has a problem. If the employee wants to work extra this is possible.

The poolers can be exchanged among the NoaberZorg organizations, especially in times of tightness. At the moment the poolers of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten work already in the different departments in the own organization, and the pool of Bruggerbosch has supported Zorggroep Manna in times of utilization problems.

Currently, the system administrator works at Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, and Zorggroep Manna. According to the interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal the system administrator is an exchangeable function.

The volunteer is a not exchangeable function according to the interviewees of all four organizations. The volunteer chooses specifically for an organization. It can be that the identity of the organization or the healthcare form are important for the volunteer. The risk of losing the volunteer is too large.

The vacation employee supportive function can also not be exchanged according to the interviewees of Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorggroep Manna. The function was not asked for at Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. The period is too short, the vacation employee chooses for a specific organization and the organization has enough work to offer in the vacation period.

5.3.8 Differences among the operational functions analyzed across the organizations

The planner internal care and the planner thuiszorg can be developed in the alliance according to the interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. It takes a long period of time to master the function and much knowledge is necessary of the employees e.g. the time the employees can work because of the family situation. A condition is that the other Noabers must have planners, and the way of planning must be the same. The other planners investigated in this study of Bruggerbosch (employee flex bureau), Zorgcentrum de Posten (the employee roster planning) and Zorggroep Manna (planner domestic care, the planner nursing and caring, the planner care) are according to the interviewees not exchangeable. The interviewees indicated that the other organizations do not have a flex bureau and that the employees can work at the Noabers in case of a career switch. The employee who fulfills the planning function has a solo function, and planning is an organization specific function. The organizations have own shift codes and systems and a part of the planning is performed by the supervisors. The employee that fulfills the planning function can walk along the Noabers.

The HR employee is exchangeable according to the interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten. The tasks the HR employee fulfills in the organization must be the same and the HR employee needs a long period of time to master the function and therefore can be exchanged for a long period of time. In case of knowledge sharing, exchanging the HR employee in each organization is possible for a short period. The HR employee of Bruggerbosch has supported the HR manager of Zorggroep Manna. The interviewees of Zorggroep Manna mentioned that the HR manager can walk along to enhance more knowledge, and the interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal indicated that it is a solo function, and that the HR managers in the organizations do not have the same position regarding strategic advice tasks.

The quality official is exchangeable according to the interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten. The employee needs a long period of time to master the function, and therefore can be exchanged only for a long period of time. The employee can also work in a project form. Some interviewees of Bruggerbosch indicated that the quality official is an important function in the organization and cannot be missed. The interviewees of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal mentioned that it is a solo function and the content of the function is different in the organizations. The function is suitable for knowledge exchange and the interviewees of Zorggroep Manna indicated that the quality official can be posted to the Noabers on a temporary basis during a vacancy.

The secretarial support employee is exchangeable according to the interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal and Bruggerbosch. The employee fulfills tasks that are common in every organization, and the employee works on the assignment of someone, and can be quickly employed at the Noabers. The interviewees mentioned also that secretarial support is a confidential function, and that the organization has put much effort in training the secretarial support employees. The secretarial support employees of Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorggroep Manna work for their managing director for a long period of time, and a reciprocal condition is built up between the secretaries and the managing director. The interviewees of the Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal indicated that on that level the information is confidential, the employees have a pivot function and much knowledge of the organization.

5.3.9 Overview of the exchangeability of the functions in the HR alliance NoaberZorg

Figure 4 provides an overview of the exchangeability of the functions in the HR alliance. When the interviewees of the four organizations had different opinions concerning the exchangeability of the function, see paragraph 5.3.6, 5.3.7 and 5.3.8. the function was not included in the overview.

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	Mf-1 Care manager
Hf-2 Assistant activities guidance employee	Mf-2 Day treatment manager
Hf-3 Assistant level 2	Mf-3 Department manager
Hf-4 Caretaker	Mf-4 Facilitating service manager
Hf-5 Cleaning employee/domestic service employee	Mf-5 HR manager
Hf-6 Caretaker in education in thuiszorg	Mf-6 Internal service manager
Hf-7 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)	Mf-7 Nutrition service manager
Hf-8 Ergo therapist	Mf-8 Technical service manager
Hf-9 Evening and night head employee	Mf-9 The economic and administrative service manager
Hf-10 First responsible caretaker	Mf-10 Care and nursing manager
Hf-11 Groups guidance day treatment employee	Mf-11 Controller
Hf-12 Music therapist	Mf-12 Manager social work
Hf-13 Nursing home doctor	Mf-13 Manager thuiszorg
Hf-14 Physiotherapist	Mf-14 Manager care & welfare
Hf-15 Psychologist	Mf-15 Manager finance, information and personnel
Hf-16 Student care	Mf-16 Manager internal care & facilitating
Hf-17 Trainee care	Mf-17 Manager thuiszorg & welfare
Hf-18 Nurse	Cf-1 Coordinator living
Hf-19 Employee day nursery suryoye	Cf-2 Coordinator training
Hf-20 First responsible nurse internal care	Cf-3 Coordinator volunteer work
Hf-21 Sleep watch employee	Cf-4 Coordinator Zeker Thuis Twente
Of-1 First cleaning employee	Cf-5 Coordinator relaxation
Of-2 Internal advisor trainer/practice teacher	Cf-6 Coordinator alpha team
Of-3 Kitchen employee	Cf-7 Coordinator internal care
Of-4 Purchase employee	Cf-8 Coordinator thuiszorg
Of-5 Restaurant employee	Tf-1 Team leader activities guidance
Of-6 System administrator	Tf-2 Team leader department
Of-7 Trainee administration	Tf-3 Team leader domestic service
Of-8 Transport employee	Tf-4 Team leader kitchen
Of-9 Pool director	Tf-5 Team leader restorative service
Of-10 Warehouse employee	Tf-6 Team leader thuiszorg
Of-11 AVR official	Tf-7 Team leader volunteers
Of-12 Communication advisor	Tf-8 Assistant team leader
Of-13 Dietician	Tf-9 Team leader elderly home
Of-14 Catering employee	Tf-10 Team leader facilitating
Of-15 Pooler	Tf-11 Team leader thuiszorg
	Tf-12 Supervisor internal care
	Tf-13 Supervisor welfare
	Hf-1 Facilitating care employee
	Hf-2 Nursing home doctor in education
	Hf-3 Pooler student assistant level 2
	Hf-4 Student assistant level 2
	Hf-5 Vacation employee care
	Hf-6 Living guide
	Of-1 Vacation employee supportive function
	Of-2 Volunteer
	Of-3 Assistant controller
	Of-4 Assistant facilitating service
	Of-5 WMO mediator

Figure 4: Workforce architecture NoaberZorg (Based on interview analysis)

Figure 4 shows that in the HR alliance NoaberZorg the managerial functions, coordinating functions and team leader functions are not exchangeable. In contrast, more healthcare functions and operational functions are exchangeable than not: 21:6, 15:5. In the four textboxes below quotes are presented that correspond to the mentioned reasons by the interviewees concerning the exchangeability of a function.

Managerial functions

“Solo function is harder, that is directly noticeable in the own organization. When you have a larger pool, it is easier to exchange than a solo function” (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

“I find the first six ordinary management team members that is not exchangeable, it are all independently unique functions...” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

Textbox 1: Responses of interviewees concerning the exchangeability of managerial functions

Coordinating/team leader functions

“You are head of a group. When you make a comparison, not every conductor can stand for the same choir” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

“I can generally say, how more employees there are of a certain function, the easier they can work at another organization, and master the function. When there are few, that is a general tendency, the function becomes more unique, that counts for management team members, for solo functions” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

Textbox 2: Responses of interviewees concerning the exchangeability of coordinating/team leader functions

Healthcare functions

“Very short through the bend, care and domestic employees are the most valuable for the organization for the client. These people contribute to the core task of the organization. While, I think these people exactly can be exchanged. Easier, and also as a salary administration, easier as a management team member, because a management team member has much knowledge about the organization” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

“Care is something that must be provided 24 hours a day, and I think that it is pretty easy, when you work here or somewhere else, the way of working, you need to wash or take care of someone is the same, there are many similarities in the working method” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

Textbox 3: Responses of interviewees concerning the exchangeability of healthcare functions

Operational functions

“When the tasks are the same that is possible (exchanging the function), because that are the practical things, that is the kitchen, restaurant, warehouse... that are practical things, also that of the caretaker is practical, but that concerns clients, and levels of people, but it is possible” (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

“I think that more that the shop floor, exchanging employees at the shop floor, that that is easier, than the more higher functions” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

Textbox 4: Responses of interviewees concerning the exchangeability of operational functions

5.3.10 Time needed to master function

For the functions of which the workforce can be developed in the alliance, Figure 5 provides an overview of the period of time the employee needs to master the function. In the interviews it was indicated that the time to master the function must be as short as possible and conditions must be determined to achieve this. When this is not the case, the productivity loss is larger, and in practice it will lead that no exchange takes place.

Short period of time to master the function	Long period of time to master the function
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	Hf-1 First caretaker
Hf-2 Assistant activities guidance employee	Hf-2 First responsible nurse internal care
Hf-3 Assistant level 2	Of-1 AVR official
Hf-4 Caretaker	Of-2 Internal advisor trainer/ Practice teacher
Hf-5 Cleaning employee/domestic service employee	Of-3 System administrator
Hf-6 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)	
Hf-7 Employee day nursery	
Hf-8 Evening and night head employee	
Hf-9 Groups guidance day treatment employee	
Hf-10 Sleep watch employee	
Hf-11 Ergo therapist	
Hf-12 Nursing home doctor	
Hf-13 Music therapist	
Hf-14 Physiotherapist	
Hf-15 Psychologist	
Of-1 Catering employee	
Of-2 Communication advisor	
Of-3 Dietician	
Of-4 Kitchen employee	
Of-5 Pool director	
Of-6 Purchase employee	
Of-7 Restaurant employee	
Of-8 Transport employee	
Of-9 Warehouse employee	

Figure 5: Time needed to master the details of the function (Based on interview analysis)

In Figure 5 the following functions of which the workforce can be developed in the alliance are missing: the trainee/student care, the caretaker in education in the thuiszorg, the nurse, and the first cleaning employee.

Trainees/students and the caretaker in education in the thuiszorg need to master the function in every organization. The period of time a first year student/trainee needs is longer than the period of time a student in the third year of the education needs. The trainees and students need to receive appropriate work guidance and document material must be present. The vision on the guidance of the students needs to be the same. For the nurse the time to master the function depends on the tasks the nurse must fulfill in the other organization: when the nurse must provide care to clients lying in bed the time to master the function is short, but when the nurse must coordinate the care of the client, a longer period to master the function is necessary. The first cleaning employee can according to the interviewees provide training to the other NoaberZorg organizations and therefore no time is needed to master the function.

Figure 5 shows that the time to master the function is for most healthcare functions analyzed in this study short. The tasks that the employee in a healthcare function needs to fulfill are the same among the organizations. The employee must get familiar with the vision of the organization on care, the procedures, the work processes, the cultural elements, the working method on how to treat the clients and the different categories of clients: somatic, psychic, dementia and Korsakov. For the first caretaker and the first responsible nurse internal care the time to master the function is longer. The employees in these two functions are responsible for own clients, need to coordinate the care of these clients, have contact with the family and the doctor of the clients, the employees, are responsible for the care plan of the clients, and must know the organization.

Regarding the operational functions, Figure 5 shows that for most operational functions the time to master the function is short. Again, the most frequently mentioned reason is that the tasks that the employee needs to fulfill are the same among the organizations, and the employee must know the procedures, work processes, and the cultural elements of the organization. The AVR official and the internal advisor trainer/practice teacher require a long period of time to master the function. The interviewees indicated that to fulfill these functions the employee must know the organization, the supervisors and the employees working in the organization. The system administrator needs time to master the different software packages in the organizations.

5.3.11 Time the workforce can be exchanged among the organizations

Figure 6 shows the period of time the workforce can be exchanged among the organizations.

Exchangeable functions for a short period of time	Exchangeable functions for a long period of time
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	Hf-1 Activities guidance employee
Hf-2 Assistant activities guidance employee	Hf-2 Assistant activities guidance employee
Hf-3 Assistant level 2	Hf-3 Assistant level 2
Hf-4 Caretaker	Hf-4 Caretaker
Hf-5 Caretaker in education in thuiszorg	Hf-5 Caretaker in education in thuiszorg
Hf-6 Cleaning employee/domestic service employee	Hf-6 Cleaning employee/domestic service employee
Hf-7 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)	Hf-7 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)
Hf-8 Evening and night head employee	Hf-8 Evening and night head employee
Hf-9 Groups guidance day treatment employee	Hf-9 First caretaker
Hf-10 Nurse	Hf-10 First nurse internal care
Hf-11 Sleep watch employee	Hf-11 Groups guidance day treatment employee
Hf-12 Student care	Hf-12 Nurse
Hf-13 Trainee care	Hf-13 Sleep watch employee
Of-1 Catering employee	Hf-14 Student care
Of-2 Communication advisor	Hf-15 Trainee care
Of-3 Dietician	Of-1 AVR official
Of-4 Kitchen employee	Of-2 Catering employee
Of-5 Purchase employee	Of-3 Communication advisor
Of-6 Restaurant employee	Of-4 Dietician
Of-7 Transport employee	Of-5 Internal advisor trainer/practice teacher
Of-8 Warehouse employee	Of-6 Kitchen employee
	Of-7 Purchase employee
	Of-8 Restaurant employee
	Of-9 System administrator
	Of-10 Trainee administration
	Of-11 Transport employee
	Of-12 Warehouse employee

Figure 6: The period of time the workforce can be exchanged among the organizations (based on interviews)

Figure 6 shows that when the time to master the function is long, the employees can only be exchanged for a long period. When the time to learn the ropes is short, the workforce can be exchanged for a short and long period.

For the clients the interviewees prefer that the workforce who fulfills the healthcare functions are exchanged to the Noabers for a long period. Clients get familiar with the employees, and built a trusting relationship with the employees, so it is not wise to change that very often, the clients get confused and disoriented.

5.3.12 Reflection

Based on Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6 and the literature used in this case study, the workforce architecture can be developed based on the research framework depicted in Figure 3 of this study.

The value of the workforce is the ratio of strategic benefits an employee provides to customers, derived from skills, relative to the costs incurred in managing and retaining the employees with these skills (Lepak, Snell, 1999). The interviewees indicated that every employee in the organization scores high on the strategic determinant value. When the ratio of strategic benefits an employee provides to customers, relative to the costs incurred in managing and retaining the employees with these skills is low, the employee is not employed in the organization, since the organization has discretion over the employees employed in the organization. The interviewees indicated that when an employee scores low on the strategic determinant value, it means that the employee is not valuable to the organization, and may even have a negative influence on the organization.

Uniqueness is the degree to which an employee has firm specific skills, that are not readily available in the labor market (Lepak, Snell, 1999). When an employee possesses firm specific skills and the employee leaves the organization, the organization is confronted with heavy replacements costs to hire and train a new employee who can perform at the same level as the employee who leaves the organization, because firm specific skills are not widely available in the external labor market (Williamson et al, 1975, Pfeffer, Cohen, 1984, Becker, 1962, Barney, 1991, Williamson, 1981, Lado, Wilson, 1984). When the interviewees indicated that a short period of time was needed to master the function, the degree of firm specific skills needed in the function was low, and when a long period of time was needed to master the function, the degree of firm specific skills needed in the function was high.

Information asymmetry arises when an employee possesses information that the other organizations do not possess. When an employee scores low on the strategic determinant uniqueness, in other words has few firm specific skills, the degree of information asymmetry is low. The employee has general skills, that are mostly received from an education, and the employees have a determined expertise area.

Except for the managerial functions, the other functions that are viewed as not exchangeable according to the interviewees, see Figure 4 of this study, are not presented in the workforce architecture of NoaberZorg. When the interviewees namely found a function not exchangeable, no further questions were asked concerning the time the employee needs to master the function and the period of time the employee could be exchanged. The consequence is that for these functions it was not possible to determine the strategic determinant uniqueness.

For the managerial functions a long period of time is needed to master the function. A manager possesses firm specific skills and is involved in the strategic policy determination of the organization. It was indicated by the interviewees that some managers are qualitatively stronger, than the managers employed at the other NoaberZorg organizations, and that the organization would lose more, than it will receive, when the managers are exchanged. In other words, the fact that a manager possesses information asymmetry in the form of being qualitatively stronger and having more experience than another manager, makes the organization reluctant to exchange the manager, since the organization has discretion over the manager and can determine if the manager can be exchanged.

The workforce architecture of NoaberZorg is depicted in Figure 7.

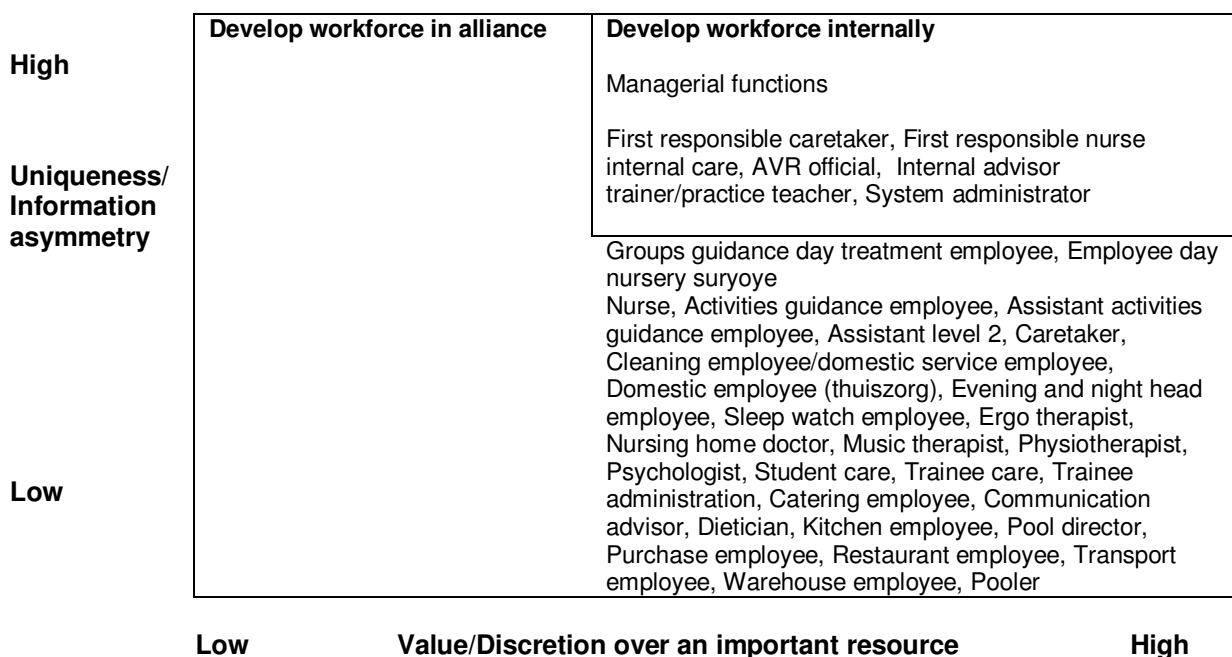


Figure 7: Workforce architecture NoaberZorg

5.4 Architecture of the HR policies/practices in the HR alliance NoaberZorg

The HR policies/practices analyzed in this study are first discussed per organization. Subsequently, for every HR policy/practice the HR architecture is determined. Paragraph 5.4.15 reflects on the HR policies/practices architecture for the HR alliance NoaberZorg.

5.4.1 Recruitment and selection

Bruggerbosch

The NoaberZorg organizations should mould themselves individually. Being employed at Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal is not the same. Every organization has its own cultural aspects and client categories. People may have a preference for a specific NoaberZorg organization, and do not want to be taken into considering by another NoaberZorg organization. During the recruitment and selection procedure the possibilities that the employees have at the Noabers must be mentioned, to take a broader retinue over the labor market. Selection is an organization specific activity because the HR manager must determine which employee fits with regard to his or her character better to the culture of the organization. Combination vacancies and publishing the vacancies on the intranet of every organization are two options that were mentioned by the interviewees to collaborate in the HR practice recruitment and selection. When there is a vacancy the Noabers can contact each other to see if potential talent is employed in the organizations.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

Recruitment and selection is an organization specific HR practice.

“So when you are doing recruitment together, and when for example one HR manager does the recruitment and carries out all the conversations, then I cannot imagine that he has enough insight in the culture and working method, and the informal environment of de Posten, to do the recruitment, when he is someone of Bruggerbosch, and the other way around also” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

It is possible to ask the NoaberZorg organizations when there is a vacancy if the Noabers have employees that are suited for the function. One interviewee indicated that for offering assessments price agreements can be made with an agency, or with the organization Wegener for the vacancies that are published in the newspaper was indicated by another interviewee.

Zorggroep Manna

The HR practice recruitment and selection is specifically adjusted to Zorggroep Manna. The Christian identity of the organization and the client council play a more prominent role in the recruitment and selection procedures than in the other organizations. One interviewee indicated that it is an idea to jointly make a website were only the vacancies of the Noabers are mentioned. The organizations are at this website approached individually.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Recruitment and selection is an organization specific HR practice. Small-scale must be in the centre of interest in the recruitment of future employees. When there is a vacancy the Noabers can look in each others portfolio. Employees who are not selected at one NoaberZorg organization, can be referred to the other Noabers and combination vacancies are a possibility.

HR architecture

Recruitment and selection is considered by the interviewees of the four organizations, as an organization specific HR practice. It is possible to collaborate in this domain in the operational execution of the HR practice, like referring employees to each other, contacting each other for potential talent, combination vacancies, publishing vacancies on the intranet/internet, and making price agreements with assessment centers and advertisements companies. During the recruitment and selection procedure the possibilities that the employees have at the Noabers must be mentioned, to take a broader retinue over the labor market.

5.4.2 Labor agreements

Bruggerbosch

The labor agreements are for a part determined by the collective labor agreements. Currently, the Noabers are busy with a labor agreements route with the company councils to make agreements in the sphere of the secondary and tertiary labor agreements, in order to be distinct for employees. The Noabers need to compete on cultural aspects, and not on labor agreements, these need to be adjusted to each other as much as possible.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

The labor agreements are for a part determined by the collective labor agreements, and need to be univocal as soon as possible.

"I find that (the labor agreements) must be univocal as soon as possible. Because I think that when we as Noabers want to offer a distinct package as employers, as combined employers, the reward policy must be reasonable the same" (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

Zorggroep Manna

At the moment the Noabers are busy with the labor agreements route with the company councils to offer a collective package to the employees. When the labor agreements are equal it is possible to exchange employees. This is viewed as an extra form of collaboration.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Currently, the Noabers are busy with the labor agreements together with the company councils to be an attractive employer and not to be competitors of each other. The caretakers who are employed in the four organizations do not have the same function appreciation. When the organizations want to exchange employees, the labor agreements must be univocal.

HR architecture

The labor agreements are not organization specific. The labor agreements are determined for a part by the collective labor agreements, and it is possible to collaborate in determining the secondary and tertiary labor agreements. Interviewees indicated that the labor agreements must be univocal when employees are exchanged among the organizations.

5.4.3 Attention policy

Bruggerbosch

The attention policy is organization specific and the culture of the organization plays a role.

"Every organization gives that form on his or her own way, such as best fits there" (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

When an employee works for a couple of years at the organization and receives a certain amount of money as a bonus, that can be adjusted in the association.

Zorggroep Manna

The attention policy is organization specific. In the labor agreements the same line can be followed, for example what an employee receives when the employee is employed for a certain amount of years at the organization, but there are also organization specific elements to be distinguished in the attention policy, for example Christmas gifts that the employees receive. One HR manager can investigate if the labor agreements follow the same line.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

The attention policy is organization specific.

"I would not do that, because you carry out your own organization with this policy" (Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

The attention policy can partly be adjusted, with a personal touch of every organization.

HR architecture

The attention policy is organization specific. In the execution of the attention policy some adjustments can be made, especially about the amount of money an employee receives when his or her jubilee is celebrated.

5.4.4 Introduction policy

Bruggerbosch

The introduction policy of every organization will differ, and is considered by the interviewees organization specific. Employees are introduced in a separate organization. Every Noaber can tell the same in the introduction period to the employees what NoaberZorg means in the form of concrete examples and the procedure that an employee needs to follow to master the function can as much as possible be adjusted to each other.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

The introduction policy is organization specific. Every organization wants to communicate in the introduction period the specific characteristics of the organization to the employees. The part about what NoaberZorg is and what it means to work in the healthcare sector can be combined. Making a map together that is given to the employees in the introduction period is possible, but there will be a different translation of the map per organization.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

The introduction policy must be adjusted to the own organization. In the introduction period attention can be paid to what NoaberZorg means.

HR architecture

The introduction policy is viewed as organization specific by the interviewees. In the operational execution of the introduction policy some adjustments can be made: the part in the introduction period about what NoaberZorg means and what it means to work in the healthcare can be the same, procedures to master the function can be similar as much as possible, and some adjustments can be made in the map the employee receives in the introduction period.

5.4.5 Trainee policy

Bruggerbosch

The trainee policy can be combined in the NoaberZorg association.

“You can indicate that someone at the NoaberZorg partners actually can follow the complete breath of the trainee package in especially healthcare functions, because de Posten and Manna have an own thuiszorg organization, so there a traineeship is possible, and we have elderly people’s home care and nursing home care, so there you can provide the package that most caretakers need. Only for HBO studies, the hospital care is missing, that we cannot provide” (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

The Noabers can create together a traineeship, that the individual NoaberZorg organizations cannot offer by themselves and a combined trainee policy can lower the instinctive barrier of the employee to work in another NoaberZorg organization, when the employee has followed a traineeship at the other NoaberZorg organization.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

On the domain of the trainee policy the Noabers can collaborate.

“I think we can take that up together, because when you talk about a NoaberZorg broad trainee policy, that will have a positive radiation on the education institutions, were every organization has to deal with, what can also have a positive radiation on our future employees. There, I think the first communication starts” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

Trainees can be exchanged in the association. On the domain of rewards, working time and which responsibilities a first year student can bear, the NoaberZorg partners can collaborate. Concerning, what the trainees need to learn, some competences can better be learned in one NoaberZorg partner

than at another. The procedures the trainees need to follow can be the same, and the education institutions have clear requirements for traineeships.

Zorggroep Manna

On the domain of the trainee policy the Noabers can collaborate.

“Maybe an exchange trainee period can be developed, but then you must have a long trainee period of at least half a year, that you work three months here and three months at de Posten, maybe that can be nicely combined” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna.)

“I will find that very important, in the scope of horizontal career development” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

When a trainee period starts for half a year, the trainees can be schooled one or two days in the association. The practice assignment that the trainees need to execute, cannot all be executed at Zorggroep Manna, because some medical technical acts are not present in the elderly people’s home: probe feeding and stomas. These assignments can be executed at the Noabers.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Collaborating in the trainee policy is possible.

“In my opinion you can take that broader, it must be possible to exchange people to make it more attractive, execute a broader policy” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

For trainees it can be the distance between Oldenzaal and Enschede, but that the trainees must overcome. Attracting and guiding trainees can in the NoaberZorg organizations be executed in the same manner, and the labor agreements for the trainees can be the same in NoaberZorg.

HR architecture

The trainee policy is not regarded as organization specific and the Noabers can collaborate in this HR policy. When the organizations make use of a NoaberZorg broad trainee policy, the organizations can offer traineeships in the complete breath of the trainee package in the healthcare functions, which has a positive radiation on the education institutions, future employees and is relevant in the scope of horizontal career development. The instinctive barrier of the employee to work in another NoaberZorg organization is lowered due traineeships. In the operational execution in the domain of the rewards, working time, the responsibilities of a trainee, schooling and learning competences the Noabers can collaborate. The same applies for attracting and guiding trainees. Requirements are provided by the education institutions concerning the traineeships.

5.4.6 Function description and function appreciation

Bruggerbosch

There are specific functions to be distinguished in a nursing home, like the nursing home doctor, the ergo therapist, and the music therapist. The elderly people’s homes and the nursing homes in this study have functions that are present in every organization. When these employees get a uniform function description, posting and exchanging these employees will be easier. An organization can choose for a different function description, but it is relevant that the function appreciation is insightful.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

In the basis some functions, especially operational functions, can be determined together.

“In the basis they can be determined together, every organization has some specific characteristics that you want to put into the function, that is possible, but I think the content when you are a caretaker here or at Bruggerbosch, that the content is approximately the same, I think.” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

When the function description is univocal, exchanging employees is easier, because the tasks are the same. The function appreciation is currently looked at in the NoaberZorg association, also to prevent mutual competitiveness.

Zorggroep Manna

When employees have the same tasks the function appreciation must also be the same, according to the interviewees. Otherwise there is mutual competition present and that is not reasonable. At the moment the caretakers of the four organizations do not have the same function appreciation. In the supportive functions there is a difference to be discerned in the numbers of employees employed in the organization. At Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten more employees are employed than at Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. The result is that the function appreciation has different weighed domains. The same function appreciation enhances the exchangeability of the employees. In the operational functions where the tasks are more the same, the same function appreciation is useful. One of the Noabers can be the hamper tragger in this domain.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

The Noabers can look at how detailed a function is described and what appreciation the function has. The function description must be a representation of the own organization. When the organizations expect the same of the caretakers, than it is possible to have the same function description and appreciation.

HR architecture

The function description and function appreciation is partly organization specific. The function description and function appreciation must be a representation of the own organization, some functions are not present in all the NoaberZorg organizations, but making adjustments in the function description and function appreciation is viewed as useful in the framework of exchanging employees.

5.4.7 Training policy

Bruggerbosch

The Noabers can compare the training policy of each organization. Clearness is needed on which training/courses are wished for, necessary and which training/courses can be combined in the NoaberZorg association: HACCP, in-house emergency and first-aid service, and work guidance. Bruggerbosch has a schooling carousel where employees of the organization can enroll to keep up their knowledge. An interviewee indicated that this concept can decently be translated to NoaberZorg.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

On the domain of the training policy it is possible to collaborate.

"I find that exceptionally one of the suited cases that you certainly in the NoaberZorg association, maybe you need to speak of the NoaberZorg school, or academy. We now have approximately four schools or academies, in which everyone does his own story, everyone has its own training coordinator, makes its own rosters, regulates the own training, makes agreements with ROC and HBO and other institutions, why would you not offer that as one organization, saying that you contribute and take away at the extent of your budget" (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

Depending on the development of the organization there are specific courses/trainings to be distinguished in every organization. However, there are also courses/trainings relevant for all organizations, and these can be combined. The organizations can make more use of the knowledge of each other, for example a course dementia that is organized by Bruggerbosch.

Zorggroep Manna

Training needs to be grafted on the strength and weaknesses of the own organization. To follow a training there always must be a relation with Zorggroep Manna and the policy plans of the organization. It is possible to jointly organize courses or let another NoaberZorg organization give a clinical lesson.

"Actually the employees do the same job, the execution is somewhat different, but the same knowledge is necessary" (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

It is viewed as useful when the training officials of Zorggroep Manna, Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten have more contact with each other, because the organizations have too much the inclination to discover everything themselves. More profit can be made of each other by exchanging

information and holding meetings. For example about the responsibility of the supervisor in the scope of the Manna Academy, what kind of assignments must be made, how schooling is organized. Also on the administrative domain: content of a file, the Noabers can mean something for each other.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

For the training policy there must be a relation with the strategic policy plan of the organization. The other NoaberZorg organizations can have another strategic policy plan. When the courses fit into the strategic policy plan it is possible to jointly organize that with the Noabers like a lift and first care taker course. Together the organizations can look at the grants that can be gained on the domain of training.

HR architecture

The training policy is organization specific. Interviewees of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal indicated that there must be a relation with the strategic policy plan of the organization. The training policy must help the organization achieves its objectives. In the execution of the training policy in the forms of courses and obtaining grants, the Noabers can collaborate. This can reduce the transaction costs for the training, and in addition the organizations pool together resources when employees give clinical lessons to each other, and work together at the operational level of the training policy so that the organizations do not have to discover everything themselves.

5.4.8 Investors in People

Bruggerbosch

On the domain of investors in people the Noabers can learn from each other. Every individual organization has its own improvements points.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

The main aspects and the improvement aspects of Investors in People are personally for every organization.

“You can look what the others are doing, but it must be your own process, it is about making improvements and that means that you must be busy with it yourself and not copy something” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

HR architecture

The route of investors in people is organization specific, every organization has own improvement points.

5.4.9 Personal development plan

Bruggerbosch

The format of the personal development plan can be exchanged among the Noabers. It is viewed as useful to be univocal in the personal development plan. When the employees are exchanged to another organization of the Noabers and the employees need to get used to a different personal development plan that is not productive.

Zorggroep Manna

The personal development plan is linked to the Manna Academy and cannot be developed separately. It is possible to look if the Noabers can develop a form that is so pragmatically as possible.

HR architecture

The personal development plan is partly organization specific. If one personal development plan is made, the exchangeability of employees will be easier since the employees do not have to get used to a different personal development plan.

5.4.10 Function conversation

Bruggerbosch

The format of the function conversation can be exchanged among the Noabers. There are specific elements to be distinguished in the function conversation. A caretaker at Bruggerbosch can indicate that he or she wants to become a coordinator living, and that is function not present at the other Noabers.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

The appraisal and function policy is adjusted to Zorgcentrum de Posten and delegated to the supervisors.

Zorggroep Manna

The function conversation is linked to the Manna Academy and cannot be developed separately. It is possible to look if the Noabers can develop a form that is so pragmatically as possible.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

The format of the function conversation can be exchanged among the organizations.

HR architecture

The function conversation is partly organization specific. The Noabers can develop one function conversation method.

5.4.11 Guidance route employee (reintegration)

Bruggerbosch

The put in of the guidance route of an employee must be the same at every NoaberZorg organization. Employees that need to do reintegration can do this at the Noabers. An interviewee indicated that the possibilities to make agreements with bureaus that have people that need to follow a reintegration route can be investigated.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

On the domain of reintegration policy the Noabers can collaborate. Exploiting the opportunities for employees that need to do reintegration, can be improved in the NoaberZorg association. Together the Noabers are a much larger organization and information can be exchanged.

"I think that there the profit lies in the NoaberZorg association. Certainly when you talk about reintegration for example, I think that reintegrating employees in each others organizations can be much better and more utilized. That we see more the possibilities of the other organizations to temporary reintegrate employees. We look I think too much in our own organization, where an employee can temporary do his job, that is sometimes a whole search. I think that we earlier need to ring a bell to our colleague institutions and say can someone work temporary for two months in your organization" (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

Zorggroep Manna

To collaborate on the domain of the guidance route the vision on guidance must be the same. The organizations can learn how a guidance route must be approached and per employee the possibilities for reintegration must be investigated. It is viewed as important that the employee gets to work as soon as possible and if that is possible in another organization, because the function that the employee originally has the employee cannot fulfill in Zorggroep Manna than this is possible.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

For the collaboration on the domain of reintegration a financial incentive is present. The four organizations are risk barrier of the WGA and when the organization finds no place for the employee for reintegration, the organization pays a payment to the employee for ten years.

HR architecture

The HR practice guidance route employee (reintegration) is partly organization specific. There is a clear financial incentive to pool the resources together and collaboration is possible when the vision on guidance is the same.

5.4.12 Safety, health and welfare policy

Bruggerbosch

All Noabers face the same legislation. Exchanging documents is possible. In the safety, health and welfare policy building aspects play a role. The courses that are needed in the domain of the safety, health and welfare policy can be combined in the NoaberZorg association.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

On the domain of safety, health and welfare policy the Noabers can collaborate. All the Noabers need to follow the safety, health and welfare legislation, and activities in the scope to work ergonomic and healthy need to be executed in every organization. The Noabers can learn from each other and bundle the knowledge by exchanging information on the domain of the safety, health and welfare policy.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

On the domain of safety, health and welfare policy it is possible to collaborate in the NoaberZorg association. The courses that need to be followed in the scope of the safety, health and welfare policy, for example a lift course can the Noabers organize together. Collaborating can provide Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal with a broader expertise on the domain of the safety, health and welfare policy.

HR architecture

The safety, health and welfare policy is partly organization specific. The building aspects of each NoaberZorg organization play a role. Collaboration is possible on the courses that need to be followed and exchanging information on the domain of the safety, health and welfare policy.

5.4.13 Absenteeism policy

Bruggerbosch

The culture plays a role in the absenteeism policy. On the domain of the absenteeism policy collaboration is possible when there is a clear financial benefit. The Noabers are according to one interviewee on an acceptable absenteeism level, and one percentage absenteeism costs a lot of money on a yearly basis.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

The absenteeism policy is in the execution bound to the organization and to the supervisors and the culture plays a role. Since Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has a low absenteeism level it is indicated that Zorgcentrum de Posten can learn in this domain from Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal. In the absenteeism policy organization specific javelin points are to be distinguished. Zorgcentrum de Posten focuses attention on the medium period of absenteeism and prevention.

Zorggroep Manna

On the domain of the absenteeism policy the Noabers can learn from each other. It must be prevented that employees get sick and therefore labor agreements, nice regulations, and that people enjoy their work is important. Information can be exchanged on the domain of how do you monitor the absenteeism policy in the right manner and which safety, health and welfare service is contracted.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

On the domain of the absenteeism policy the cultural aspects of the organization play a role. Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has a low absenteeism level, were the Noabers maybe can learn from.

HR architecture

The absenteeism policy is partly organization specific. The culture of the organization plays a role, and every organization has own javelin points. In the execution the absenteeism policy is bound to the supervisors. There must be a financial benefit to collaborate, and information exchange is possible on the absenteeism policy domain to learn from each other.

5.4.14 Exit interview

Bruggerbosch

The format of the exit interview can be exchanged among the Noabers. It is relevant to know why people leave NoaberZorg. When necessary a policy plan can be made by the Noabers.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

The format of the exit interview can be exchanged among the Noabers. It can be used as a benchmark figure.

Zorggroep Manna

The format can be exchanged. The results of the exit interview are organization specific.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

The format of the exit interview can be exchanged among the NoaberZorg organizations and the results of the exit interview can be compared.

HR architecture

The exit interview is partly organization specific. The results can according to some interviewees be benchmarked, other consider the results organization specific. The format of the exit interview can be the same.

5.4.15 Reflection

It is not possible to portray the HR policies/practices architecture of NoaberZorg. During the interviews, the interviewees made no comments concerning the ability of an HR policy/practice to help the organization achieve its objectives and no reasons were mentioned regarding the benefits derived from a particular HR policy/practice relative to the costs associated with the deployment of the HR policy/practice (Lepak, Snell, 1998). The interviewees of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal only indicated that for collaboration in the training policy there must be relation with the strategic policy plan of the organization. For the other 13 investigated HR policies/practices no such comments were mentioned. A possible explanation is that when organizations in an alliance decide to collaborate in an HR policy/practice the interviewees look for the advantages that are achieved when the resources are pooled together. This study has namely found that the resource based perspective can be used to explain the formation of an HR alliance.

Concerning the uniqueness of the HR policy/practice, this case study found a remarkable result. Although the interviewees considered the HR practices recruitment and selection, function description and appreciation, the personal development plan, the function conversation, the exit interview, and the following HR policies, the guidance route (reintegration), the attention policy, the introduction policy, the training policy, the safety health and welfare policy, the absenteeism policy, and the exit interview (partly) organization specific, collaboration was possible in the operational execution of these HR policies/practices. This means that although an HR policy/practice is viewed as organization specific there are activities in the HR policy/practice where collaboration is possible. The labor agreements and trainee policy were considered as not organization specific, and as expected collaboration was possible in the execution of the labor agreements and trainee policy.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal possesses in the execution of the absenteeism policy information asymmetry compared to the other NoaberZorg organizations. Since, Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has discretion over the absenteeism policy, the organization can decide that the organization wants to share the knowledge about this policy with the Noabers or not. The interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal indicated that the organization can mean something for the Noabers in the execution of the absenteeism policy. This means that the organization is not reluctant to share the knowledge about this HR policy, over which the organization has much discretion, with another organization. The same applies for Bruggerbosch. Bruggerbosch has a historical advantage in the domain of the training policy, and wants to share the knowledge with the other Noabers.

The interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal further indicated that in the domain of the safety, health and welfare policy, collaboration makes it possible for Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal to become broader in the domain of this policy. In paragraph 2.2.2 of this study, it was already indicated that collaborating in

HR policies/practices makes it possible for the organization to specialize in the HR policies/practices in which the organization excels, and the organization can share the expertise about the HR policies/practices with the other organizations in the alliance. In the HR policies/practices in which the organization does not excel it is possible for the organization to collaborate with other organizations in the alliance who excel in the HR policies/practices. This is also what the interviewees in this study indicated as possibilities. Through exchanging information the HR managers can become more profound in their knowledge.

5.5 Internal labor market

The interviewees of the four organizations indicated in the interviews that the exchange of employees in the association of NoaberZorg has not occurred very often. An overview of the exchanged/posted employees in the NoaberZorg association can be found in Appendix 12.

Except for an evening and night head employee of Bruggerbosch, who has become a team leader at Zorggroep Manna, the interviewees indicated that the employees have not made promotion in another NoaberZorg organization. In the association, there are opportunities present for promotion. For example when a caretaker of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal wants to become a nurse, there are no possibilities present for the caretaker at Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal, but at Zorgcentrum de Posten nurses are employed and maybe the caretaker can be promoted to Zorgcentrum de Posten.

Since employees costs are the largest expenses of an organization in the healthcare sector all Noabers look sharp to which employees are mentioned on the remuneration list. The formations are adjusted to the organization, and it gets more difficult to have sufficient buffer to provide a solution for the bottlenecks in the personnel utilization during holidays and periods of absenteeism.

“When I look to who we have employed, and that will be the same at the other organizations, the contracts the employees have, the hours are fulfilled, and that we rather have a shortage than a surplus of employees. Through this shortage it is difficult to employ employees flexible. You notice that now too. Our (function) was with (...) than you ask the other organizations do you have someone for a month or three months, and than one or two weeks later you hear sorry we are also full, we cannot do it. The pursuit is very nice, but the flexibility is there insufficiently. Not because it is consciously I think, but that’s the way it goes” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

Indicated is that the Noabers now hire employment agencies for activities that the Noabers can jointly organize by developing a flexpool. An organization has a flexpool to be able to employ employees flexible when the organizations needs them. At the same time there is a implicit policy, to do this as less as possible, because the organization wants to have fixed teams working for the clients. When a pooler is employed not enough times, the pooler can have no desire in being a pooler.

Developing a flexpool together has several advantages. The extra costs that need to be paid to the employment agency do not longer apply, the employees can master the job and be familiar with the situation and the clients of the organization, and that works more efficiently. When a temporary employee is employed in the organization, the client has loss of quality.

“The temporary employee does not know that Mr. has died, does not know that the daughter is divorced, so the clients always are the victim of this” (Interviewee Zorgcentrum de Posten).

It is considered difficult to preserve employees with a zero hours contract, because the employees are offered contracts for a fixed amount of hours at other organizations. When a flexpool is developed the employees can be offered a contract in the flexpool. However, the largest danger is that when the organization posts an employee to another organization, the organization can be viewed as an employment agency and must be VAT and that is an expensive matter.

According to the interviewees the flexpool can contain domestic employees, assistant level 2, caretakers and nurses. It is notified that in the healthcare functions shortages will be developed, and the mentioned employees need a short time to master the function, see Figure 5 in this study and are part of the workforce architecture depicted in Figure 7 of this study.

5.6 External labor market

In paragraph 5.6.1 the responses of the organizations to the expected labor shortages is discussed and paragraph 5.6.2 elaborates about the possibilities of collaborating in attracting employees.

5.6.1 Responses to the expected labor shortages

Bruggerbosch

The interview analysis showed that because of the *kredietcrisis* the interviewees expect that the supply of employees is changing. The healthcare sector is again viewed as a reliable employer and the expectation is that the organization is confronted with employees that will spontaneously apply for a job. Since, these people are unqualified, they need to be trained.

Bruggerbosch has several ways to react on the 'expected' labor shortages:

- Being known/familiar at schools.
- The name of Bruggerbosch.
- The volunteer policy and trainee policy are in a way arranged that people feel welcome and talk that through.
- Offering volunteers a training, so that the volunteers can participate in the labor process.
- In the past: adult education.
- Through internal moving up/training get people on the desired level.
- Agreements to train 10 people who keep their payment fees.
- Contacts with organizations to respond to immigrants.

Zorgcentrum de Posten

The interviewees indicated that because of the bad economy there is a pour in of employees in the direction of healthcare and education, because these two sectors are likely to offer more guaranties.

Zorgcentrum de Posten has several ways to respond to the 'expected' labor shortages:

- The name of Zorgcentrum de Posten.
- Recognition as a trainee organization.
- Project 'color' in the healthcare sector.
- Providing a reward when a caretaker employs a new caretaker.
- Attention is paid on how to work smarter.
- Offer training places for young employees and preserve the employees for the future.
- Lower levels of employees move up to assistant level 2, caretaker, nurse or level 5.
- The organization tries to develop it's own cultivate angle.

Zorggroep Manna

In the interviews it was mentioned that because of the economic situation the shortages will turn out better than expected. Especially people who have always wanted to be employed in the healthcare sector are expected to apply for a job. It is mentioned that people do not easily change jobs when being employed in the healthcare sector.

Zorggroep Manna has several ways to respond to the 'expected' labor shortages:

- Proactive anticipate in projects: being mentioned in the newspaper.
- Actively advertise.
- Actively look in churches and rank and file for employees.
- Offer employees the possibility to move up in the organization: from domestic employee to caretaker for example.

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal has several ways to respond to the 'expected' labor shortages:

- Providing employees moving up possibilities.
- Best employer award 2007.
- Change the recruitment and selection policy.
- Trainee policy: provide young employees a zero hours contract and offer them the option to be employed in the holidays.
- Employees who employ a new employee receive a reward.

5.6.2 Collaborating in attracting employees

The NoaberZorg organizations have agreed to publish the vacancies internally at every NoaberZorg organization, and the layout of the vacancies are adjusted to each other. Currently, the Noabers do not collaborate in attracting employees.

“I believe this has happened with a combination function, I think with the purchase facilitating service between Bruggerbosch and de Posten, further actually not at the moment.” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

The interviewees of the four organizations indicated that it is possible to collaborate in attracting employees.

“They should have a good picture on which target groups do we focus as NoaberZorg organization and as Noabers, and when you set a structural policy on this, and undertake focused action, then you are one stroke ahead of the others, because the problems comes with the shortage” (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

When an extension of a couple of hours is necessary, the Noabers can contact each other and find out of the other Noabers also need employees in the same domain, so that one vacancy can be published. It must be mentioned that in practice, this has not achieved many results.

The agreement Bruggerbosch has with the municipality to train 10 people who keep their payment fees can also be extended to the NoaberZorg association. This has an advantage:

“The advantage of this construction is that you have employees for one year, what costs you guidance costs, it costs you guidance, but it costs you no salary and that means per definition for me that there is added value. When those people are taking out of the healthcare today, they have a huge problem in the healthcare” (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

In the future the labor market must be manipulated, schools must be visited to provide people with an incentive to work in the healthcare and new target groups of employees must be attracted, because the organization is confronted with clients of different nationalities. The career possibilities that the employees have in the NoaberZorg organizations can be more emphasized.

“When you work at Bruggerbosch, you have at the same time the possibility to move up into the direction of one of the others” (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

The shortages of employees can be solved in the NoaberZorg organization, when the flexpool is used.

“So let people flow into the pool and in that scope the employees can move up” (Interviewee Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal).

The time to master the job for the employees that are attracted can be jointly taken up. This means that the employees during a year learn the ropes in the four organizations and then are placed at Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten, Zorggroep Manna, Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal or a combination of the organizations.

However, the organizations are still a little bit competitors of each other, employees often choose for a specific organization to be employed, and not all organizations have the same functions, for example Bruggerbosch has no thuiszorg. A comment from an interviewee:

“In that sense the healthcare sector must work very hard on its image, and inside the healthcare sector NoaberZorg must specifically profile itself, it is nice in the healthcare, more nicer in NoaberZorg, and even more nicer at (name organization)” (Confidential quote interviewee).

5.6.2.1 Various population groups

For attracting various population groups there must be a relation with the client target group and the policy of the organization. It is viewed as an attractive thought to jointly attract these employees.

Bruggerbosch gradually gets clients who are not born in the Netherlands, and do not have Dutch as their first language. The second generation immigrants have Dutch as a second language, and that disappears with dementia. It is indicated that every population group has its own communication treatment and in the representation of healthcare in the culture of the various populations groups especially the Turks and Moroccans, the Noabers can collaborate together.

5.6.2.2 Unemployed

The Noabers can talk together with the municipalities of Enschede and Oldenzaal to get a larger continent of unemployed people, was indicated by one interviewee. NoaberZorg has more budget and labor places, and then the organizations are a different conversation partner.

However, before the economic crisis had manifested itself, the people who were available in the labor market, were on average more difficult employable, and not always capable to represent the organization and deliver care. Other interviewees indicated that some unemployed people do not reach the level that is needed to provide good care.

“You can possible organize hands at the bed, but that these hands have insufficient insight to keep the healthcare qualitatively good. Look having hands at the bed is a much lesser problem, than having qualified hands at the bed” (Interviewee Bruggerbosch).

The unemployed people who follow a project like a work experience place mostly stay in the unqualified labor, according to interviewees of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal and getting these people trained to level 2 is very difficult. In addition, the employers association Zorg en Welzijn Oost-Nederland indicates that people who are looking for a job in the healthcare sector do not always possess the right competences and motivations and need a long route of training before the employees are employable (De Twentsche Courant Tubantia, 2009).

An advantage of unemployed people is that these people often provide the organization with grants and one HR manager can investigate how the grants can optimally be used.

“If one person would be busy in looking how the grants can optimally be used. If only person needs to invent the wheel, than that is an advantage” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

The Noabers can collaborate in people who have few or no education. When people deliver domestic care and are not educated for it, the employees can learn some basic principles.

5.6.2.3 New advent employees

Concerning the new advent employees the reactions of the interviewees were different. Some interviewees indicated that with attracting this group the financial situation plays a role, since there are mostly no financial resources behind this group of employees. Other interviewees consider the nieuwe intreders a new group:

“It is actually a new group. In the past it was said, you place an advertisement, you are searching for a caretaker, so you look for people who have followed that study, or who fulfill that function, now you must indeed more look to other groups” (Interviewee Zorggroep Manna).

Indicated in the interviews was that it is possible to train these employees in the NoaberZorg association. When the employees have finished the training, the employees can be put into a flexpool and be employed in all the organizations.

6. Discussion and conclusions

The goal of this study was to determine the *appropriate* HR architecture for the HR alliance NoaberZorg. To achieve this objective a literature study was carried out in order to learn more about the theories that influence the likelihood of organizations to form an HR alliance, and the workforce and HR policies/practices architecture literature in particular. In addition, the literature about the internal labor market, the external labor market, and the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function was examined. An empirical study was carried out to explore, unfold, test, and refine the research framework of this case study.

6.1 Discussion

In chapter five the findings of this case study have been described. The findings of this case study are elaborated below. A comparison is made with the research framework of this study. When appropriate and feasible the research framework will be refined.

Integration between the HR function and the strategic planning function

Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten have an integrative linkage between the strategic planning function and the HR function. There is a dynamic and interactive relationship present between the strategic planning function and the HR function (Buller, 2004). In both organizations, the HR manager is a member of the management team of the organization and has decision making authority.

Zorggroep Manna has an administrative linkage between the strategic planning function and the HR function, and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal can be characterized as having a two way linkage. At Zorggroep Manna the HR department is informed, but not involved in the determination of the strategic policy plan of the organization. At Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal there is partly a reciprocal and interdependent relationship present between the strategic planning function and the HR function (Buller, 2004). In both organizations, the HR function is viewed as a supportive function and the HR manager is not a member of the management team of the organization.

This study has found that the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function develops gradually over time and that in the organizations still partly or strongly characteristics are present of previous or future linkages. In 2002, Zorgcentrum de Posten could be characterized as having an administrative linkage, and nowadays the organization has an integrative linkage, while still characteristics are strongly and partly present of the administrative linkage. In the near future, it is expected that the degree of integration between the strategic planning function and the HR function at Zorggroep Manna changes from an administrative linkage to an one way linkage. Currently, Zorggroep Manna already has two characteristics of the one way linkage strongly present in the organization.

The interviewees of Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten noticed that the HR manager of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal do not have decision making authority. On the contrary, the interviewees of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal did not consider the differences that exist in decision making authority a challenge in the collaboration. A likely explanation for this finding is that the interviewees of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal have a philosophy in which the HR department is considered a supportive department, and the management team and the managing director have decision making authority. This means that the role that the HR department fulfills in the organization, is in accordance with the philosophy of the organization. Conversely, at Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten the HR manager is a member of the management team of the organization and has decision making authority. When the HR department of another organization has a supportive function without decision making authority, there is no accordance with the philosophy of the own organization.

Currently, the HR manager of Zorggroep Manna and Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal depend upon their supervisor what is being determined in the management team meetings in their organization about NoaberZorg. The result is that when decisions must be made to collaborate in the domain of HR in the association, only two HR managers have decision making authority. It is possible that the supervisor of an HR manager does not want to collaborate in a certain topic in the association, while the HR manager finds collaborating in that certain topic useful because it corresponds or adds value to the business strategy. In the worst scenario, no collaboration will take place in that topic. This means that this construct has a direct relation with the workforce and the HR policies/practices architecture of this study.

HR alliance

This study found that the opinions of the interviewees correspond to the four theoretical perspectives that were analyzed to understand the rationale for forming HR alliances. Especially, in the mentioned strategic goals and the common ambition in the collaboration among the HR departments, similarities can be found that correspond to the transaction cost economics perspective, the resource based view perspective, the resource dependency perspective and the agency cost perspective.

The transaction costs can be minimized through an HR alliance, when the HR managers do not need to invent the same wheel, share knowledge, collaborate in the domain of training, and publish vacancies in the four organizations.

When the employees are offered variety, new challenges and a possibility to work at the Noabers in order to brush up their knowledge and expertise, there is a value creating potential of resources that are pooled together.

The collaboration among the HR departments makes it possible to obtain access to critical resources, when employees are exchanged during sickness absence, and the power of the organizations in comparison to other organizations can increase, by determining the secondary and tertiary labor agreement together.

The agency cost perspective indicates that it is in the best interest of all the organizations in the association to contribute to the competence development of the alliance. The common ambition distinguished in the collaboration among the HR departments is connecting the advantages of small-scale with the advantages of a certain large-scale in collaborating with four partners.

Workforce architecture

This study has found that all the functions present in the workforce architecture of NoaberZorg score high on the strategic determinant value of Lepak and Snell (1999). When an employee scores low on the strategic determinant value, this research found that the employee is not valuable to the organization, and may even have a negative influence on the organization. The consequence is that the employee will not be employed in the organization.

Gardner (2005) indicated that the employees who score high in the value creating spectrum are top managers, and it is unlikely that these employees are managed in cooperation with other organizations. In this case study, it was found that managerial functions cannot be exchanged and need to be developed internally in the organization. Two reasons the interviewees indicated correspond to what Gardner (2005) mentioned: (1) managers are advisors of the managing director, and (2) managers are involved in the strategic policy determination of the organization, or in other words, managers have inside information about the value creating process of the organization (Gardner, 2005).

The healthcare functions and operational functions present in the workforce architecture are core employees (Osterman, 1994). Core employees are the largest group of non supervisory, non managerial workers, directly involved in providing the service of the organization (Osterman, 1994). According to Gardner (2005) core employees can be exchanged and that is also true for most of the operational and healthcare functions depicted in the workforce architecture of this research. Gardner (2005) mentioned that there are a larger number of these employees employed in the organization, and that core employees possess a mix of firm specific and general skills. Comparing the reasons of Gardner (2005) with the mentioned reasons in this case study to exchange the operational and healthcare functions, some similarities can be found. It was indicated that the workforce of a function was exchangeable when the workforce has followed an education and when more employees are employed in the organization. In contrast, exchanging an employee for a short period of time is not efficient in terms of costs and productivity, and when an employee has a pivot function or there is a risk of losing the employee, the function is also not exchangeable.

The second strategic determinant of the workforce architecture is uniqueness (Lepak, Snell, 1999). When an employee with firm specific skills leaves the organization, or in this case is exchanged, the organization is confronted with heavy replacement costs to hire and train a new employee who can perform at the same level as the employee who is exchanged, because firm specific skills are not widely available in the external labor market (Becker, 1962; Williamson *et al*, 1975; Williamson, 1981; Lado, Wilson, 1984; Pfeffer, Cohen, 1984; Barney, 1991). When the period of time needed to master the function is short, this study found that the degree of uniqueness is low, and when the period of time needed to master the function is long, the degree of uniqueness is high.

All managerial functions, two healthcare functions and three operational functions score in this study high on the strategic determinant uniqueness. Eighteen healthcare functions and ten operational functions score low on the strategic determinant uniqueness.

The managerial functions score high on the strategic determinant uniqueness, because managers have knowledge about the challenges and positive aspects of the organization. Since, the managerial functions score high on both the strategic determinants value and uniqueness, the managerial functions need to be developed internally in the organization according to the research model of this study, and that is also what this study found.

The operational functions and healthcare functions that score high on the strategic determinants uniqueness and value need according to the research framework be developed internally in the organization. However, the findings of this study show that these operational functions and healthcare functions can be exchanged among the organizations. The result is that there is a difference between the research framework and the findings of this study. A possible explanation of the difference found is that the employees of the operational and healthcare functions can only be exchanged for a long period of time. This means that the employee is actually developed internally in the other organization. Another likely explanation is that the employees who fulfill these functions are employed on the 'operational level' of the organization, and not on the 'strategic level' where the top managers can be found.

It was revealed in this study that the employees of the operational and healthcare functions are exchangeable when the employees possess the same skills, can work under guidance, and have the same tasks. The healthcare and operational functions are viewed as not exchangeable when the functions are organization specific, the employee has a basal function level, is responsible for vulnerable clients or has a solo function due to which continuity is not assured.

The interviewees of the four organizations have different opinions about seven functions: the social worker, the care consultant, the client advisor, the planners, the HR manager, the quality official and the secretarial support employee. Analyzing the disclosed reasons of the interviewees regarding the seven functions, it can be concluded that the employees who fulfill these functions score high on the strategic determinant uniqueness. As mentioned in this study, when the skills of the employee become more firm specific, the employer will seek to reduce the risks of firm specificity through the use of a stronger employment relationships (Becker, 1962; Williamson, 1981; Bridges, Villemez, 1991; Lepak, Snell, 1998). This explains why some organizations are reluctant to exchange these employees in the association.

The other two strategic determinants of the workforce architecture are information asymmetry and discretion over an important resource. When an employee scores low on the strategic determinant uniqueness, the degree of information asymmetry is low. The employee has general skills, that are mostly received from an education, and the employee has a determined expertise area. Only the healthcare functions and the operational functions score low on the strategic determinant information asymmetry. However, some healthcare functions and operational functions also score high on the strategic determinant information asymmetry. The employees who fulfill the functions that score high on the strategic determinant information asymmetry need a long time to master the function/have firm specific skills, because the employees must know the organization, the employees and/or clients of the organization.

Some managers in this study are qualitatively stronger and have more experience than the managers employed in the other organizations. The organization that has discretion over a manager that is qualitatively stronger is reluctant to exchange the manager and wants the manager to be developed internally in the organization. This is in accordance with the research framework, since organizations want to protect their own valuable resources in the alliance (Das, Teng, 2000)

Although this study found that the managers cannot be exchanged among the organizations, the managers can be posted to the NoaberZorg organizations on a temporary basis, and the managers can work together in a project form. An inter vision meeting is also viewed as useful for the managers.

For the coordinating and team leader functions this study found that exchanging knowledge, getting to know each other and walking along in another organization is suitable for employees fulfilling these functions, but not being exchanged. The identified reasons are that the function is organization specific, a solo function, an 'approachable' point function, a network function and/or that the policies must become first more uniform, before exchanging these functions is possible.

HR policies/practices architecture

This study has found that the labor agreements and trainee policy are not organization specific, and collaboration is possible in the execution of the labor agreements and trainee policy.

The following HR practices, recruitment and selection, investors in people, function description and appreciation, the personal development plan, the function conversation, the exit interview, and the following HR policies, the attention policy, the introduction policy, the training policy, the safety, health and welfare policy, the guidance route (reintegration), and the absenteeism policy are (partly) organization specific, and collaboration is possible in the operational execution of these HR policies/practices. This means that although the HR policies/practices are considered (partly) organization specific, there are activities in the HR policies/practices in which it is possible to collaborate.

To provide an explanation for these findings, the strategic goals of the HR departments in the collaboration must be discussed, since an HR architecture must meet the strategic objectives of HR (Nadler *et al*, 1992; Lepak, Snell, 1998). The common strategic goals mentioned by the interviewees are: (1) the HR managers do not need to invent the same wheel, (2) share knowledge (3) collaborate in the domain of training, (4) exchange employees during sickness absence, and (5) provide a competitive offer of labor agreements. Taking these strategic goals into considering, it can be explained that the interviewees indicated that the Noabers can collaborate in the operational execution of the HR policies/practices, since sharing knowledge and not inventing the same wheel are explicit goals mentioned by the interviewees.

When the above findings are compared to the research framework and the HR practices literature, it can be noticed that collaboration of HR policies/practices that have high uniqueness is possible when the HR policies/practices score low on the strategic determinant value. When this is the case, the organization can capitalize on the specialized knowledge of the other organization, without incurring the costs of internal development (Lepak, Snell, 1998).

However, when the HR policy/practice has high value and high uniqueness the literature indicates that organizations have strategic incentives to retain and internally deploy the HR policies/practices (Reed, DeFillipp, 1990; Prahalad, Hamel, 1990). That is not what this study found. In the healthcare sector it is expected that an absenteeism policy scores high on the strategic determinant value: the ability to help the organization achieve its objectives (Lepak, Snell, 1998). When the absenteeism level is low the organization can achieve its objectives, providing care to elderly and vulnerable people. Since, the healthcare sector is primarily a people oriented, labor intensive sector (Zairi, 1998; Buchan, 2004; Wijk, 2007; Prins, Henderickx, 2007; Bokeloh, 2008) it is important to have a low absenteeism level in order to provide care of good quality. The consequence is that when organizations form an HR alliance, the organizations share the HR policy/practices that score high on the strategic determinants value and uniqueness by collaborating on the operational execution of these HR policies/practices.

Concerning the strategic determinants information asymmetry and discretion over an important resource, this study found a remarkable result. Although, the absenteeism policy of Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal and the training policy of Bruggerbosch score high on the strategic determinant information asymmetry and discretion over an important resource, the organizations are willing to share their knowledge with the other organizations in NoaberZorg. This is not in accordance with the research framework, since it was expected that organizations who have discretion about an important HR policy/practice and possess information asymmetry about this HR policy/practice will internally develop the HR policy/practice. A possible explanation of this finding is that trust is present in the collaboration among the organizations in the association. Therefore, a strategic determinant that would be more likely to have a mediating influence on the information asymmetry determinant is trust. In this study it was indicated that over time organizations may develop relationships that are characterized by open and frequent communication and a willingness to adjust to the needs of each other (Ring, Ven, 1992; Gulati, 1995b). When trust is present, organizations are more likely to collaborate with each other to manage human resources (Gardner, 2005), and trust is defined in this study as the belief comprising the deliberate intentions to render the organization vulnerable to another organization based on confident positive expectations (Dietz, 2004). This study has determined that there is trust present in the collaboration among the HR departments, and the result can be that therefore the HR managers are willing to share HR practices/policies over which the organization has information asymmetry.

During the interviews two other strategic determinants were indicated by the interviewees: (1) the influence collaborating in the HR policy/practice would have on the identity/culture of the organization and (2) the extent of advantages when resources are pooled together. When the collaboration of the Noabers has an influence on the culture and identity of the organization, it is possible to collaborate in the operational execution of the HR policies/practices to obtain the advantages of pooling resources. A characteristic of an alliance, is that the individual partners maintain their separate identity and in doing so protect their self interests (Doz, Hamel, 1998).

Internal labor market

This study has found a direct relation from the workforce architecture to the internal labor market.

The HR architecture of an organization consists of various components of HR that fit together and are managed to meet the strategic objectives of HR (Nadler *et al*, 1992; Lepak, Snell, 1998). Two common strategic goals that were identified by the interviewees for the collaboration in the HR departments are providing a competitive offer of labor agreements and internal vacancy publication at the Noabers. These two common goals correspond to the characteristics of an internal labor market, namely that the organization offers generous fringe benefits and has policies that favor promotion and transfer from within (Bills, 1987; Althausen, 1989; Boxall, Purcell, 2003; Gardner, 2005).

Further, the interviewees indicated that exchanging employees is possible during sickness absence and to provide employees experience, a new challenge and/or variety. The functions that are mentioned in Appendix 12, as functions of which the workforce has been exchanged/posted among the NoaberZorg organizations, correspond to the functions that can be found in the workforce architecture of Figure 7 of this study that can be developed in the alliance.

It was found that exchanging employees in the association has not frequently occurred, and that one employee has made promotion in the association. In contrast, in the individual NoaberZorg organizations employees have made promotion, because the organizations offer the employees moving up possibilities from assistant level 2, to caretaker, or nurse in the own organization.

In the association a flexpool can be developed. In this pool domestic employees, assistants level 2, caretakers and nurses can be employed. The consequence is that an internal labor market is developed in which employees are temporarily loaned to another organization (Gardner, 2005). The internal labor market makes it possible for the organization to be more flexible in the usage of the workforce (Windt *et al*, 2008). The four types of employees that need to be employed in the pool fall in the workforce architecture in the quadrant of functions of which the workforce can be developed in the alliance. Since, a strategic goal in the collaboration among the HR department is to persevere employees in the association, an internal labor market can protect the employees of the four organizations from the external labor market. An internal labor market offers an employee a variety of work experiences and systematic promotion and development opportunities in the different organizations (Gardner, 2005) and in an internal labor market an employee sees internal promotion as the way to improve his or her position (Williamson *et al*, 1975).

External labor market

This study has found that the external labor market has a direct relation with the internal labor market. A tight labor market effects the development of an internal labor market.

This study found that in the healthcare sector it is more difficult to provide a buffer for bottlenecks in the personnel utilization during holidays and periods of absenteeism. The result is that it is viewed as possible to develop a pool of employees. The literature indicates that when critical resources are difficult to obtain (Pfeffer, Salancik, 1978; Bills, 1987, Boxall, Purcell, 2003) organizations take action to reduce this dependency, and cooperation is viewed as an effective way of dealing with workforce shortages (Cappelli, 2000; Dijk *et al*, 2007; Windt *et al*, 2008).

Concerning, the responses of the organizations to the expected labor shortages in the healthcare sector, the interviewees of all four organizations indicated that the organizations offer their employees opportunities to move up to a higher function. Zorgcentrum de Posten tries to develop it's own cultivate angle and Bruggerbosch offers volunteers a training, so that the volunteers can participate in the work process. The mentioned responses correspond to the characteristics of an internal labor market that are determined in this study.

It is considered possible to collaborate in attracting employees. Especially, when employees are attracted the employees can be trained in the NoaberZorg organizations and when the employees have finished the training the employees can be employed in the flexpool. Cooperating in the initial training for future employees in a tight labor market is according to Dijk *et al* (2007) wise, because the costs can be spread among more employees.

6.2 Conclusions and advices

6.2.1 Conclusions

The central research question formulated in this study was:

“What is the appropriate HR architecture for the HR alliance NoaberZorg?”

In the HR alliance NoaberZorg five common strategic goals can be distinguished: (1) the HR managers do not need to invent the same wheel, (2) share knowledge, (3) collaborate in the domain of training, (4) exchange employees during sickness absence, and (5) provide a competitive offer of labor agreements. Relevant is that the HR architecture meets the strategic goals of the HR alliance NoaberZorg.

The healthcare sector is a labor intensive sector and healthcare organizations are highly dependent on the workforce, since employees are the most critical organizational input. In the workforce architecture of NoaberZorg, the managerial functions, coordinating functions and team leader functions cannot be developed in the alliance. For these functions it is viable to exchange knowledge, and work together in a project form. The workforce of most of the healthcare and operational functions analyzed in this study can be developed in the alliance. Further, the employees of all the analyzed functions can walk along in another NoaberZorg organization. This has certain advantages: the employees learn how the function is performed at the Noabers, it provides new insights, prohibits rusting, and the employees can reflect on their own functioning in the organization.

Besides, an internal labor market can be developed in the NoaberZorg association. Currently, the organizations already have two characteristics of an internal labor market present in the collaboration: publishing vacancies internally at the organizations, and determining labor agreements together to provide generous fringe benefits. In the internal labor market employees can be exchanged among the NoaberZorg organizations for a short period and/or long period of time to provide employees the possibility for knowledge, experience development and variety. Offering employees a new challenge or chance to work at another NoaberZorg organization is also feasible. Research has shown that employees find it important to have enough development opportunities and by collaborating in managing the workforce the NoaberZorg organizations can offer employees more development opportunities. In addition, when organizations have an internal labor market, an employee sees internal promotion as the principal means of improving his or her position. The result is that the NoaberZorg organizations preserve employees in the association.

Concerning the HR policies/practices architecture, the organizations can collaborate in the execution of all analyzed HR policies/practices: recruitment and selection, the introduction policy, labor agreements, the attention policy, the function description and appreciation, the personal development plan, the function conversation, the trainee policy, the guidance route employee (reintegration), the training policy, the safety, health and welfare policy, the absenteeism policy, and the exit interview. Collaborating in the HR policies/practices makes it for the individual NoaberZorg organization possible to share the expertise the organization has about the HR policies/practices with the other organizations, and in the HR policies/practices in which the organization does not excel, the organization can learn from the Noabers.

In conclusion, this means that the locus of value creation in the HR alliance NoaberZorg lies in developing the healthcare and operational functions in the HR alliance and by collaborating in the operational execution of the HR policies/practices. When this is done, the HR architecture meets the strategic goals of the HR alliance NoaberZorg.

6.2.2 Advices

The advices of this case study, based on the empirical research, are formulated per paragraph per construct analyzed in the research framework.

Concerning the advices for the collaboration among the HR departments, or the HR alliance itself, only advices are given about aspects that are supported by all four organizations in this study.

Degree of integration between the strategic planning function and HR function

- Although the HR managers have different positions and decision making authority in the organizations, it is relevant that all HR managers are present in the management meetings that are held in the NoaberZorg association. When topics are discussed in the management team meetings the HR managers are directly involved and can respond to the topics that are elaborated and decide who leads a certain project. Besides, an advice is to collaborate in managing the workforce in the association and in the operational execution of the HR policies/practices. Therefore, it is pertinent that in every management team meeting in NoaberZorg attention is paid on the positive and challenging aspects of the collaboration in these two areas.

HR alliance

- Clear strategic goals need to be formulated in the collaboration among the HR departments. Currently, the HR managers do not have concrete strategic goals were to focus on in their collaboration. The five common strategic goals that are identified in this study (1) the HR managers do not need to invent the same wheel, (2) share knowledge, (3) collaborate in the domain of training, (4) exchange employees during sickness absence, and (5) provide a competitive offer of labor agreements, and the common ambition: connecting the advantages of small-scale with the advantages of a certain large-scale in collaborating with four partners, must be used as directives of the framework for the HR managers in their collaboration. A shared vision namely helps the HR managers to believe that their goals are cooperatively related and reduces the chance for opportunism. The framework were the HR managers must focus on is managing the workforce that can be developed in the alliance together and collaborate in the operational execution of the HR policies/practices. When the HR departments collaborate in these two topics, the following challenges that were found in this study are no longer applicable: hardly collaboration among the HR departments, tension between choosing for the own organization or NoaberZorg, focus of the collaboration is mostly on practical part exchanging protocols and regulations, insufficient and visible results and finally that the HR managers must be more proactive in the content of the collaboration.
- Every organization must have an own HR department and the presence of the own HR manager must be assured.
- The HR managers must collaborate in a project form. When an HR manager investigates a certain topic, the knowledge about this topic can later be shared with the other NoaberZorg organizations.
- The HR managers must coordinate were the Noabers can ask questions about HR topics. The HR department of Bruggerbosch can be approached for the following topics: the training policy, labor agreements, exploiting the use of grants and work experience places. Zorgcentrum de Posten for policy notes, advising in personnel conflicts and function appreciation. Zorggroep Manna for systems and automation. Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal for aspects concerning the safety, health and welfare policy, absenteeism policy, and reintegration. The consequence is that when the HR managers start to work on a project, the HR managers first must determine which HR manager has most knowledge about the topic of the project, and then one HR manager is the hamper tragger of the project. Important is to realize that for the viability of the HR alliance, there must be a balance in the benefits and contributions of each HR department. This advice must be kept in mind in deciding who is responsible for which project.
- Although the HR managers must coordinate were the Noabers can ask questions about HR topics, the advice is not that the HR departments only specialize in the above mentioned HR topics and do not perform the other HR policies/practices anymore in the organization. Otherwise, the employees need to contact the other organization for advice/support. This is viewed as a barrier and besides this study found that it is important not to make agreements in which the organizations become to dependent on each other in such a way that there is a deceleration of speed in which bottlenecks can be resolved in the organization. When the HR managers work together in a project form, actually a kind of specialization takes place, but it is relevant that all HR policies/practices are performed in the own organization. Besides, the HR policies/practices are viewed as organization specific HR policies/practices in this study and the results of this study also indicate that the HR policies/practices need to be adjusted to the own organization.

6.2.3 Workforce architecture/internal labor market

- Employees need to walk along in another NoaberZorg organization with a concrete task assignment. This has certain advantages: the employees learn how the function is performed at

the Noabers, it provides new insights, prohibits rusting, and the employees can reflect on their own functioning in the organization.

- The workforce of the managerial functions, coordinating functions and team leader functions need to be developed internally in the own organization, and need not to be exchanged to the NoaberZorg organizations. The employees that fulfill these functions can exchange knowledge and work together in a project form.
- The workforce of most of the analyzed operational functions and healthcare functions can be developed in the alliance. This has certain advantages, since the employees who fulfill the operational functions and healthcare functions can be part of an internal labor market. In an internal labor market employees can be offered variety, new challenges, possibilities to brush up their knowledge and experience, or be given a new chance to work. When an internal labor market is developed the four Noabers can protect the employees from the external labor market and preserve the employees in the association. In an internal labor market an employee sees internal promotion as the principal means of improving his or her position. When the workforce of the healthcare functions are exchanged a long period of time has the preference, since the clients get familiar with the employees and built a trusting relationship. However, when the organizations choose to develop most of the operational functions and healthcare functions in the alliance, accurate agreements must be made, because it is possible that when an employee is exchanged to another NoaberZorg organization, the employee does not want to go back to his or her original employer. It must be mentioned that research shows that actual turnover of employees in the healthcare sector is relatively low. Further, the employee must want to be exchanged, feel competent during and after the exchange, and the own organization may not suffer when an employee is exchanged in the form of having a shortage.
- Start a pilot for a flexpool to have a decent buffer in times of absenteeism and holidays. In the flexpool at least the domestic employees, assistants level 2, caretakers and nurses need to be employed. It is feasible that the workforce of the functions that can be developed in the alliance are also put in the flexpool. Although research shows that in Twente in 2012 there will be no shortages of employees, for the other regions in the Netherlands severe labor shortages are expected and the groups that are most effected are the caretakers, and nurses. The advice is that the organizations set up a flexpool that in first instance employs the domestic employees, assistants level 2, caretakers and nurses. A flexpool has several advantages: it makes it possible for the organization to balance workforce requirements, enhances organizational flexibility and provides the organization with more discretion in the number and types of employees used. Nevertheless, it is viewed as important to have a fixed team of employees working for the clients. This means that for the utilization of the employees in the flexpool decent agreements must be made: a client must not be confronted with many different employees. Otherwise, there can be a lost of the quality of care that is provided.

HR policies/practices architecture

- The competitive advantage as combined employers must be better indicated in the recruitment and selection stage, by indicating the possibilities the employee not only has in the NoaberZorg organization in which the employee gets employed, but also in the other NoaberZorg organizations. Providing employees the possibilities to work at more organizations can cause the NoaberZorg organizations to achieve a competitive advantage. This advantage will not be a sustained competitive advantage, since the other healthcare organizations in the East of the Netherlands can also implement such a strategy when the organizations decide to collaborate and achieve the same benefits. Yet, the NoaberZorg organizations are all small-scale organizations and in that manner the organizations are distinct from the large organizations found in the East of the Netherlands like Livio and Carint Reggeland. Research shows that employees find development opportunities important in their function and since in the future labor shortages are expected, organizations must compete with each other for talented employees. Providing employees the possibilities to work at another NoaberZorg organization can be viewed as a creative way to manage, retain and release the workforce.
- It is useful to determine a NoaberZorg broad trainee policy. The trainee policy will have a positive radiation on the education institutions and future employees. One HR manager can be responsible to coordinate the trainee policy among the four organizations.
- Reintegrating employees in the NoaberZorg organizations must be better and more utilized. There is a clear financial incentive present to collaborate on the guidance route employee policy. One HR manager can be responsible to coordinate the reintegration of employees in the association.

- Collaboration is desired in the courses that the employees need to follow in the framework of the training policy e.g. HACCP, inhouse emergency and first aid service, and work guidance. Every year the training coordinators need to have a meeting in which the courses the organization is planning to give to the employees are discussed. When the organizations have the same requirements, the organizations can collaborate, and this will lower the transaction costs per training.
- One HR manager can investigate how the grants that can be obtained for training are optimally utilized.
- In the introduction period it is relevant that all NoaberZorg organizations mention to the employees what NoaberZorg means in the form of concrete examples. One HR manager can be the hamper tragger and make a policy plan in this domain.
- When the employees are exchanged among the NoaberZorg organizations it is relevant to have the same labor agreements, make adjustments in the labor agreements of the attention policy and when possible the function description and function appreciation must be the same. When the labor agreements are not the same, the employees may have no willingness to work in another NoaberZorg organization.
- For the personal development plan, the function conversation, and the exit interview the HR managers can determine forms that are most pragmatically. Again, one HR manager can be the hamper tragger of this project.
- Concerning the safety, health and welfare policy and the absenteeism policy information can be exchanged among the organizations.

External labor market

- Make agreements with the municipalities to train people who keep their payment fees. The advantage of employees that follow a work guidance route is that the organization has to pay guidance costs and no salary to these employees. Yet, it is important that the people who are attracted are able to provide care of good quality.
- Collaborate in attracting people with few education and learn them the basic principles for providing domestic care.
- Attract new advent employees and train these people in the association of NoaberZorg. After the training, the employees can be employed in the flexpool.

Lastly, a critical remark is that a disadvantage that was indicated by all four organizations in the collaboration, is that the four organizations collectively collaborate in a route, and at the end the organizations make different choices. Concerning the collaboration among the HR departments, this study shows that all the organizations can achieve advantages when the HR departments collaborate in managing the workforce and in the operational execution of the HR policies/practices, so the advice is not to make different choices, but collaborate on these aspects.

6.2.3 Relevance and future research

This study contributes to the scientific knowledge in several ways.

First, different from previous research, it integrates four theoretical perspectives to understand structural embodiment of HR alliances: transaction cost economics, the resource based view, the resource dependency perspective, and the agency cost perspective.

Secondly, as is broadly known, previous research has indicated that HR policies/practices are to be managed through a partnership when they have low value, and high uniqueness (Lepak, Snell, 1998). This study, however, has revealed that even when HR practices are highly unique and strategic, and thus cannot be executed through the partnership as whole, they still have a great potential for collaboration at the operational level.

Third, it is observed that organizations within the study shared operational activities within strategically important and highly unique HR policies/practices Therefore, this study suggests that the HR architectural approach should be advanced by inclusion of the 'execution' level to the practices, instead of examining them as a whole. By "execution" level types of activities are meant: operational, communicational, informational, and strategic.

Fourth, the same counts true for the workforce architecture debate. It was found that although an employee that fulfills an operational or healthcare function scores high on the strategic determinant value and uniqueness, the employee can be exchanged among the organizations.

Fifth, this study has found two new strategic determinants that can be investigated to determine if collaboration in an alliance is possible: (1) the influence collaborating in the HR policy/practice would have on the identity/culture of the organization and (2) the extent of advantages when resources are pooled together.

Overall, the results of this study, based on the explorative multiple case study, leads to more insight about HR alliances and the appropriate HR architecture for organizations in the healthcare sector.

Future research should take into account when designing a framework for different HR policies/practices the field within HR activities of each HR practice. In addition, for future research it might be interesting to test the developed framework and examine how it works in other sectors. Concerning the strategic determinant information asymmetry in this study, future research can investigate if trust has a mediating influence on information asymmetry in deciding to collaborate in the HR policies/practices and the workforce. In this study two HR policies/practices were considered as not organization specific and the other analyzed HR policies/practices were considered (partly) organization specific. Future research can focus on discovering other HR policies/practices in other sectors, that are not organization-specific.

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Appendix 1: Overview Zorgzwaartepakketten

There are ten Zorgzwaartepakketten to be distinguished (Gebruikersgids Zorgzwaartepakketten, 2008):

- Pakket 1*: Sheltered living with some guidance: average 4.5 hours care a week
- Pakket 2*: Sheltered living with guidance and care: average 7 hours care a week
- Pakket 3*: Sheltered living with guidance and intensive care: average 11 hours care a week
- Pakket 4*: Sheltered care with intensive guidance and extensive care: average 13 hours care a week
- Pakket 5*: Protected living with intensive dementia care: average 18 hours care a week
- Pakket 6*: Protected living with intensive care and nursing: average 18 hours care a week
- Pakket 7*: Protected living with extremely intensive care, focus on guidance: 23 hours care a week
- Pakket 8*: Protected living with extremely intensive care, focus on care and nursing: 27 hours care a week
- Pakket 9*: Stay with recovery focused nursing and care: 20 hours care a week
- Pakket 10*: Stay with intensive palliative terminal care: 30 hours care a week

* The organizations in the healthcare sector get extra compensation for assisting in the household, meals, and washing linen.

Appendix 2: Overview analyzed functions and HR policies/practices Bruggerbosch

Analyzed functions	Analyzed HR policies/practices
Mf-1 Care manager	1. Absenteeism policy
Mf-2 Day treatment manager	2. Attention policy
Mf-3 Department manager	3. Exit interview
Mf-4 Facilitating service manager	4. Function conversation
Mf-5 HR manager	5. Function description and function appreciation
Mf-6 Internal service manager	6. Guidance route employee (reintegration)
Mf-7 Nutrition service manager	7. Introduction policy
Mf-8 Technical service manager	8. Investors in People
Mf-9 The economic and administrative service manager	9. Labor agreements
Cf-1 Coordinator living	10. Personal development plan
Cf-2 Coordinator training	11. Recruitment and selection
Cf-3 Coordinator volunteer work	12. Safety health and welfare policy
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	13. The training policy
Hf-2 Assistant level 2	14. Trainee policy
Hf-3 Caretaker	
Hf-4 Cleaning employee	
Hf-5 Ergo therapist	
Hf-6 Evening and night head employee	
Hf-7 Facilitating care employee	
Hf-8 First responsible caretaker	
Hf-9 Groups guidance day treatment employee	
Hf-10 Music therapist	
Hf-11 Nursing home doctor	
Hf-12 Nursing home doctor in education	
Hf-13 Physiotherapist	
Hf-14 Pooler student assistant level 2	
Hf-15 Psychologist	
Hf-16 Social worker	
Hf-17 Student assistant level 2	
Hf-18 Student care	
Hf-19 Trainee care	
Hf-20 Vacation employee care	
Of-1 Employee financial administration	
Of-2 Employee flex bureau	
Of-3 First cleaning employee	
Of-4 HR employee	
Of-5 Internal advisor trainer	
Of-6 Kitchen employee	
Of-7 Linen service employee	
Of-8 Purchase employee	
Of-9 Quality official	
Of-10 Receptionist	
Of-11 Restaurant employee	
Of-12 Secretarial support	
Of-13 System administrator	
Of-14 Technical service employee	
Of-15 Trainee administration	
Of-16 Transport employee	
Of-17 Vacation employee supportive function	
Of-18 Volunteer	
Of-19 Warehouse employee	
Of-20 Pooler	

Figure 8: Overview analyzed functions and HR policies/practices Bruggerbosch

Appendix 3: Overview analyzed functions and HR policies/practices Zorgcentrum de Posten

Analyzed functions	Analyzed HR policies/practices
Mf-1 Care and nursing manager	1. Absenteeism policy
Mf-2 Controller	2. Exit interview
Mf-3 HR manager	3. Function description and function appreciation
Mf-4 Manager facilitating service	4. Introduction policy
Mf-5 Manager social work	5. Recruitment and selection
Mf-6 Manager thuiszorg	6. Labor agreements
Cf-1 Coordinator alpha team	7. Safety health and welfare policy
Cf-2 Coordinator relaxation	8. The training policy
Cf-3 Coordinator Zeker Thuis Twente	9. Trainee policy
Tf-1 Team leader activities guidance	10. Function conversation
Tf-2 Team leader department	11. Guidance route employee (reintegration)
Tf-3 Team leader domestic service	
Tf-4 Team leader kitchen	
Tf-5 Team leader restorative service	
Tf-6 Team leader thuiszorg	
Tf-7 Team leader volunteers	
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	
Hf-2 Assistant level 2	
Hf-3 Caretaker	
Hf-4 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)	
Hf-5 Domestic service employee	
Hf-6 Employee day nursery suryoye	
Hf-7 First responsible caretaker	
Hf-8 Nurse	
Hf-9 Social worker	
Hf-10 Student care	
Hf-11 Trainee care	
Hf-12 Vacation employee care	
Of-1 Assistant controller	
Of-2 Assistant facilitating service	
Of-3 AVR official	
Of-4 Client administration employee	
Of-5 Communication advisor	
Of-6 Dietician	
Of-7 Employee roster planning	
Of-8 Financial employee	
Of-9 HR employee	
Of-10 Kitchen employee	
Of-11 Linen room employee	
Of-12 Pool director	
Of-13 Practice teacher	
Of-14 Purchase employee	
Of-15 Quality official	
Of-16 Receptionist	
Of-17 Salary administration employee	
Of-18 Salary administrator	
Of-19 Secretarial support	
Of-20 System administrator	
Of-21 Technical service employee	
Of-21 Trainee administration	
Of-22 Vacation employee supportive function	
Of-23 Volunteer	
Of-24 Warehouse employee	
Of-25 Pool employee	

Figure 9: Overview analyzed functions and HR policies/practices Zorgcentrum de Posten

Appendix 4: Overview analyzed functions and HR policies/practices Zorggroep Manna

Analyzed functions	Analyzed HR policies/practices
Mf-1 Controller	1. Absenteeism policy
Mf-2 Manager Care & Welfare	2. Attention policy
Cf-1 Volunteer work coordinator	3. Exit interview
Cf-2 Assistant team leader	4. Function conversation
Cf-3 Team leader elderly home	5. Function description and function appreciation
Cf-4 Team leader facilitating	6. Guidance route employee (reintegration)
Cf-5 Team leader thuiszorg	7. Labor agreements
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	8. Personal development plan
Hf-2 Assistant level 2	9. Recruitment and selection
Hf-3 Care consultant	10. The training policy
Hf-4 Caretaker	11. Trainee policy
Hf-5 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)	
Hf-6 Domestic service employee	
Hf-7 First responsible caretaker	
Hf-8 Living guide (post)	
Hf-9 Social worker	
Hf-10 Trainee care	
Hf-11 Vacation employee care	
Of-1 Catering employee	
Of-2 Employee care administration	
Of-3 Employee financial administration	
Of-4 Employee linen service	
Of-5 Employee personnel administration	
Of-6 HR manager	
Of-7 Management assistant	
Of-8 Planner care	
Of-9 Planner domestic care	
Of-10 Planner nursing and caring	
Of-11 Quality official	
Of-12 Receptionist	
Of-13 System administrator	
Of-14 Technical service employee	
Of-15 Training official	
Of-16 Vacation employee supportive function	
Of-17 Volunteer	

Figure 10: Overview analyzed functions and HR policies/practices Zorggroep Manna

Appendix 5: Overview analyzed functions and HR policies/practices Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Analyzed functions	Analyzed HR policies/practices
Mf-1 Manager finance, information and personnel	1. Absenteeism policy
Mf-2 Manager internal care & facilitating	2. Attention policy
Mf-3 Manager thuiszorg & welfare	3. Exit interview
Cf-1 Coordinator internal care	4. Function conversation
Cf-2 Coordinator thuiszorg	5. Function description and function appreciation
Cf-3 Coordinator volunteers	6. Introduction policy
Cf-4 Training coordinator	7. Investors in People
Cf-5 Supervisor internal care	8. Labor agreements
Cf-6 Supervisor welfare	9. Recruitment and selection
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	10. Guidance route employee (reintegration)
Hf-2 Assistant activities guidance employee	11. Safety health and welfare policy
Hf-3 Assistant level 2	12. The training policy
Hf-4 Care taker	13. Trainee policy
Hf-5 Caretaker in education in thuiszorg	
Hf-6 Client advisor	
Hf-7 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)	
Hf-8 Domestic service employee	
Hf-9 First responsible caretaker	
Hf-10 First responsible nurse internal care	
Hf-11 Sleep watch employee	
Hf-12 Trainee care	
Of-1 Administrative employee	
Of-2 Client administration employee	
Of-3 Creditors and debtors administration employee	
Of-4 HR manager	
Of-5 Kitchen employee	
Of-6 Planner internal care	
Of-7 Planner thuiszorg	
Of-8 Purchasing and automation employee	
Of-9 Quality official	
Of-10 Receptionist	
Of-11 Secretarial support	
Of-12 System administrator	
Of-13 Technical employee	
Of-14 Wash linen employee	
Of-15 WMO mediator	

Figure 11: Overview analyzed functions and HR policies/practices Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Appendix 6: Overview workforce architecture Bruggerbosch

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	Mf-1 Care manager
Hf-2 Assistant level 2	Mf-2 Day treatment manager
Hf-3 Caretaker	Mf-3 Department manager
Hf-4 Cleaning employee	Mf-4 Facilitating service manager
Hf-5 Ergo therapist	Mf-5 HR manager
Hf-6 Evening and night head employee	Mf-6 Internal service manager
Hf-7 First responsible caretaker	Mf-7 Nutrition service manager
Hf-8 Groups guidance day treatment employee	Mf-8 Technical service manager
Hf-9 Music therapist	Mf-9 The economic and administrative service manager
Hf-10 Nursing home doctor	Cf-1 Coordinator living
Hf-11 Physiotherapist	Cf-2 Coordinator training
Hf-12 Psychologist	Cf-3 Coordinator volunteer work
Hf-13 Social worker	Hf-1 Facilitating care employee
Hf-14 Student care	Hf-2 Nursing home doctor in education
Hf-15 Trainee care	Hf-3 Pooler student assistant level 2
Of-1 Employee financial administration	Hf-4 Student assistant level 2
Of-2 First cleaning employee	Hf-5 Vacation employee care
Of-3 HR employee	Of-1 Employee flex bureau
Of-4 Internal advisor trainer	Of-2 Vacation employee supportive function
Of-5 Kitchen employee	Of-3 Volunteer
Of-6 Linen service employee	
Of-7 Purchase employee	
Of-8 Quality official	
Of-9 Receptionist	
Of-10 Restaurant employee	
Of-11 Secretarial support	
Of-12 System administrator	
Of-13 Technical service employee	
Of-14 Trainee administration	
Of-15 Transport employee	
Of-16 Warehouse employee	
Of-17 Pooler	

Figure 12: Overview workforce architecture Bruggerbosch

Appendix 7: Overview workforce architecture Zorgcentrum de Posten

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	Mf-1 Care and nursing manager
Hf-2 Assistant level 2	Mf-2 Controller
Hf-3 Caretaker	Mf-3 HR manager
Hf-4 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)	Mf-4 Manager facilitating service
Hf-5 Domestic service employee	Mf-5 Manager social work
Hf-6 Employee day nursery suryoye	Mf-6 Manager thuiszorg
Hf-7 First responsible caretaker	Cf-1 Coordinator Zeker Thuis Twente
Hf-8 Nurse	Cf-2 Coordinator relaxation
Hf-9 Social worker	Cf-3 Coordinator alpha team
Hf-10 Student care	TI-1 Team leader activities guidance
Hf-11 Trainee care	TI-2 Team leader department
Of-1 AVR official	TI-3 Team leader domestic service
Of-2 Client administration employee	TI-4 Team leader kitchen
Of-3 Communication advisor	TI-5 Team leader restorative service
Of-4 Dietician	TI-6 Team leader thuiszorg
Of-5 Financial employee	TI-7 Team leader volunteers
Of-6 HR employee	Hf-1 Vacation employee care
Of-7 Kitchen employee	Of-1 Assistant controller
Of-8 Linen room employee	Of-2 Assistant facilitating service
Of-9 Pool director	Of-3 Employee roster planning
Of-10 Practice teacher	Of-4 Secretarial support
Of-11 Purchase employee	Of-5 Vacation employee supportive function
Of-12 Quality official	Of-6 Volunteer
Of-13 Receptionist	
Of-14 Salary administration employee	
Of-15 Salary administrator	
Of-16 System administrator	
Of-17 Technical service employee	
Of-18 Trainee administration	
Of-19 Warehouse employee	
Of-20 Pool employee	

Figure 13: Overview workforce architecture Zorgcentrum de Posten

Appendix 8: Overview workforce architecture Zorggroep Manna

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Of-1 Catering employee	Mf-1 Controller
Of-2 System administrator	Mf-2 Manager Care & Welfare
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	Cf-1 Volunteer work coordinator
Hf-2 Assistant level 2	TI-1 Assistant team leader
Hf-3 Caretaker	TI-2 Team leader elderly home
Hf-4 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)	TI-3 Team leader facilitating
Hf-5 Domestic service employee	TI-4 Team leader thuiszorg
Hf-6 First responsible caretaker	Hf-1 Care consultant
Hf-7 Trainee care	Hf-2 Living guide
	Hf-3 Social worker
	Hf-4 Vacation employee care
	Of-1 Employee care administration
	Of-2 Employee financial administration
	Of-3 Employee linen service
	Of-4 Employee personnel administration
	Of-5 HR manager
	Of-6 Management assistant
	Of-7 Planner care
	Of-8 Planner domestic care
	Of-9 Planner nursing and caring
	Of-10 Quality official
	Of-11 Receptionist
	Of-12 Technical service employee
	Of-13 Training official
	Of-14 Vacation employee supportive function
	Of-15 Volunteer

Figure 14: Overview workforce architecture Zorggroep Manna

Appendix 9: Overview workforce architecture Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Hf-1 Activities guidance employee	Mf-1 Manager finance, information and personnel
Hf-2 Assistant activities guidance employee	Mf-2 Manager internal care & facilitating
Hf-3 Assistant level 2	Mf-3 Manager thuiszorg & welfare
Hf-4 Care taker	Cf-1 Coordinator internal care
Hf-5 Caretaker in education in thuiszorg	Cf-2 Coordinator thuiszorg
Hf-6 Domestic employee (thuiszorg)	Cf-3 Coordinator volunteers
Hf-7 Domestic service employee	Cf-4 Training coordinator
Hf-8 First responsible caretaker	Cf-5 Supervisor internal care
Hf-9 First responsible nurse internal care	Cf-6 Supervisor welfare
Hf-10 Sleep watch employee	Hf-1 Client advisor
Hf-11 Trainee care	Of-1 Quality official
Of-1 Administrative employee	Of-2 WMO mediator
Of-2 Client administration employee	Of-3 HR manager
Of-3 Creditors and debtors administration employee	
Of-4 Kitchen employee	
Of-5 Planner internal care	
Of-6 Planner thuiszorg	
Of-7 Purchasing and automation employee	
Of-8 Receptionist	
Of-9 Secretarial support	
Of-10 System administrator	
Of-11 Technical employee	
Of-12 Wash linen employee	

Figure 15: Overview workforce architecture Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

* The contact care taker thuiszorg was dropped from the analysis during the interviews due to confidential information

Appendix 10: Analyzed healthcare functions in one NoaberZorg organization

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Hf-1 Ergo therapist Hf-2 Evening and night head employee Hf-3 Groups guidance day treatment employee Hf-4 Music therapist Hf-5 Nursing home doctor Hf-6 Physiotherapist Hf-7 Psychologist	Hf-1 Facilitating care employee Hf-2 Nursing home doctor in education Hf-3 Pooler student assistant level 2 Hf-4 Student assistant level 2

Figure 16: Analyzed healthcare functions Bruggerbosch

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Hf-1 Employee day nursery suryoye	

Figure 17: Analyzed healthcare function Zorgcentrum de Posten

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
	Hf-1 Living guide

Figure 18: Analyzed healthcare function Zorggroep Manna

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Hf-1 Assistant activities guidance employee Hf-2 Caretaker in education in thuiszorg Hf-3 Sleep watch employee	Hf-1 WMO mediator

Figure 19: Analyzed healthcare functions Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal

Appendix 11: Analyzed operational functions in one NoaberZorg organization

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Of-1 First cleaning employee Of-2 Restaurant employee Of-3 Transport employee	

Figure 20: Analyzed operational functions Bruggerbosch

Develop workforce in the alliance	Develop workforce internally
Of-1 AVR official Of-2 Communication advisor Of-3 Dietician Of-4 Pool director	Of-1 Assistant controller Of-2 Assistant facilitating service

Figure 21: Analyzed operational functions Zorgcentrum de Posten

Appendix 12: Exchanged/posted employees among the NoaberZorg organizations

Exchanged/posted employees among the NoaberZorg organizations
Employees of the pool of Bruggerbosch were posted to the Noabers
Employees have received a new opportunity at another NoaberZorg organization
The system administrator is employed at Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorggroep Manna
The purchase employee has been employed at Bruggerbosch, Zorgcentrum de Posten and Zorggroep Manna
The multidisciplinary officials are posted to the Noabers
An employee of Bruggerbosch has assisted Zorgcentrum de Posten in working with the stock management system
Students who follow the education nurse are exchanged between Bruggerbosch and Zorgcentrum de Posten
The HR manager and the employee of the secretary of Bruggerbosch have assisted Zorggroep Manna
The dietician has been posted to Bruggerbosch
Caretaker of Zorgcentrum de Posten went to Bruggerbosch
Caretaker of Zorgcentrum de Posten went to Zorggroep Manna
Caretaker of Zorggroep Manna went to Zorgcentrum de Posten
The quality official of Bruggerbosch has been posted to Zorgcentrum de Posten
The quality official of Zorggroep Manna has been posted to Zorgcentrum de Posten
The evening and night head employee of Bruggerbosch has become a team leader at Zorggroep Manna
Activity guidance employees of Zorggroep Manna were posted to Zorgfederatie Oldenzaal
Nurse of Zorggroep Manna went to Zorgcentrum de Posten
The social worker of Bruggerbosch has been posted to Zorgcentrum de Posten
The social worker of Zorgcentrum de Posten has been posted to Bruggerbosch

Figure 22: Exchanged/posted employees among the NoaberZorg organizations