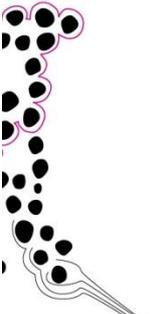


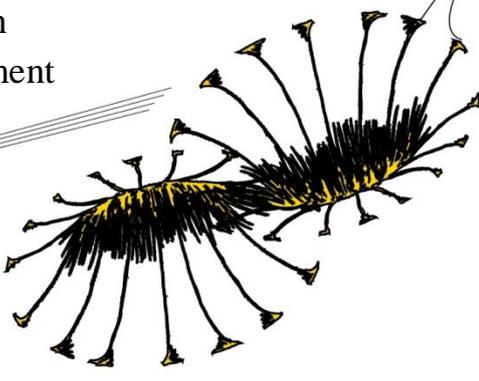


INTENDED VERSUS ACTUAL HR SYSTEMS

Causes of the gap between intended and actual HR philosophies, policies and practices

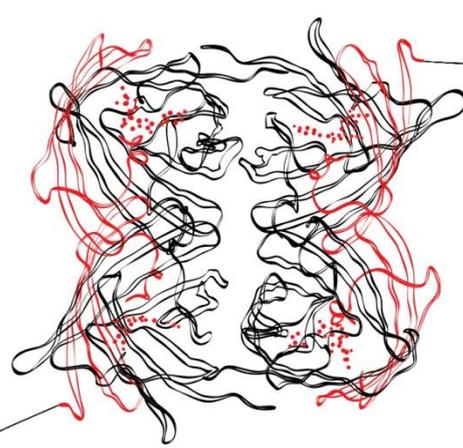


Master Thesis Business Administration
Specialisation Human Resource Management



Chair of Human Resource Management
School of Management and Governance
University of Twente, Enschede, the Netherlands

Human Resource Management Department
In association with the Board of Directors
Ziekenhuisgroep Twente, Almelo & Hengelo, the Netherlands



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18th of December 2014

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PREFACE

With proud I present my master thesis, completing my master Business Administration with specialisation Human Resource Management at the University of Twente. This study is aimed at exploring the gap between intended and actual HRM and provides insight in factors that could influence this gap. The study is performed at the Human Resource department at Ziekenhuisgroep Twente (ZGT) commissioned by the Board of Directors of ZGT.

Overall, I have been working on this master thesis with pleasure and I have learned a lot about research. Until the summer, the progress of this master thesis went smoothly. After the summer break, it took me some effort to continue the study, because I had to separate the study in two reports. One of the reports is intended for ZGT which presents more practical results and recommendations. The other is the report is the report in front of you, which is more a theoretical representation of the results and is my final research report for the completion of this master. It took some time to describe the results correctly, but I have accomplished it.

This master thesis would not have been possible without the assistance of multiple persons who contributed in the preparation, continuation and completion of this study. First, I would like to thank Jeroen Meijerink from the department of Human Resource Management for his support, feedback, time and effort spent on my master thesis. He really motivated me to understand the theory and to maximize the outcome of this report. Second, I would like to thank Annesophie Gruppen en Arjan Miltenburg from ZGT. They offered me the opportunity to perform my master thesis at ZGT and they helped me out with everything. Thank you for your support, feedback, time and efforts and the fact that you always are willing to help. I also would like to thank Tanya Bondarouk from the department Human Resource Management as second supervisor for assessing my master thesis. Also some special thanks to the Board of Directors, business managers and line managers of ZGT for their cooperation at this study. Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and feedback.

Enschede, December 2014

Susan Damhuis

ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND

There has been devolution of the responsibilities of HR systems, containing of HR philosophies, HR policies and HR practices, to the line managers on top of their operational tasks. This often results in conflict, because of varying priorities between operational tasks and HR responsibilities. HR systems could be divided in intended and actual HR systems, which are respectively the HR philosophy, policies and practices as designed by top management and the HR philosophy, policies and practices that are really implemented in the department by line managers. Evidence shows that the actual HR practices are not always in line with the intended HR practices. Giddens' structuration theory is used as a theoretical lens to understand the gap between intended and actual HR philosophies, policies and practices. This theory provides information about the influence of modalities on this gap.

OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

The objective of this study is to explore the causes of the gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, policies and practices. Also the influence of modalities on this gap is determined. The research question is: *Which modalities cause the gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices?*

METHODS

This case study is performed at Ziekenhuisgroep Twente using fifteen semi-structured interviews with a random sample of four top managers and eleven line managers. Data is collected between 1st of February 2014 and the 4th of July 2014 and is analyzed by specific encoding of the transcription of each interview.

RESULTS

The study determines the influence of modalities and actions on HR systems. The results of this study show that there is no contradiction between the intended and actual HR philosophy. Though, the interpretative schemes these HR philosophies are based on are contradictory. However, this does not result in a gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, because the intended and actual HR philosophy are the same.

The results of this study do show a gap between intended and actual recruitment policies, because actual recruitment policies and norms transcend the norm of the intended recruitment policy and no sanctions are following. The intended and actual selection policies, training policies, performance management policies and job design policies are in line. The actual recruitment practices contradict with the intended recruitment practices as well. The modality facilities and the actions power and sanctions have influence on this gap, because line managers have the facilities and power to make the actual recruitment practices transcend the intended norm and no sanction is following. There is no contradiction between the other groups of intended and actual HR practices.

DISCUSSION

To conclude, there is only a gap between the intended and actual recruitment policies and practices. The results of this study show that both the modality facilities as the modality norms are influencing the gap. Though, there is no gap between intended and actual HR philosophy and the other groups of intended and actual HR policies and practices. So, structuration theory does not explain the gap between intended and actual HRM systems. Besides, also obstructing factors have influence on the gap between intended and actual HR systems. Even though only one case study is performed, which makes empirical generalization not possible, this study does contribute to the insight in the gap between intended and actual HR systems. Further research is needed to create empirical generalization and to determine other obstructing factors of the gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, policies and practices.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 DEVOLUTION OF HUMAN RESOURCE RESPONSIBILITIES

Over the past decades, there has been a shift of Human Resource (HR) responsibilities from the HR managers to the line managers. This shift of HR responsibilities is called devolution. Devolution is a result of the changed focus of HR managers towards strategy, which caused less importance of operational HR responsibilities. Line managers were commissioned to accomplish these HR responsibilities (Guest, 1987; McGovern, Gratton, Hope-Hailey, Stiles, & Truss, 1997; Storey, 1989, 1992). In this study, the definition of line managers by Hutchinson and Purcell (2008) is used. Line managers are “a group of managers who have direct supervisory responsibility, normally for non-managerial employees, and are placed at the lower levels of the management hierarchy, often the first line (operational) level. They are responsible for day-to-day performance and HRM activities of their work area” (Hutchinson & Purcell, 2008, pp. 10–11). HR responsibilities in this research are specific tasks of line managers which are associated with Human Resource Management (HRM). HRM is defined as “the planned HR deployments and activities intended to enable an organisation to achieve its goals” (Delery & Doty, 1996, p. 804; Wright & McMahan, 1992, p. 298) or according to Paauwe (2009) ‘the achievement of employment relationship and the way people are managed at work’. Examples of HR responsibilities are performance reviews, career planning, communication of terminations and occupational health and safety (McGovern et al., 1997; Perry & Kulik, 2008).

However, line managers could have difficulties with accomplishing the devolved HR responsibilities, because they had no or only little training in HR (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Perry & Kulik, 2008). Caldwell (2003, p. 988) stated that the devolvement of HR responsibilities from HR managers to line managers increased the role conflict of line managers. Line managers have to perform both a process-oriented and a people-oriented role (Hope-Hailey, Farndale, & Truss, 2005), but these roles are often contradictory. Conflicting demands or varying priorities between operational tasks and HR responsibilities provide input for conflict as well (Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003).

There is also evidence found that the devolved HR responsibilities “vary significantly in consistency of implementation across the organization (e.g. business units and departments) and in quality of practice between managers” (McGovern et al., 1997, p. 12).

1.2 INTENDED AND ACTUAL HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES

The implementation of intended HR practices by line managers is increasingly studied and, in addition to the challenges outlined above, considered to be one of the major challenges related to devolution (Gilbert, De Winne, & Sels, 2011; Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe, 2004). In this study, implementation is used according to the definition of Klein and Sorra (1996, p. 1055) “a process of gaining targeted organizational members’ appropriate and committed use of innovations or HR practices”. Often, the implementation of HR practices is seen as a core task of line managers (Gilbert et al., 2011; Hartog et al., 2004). However, the concept of HR practices is distinguished into two kinds of HR practices. On one hand, there are intended HR practices, which are the practices as designed by policy-makers of the organisation (top management) supporting the business strategy (Boxall & Purcell, 2003). On the other hand, there are actual HR practices, which are the practices that are really implemented in the department by line managers (Khilji & Wang, 2006). Evidence shows that the actual HR practices are not always in line with the intended HR practices (Hope-Hailey et al., 2005). In addition to Hope-Hailey et al. (2005), Khilji and Wang (2006) also mentioned the gap between intended and actual HRM. Their qualitative and quantitative analysis explained that there were varying HR satisfaction levels in the research population which depends on the implementation of the HR practices (Khilji & Wang, 2006, p. 1185; Truss, 2001). This result of the study of Khilji and Wang (2006) contributes to the statement that there are inconsistencies between intended and actual HR practices. The gap between intended and actual HR practices is supported by Purcell and Hutchinson (2007, p. 3) as well. They stated that literature often observed the gap between “what is formally required in HR policy and what is actually delivered by line managers”. Also other studies have documented the gap between intended and actual HRM (Purcell, 1999; Truss, 2001). An example from Truss (2001, p. 1145) describes the ‘disconnect between the ‘rhetoric’ of HRM as expressed by the HR department and the ‘reality’ experienced by employees’. She describes that a company tries to encourage career management with programmes like management inventory, but only a small part of the employees was really satisfied with this career management. The implementation of HR practices by line managers is not sufficient (Truss, 2001).

However, the causes of the gap between intended and actual HRM are still unknown. It is remarkable that these causes are not discovered yet, because a difference in intended and actual HR practices could have impact on the performance of the organisation (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). In order to fill the gap between the intended and actual HRM, it is important to determine why this gap exists. Therefore, the causes of the gap should be identified.

Apart from the literature about the gap between intended and actual HRM, there is also a research field about the obstructing factors that hinder line managers in implementing intended HRM practices. It is possible that those obstructing factors may play a role in the gap between intended and actual HRM. Time may be a potential factor. Line managers want to spend time on their HR responsibilities, but this is often not possible. Most HR responsibilities are devolved without reducing the original responsibilities of the line managers (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007) and other time-consuming business objectives have to be achieved as well (Hope-Hailey et al., 2005). The opportunity for line managers to fulfil the HRM tasks is limited when line managers experience insufficient time (Bos-Nehles, Riemsijk, & Looise, 2013, p. 866). Besides time, line managers also have feelings of being torn in two because of contradictory demands and varying priorities between operational tasks and HR responsibilities (Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003). Their role at operational level is hard to align with the fulfilment of their HR responsibilities. The combination of time pressure and pressure related to achieving both organisational and operational objectives could result in feelings of overload for line managers (McConville, 2006; McGovern et al., 1997; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003). Overload could also result in limited performance of HR responsibilities by line managers. However, further research is necessary to determine if those obstructing factors may play a role in the gap between intended and actual HRM.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND CONTRIBUTION

The two research fields mentioned above, one about the gap between intended and actual HRM and the other about obstructing factors that hinder line managers in implementing intended HR practices, are always explored in separated studies (e.g. Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Khilji & Wang, 2006).

However, it is interesting to merge those research fields to see whether those obstructing factors have a significant role in the gap between intended and actual HRM. Because the causes of the gap between intended and actual HRM are unknown, the obstructing factors may play a role in this gap. During this study, the hindering factors are not the key focus of the study. Though, they are taken into account to see if they are influencing the gap. The core focus of this study is to explore the causes of the gap between intended and actual HRM. There is a lack of information about these causes and this study tries to provide insight into this subject. The study is aimed at the implementation of HRM, which is considered as the implementation of HR practices by line managers. The implementation of HR practices is a key task of the responsibilities of the line managers (Gilbert et al., 2011; Hartog et al., 2004). Line managers have to implement HR practices which are in line with the intended HR practices. It is important to get insight into the factors that influence line managers and the alignment of actual and intended HR practices, because it may explain the gap between intended and actual HRM. It also may offer an opportunity to fill this gap. The objective of this study is therefore to explore the causes of the gap between intended and actual HRM.

The relevance of this study is both scientific as practical. First, this study has scientific relevance, because it provides new information about and also provides insight in the causes of the gap between intended and actual HRM. Also possible obstructing or enabling factors of the gap between intended and actual HRM are provided. Those causes and obstructing or enabling factors are merged using Antony Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens, 1976, 1979, 1984). Besides, this study also has practical relevance. Results of this study provide line managers insight in the causes of the gap between the intended and actual HRM.

1.4 THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis will continue as follows. Chapter two provides relevant literature about Giddens' structuration theory. This chapter develops a theoretical lens for this study. The third chapter, the methodology chapter, describes the research setting and describes the process of data gathering and data analysis. In chapter four, the findings of this study are presented. The fifth chapter discuss the findings of this study and theoretical and practical implications are described. Also some recommendations for practice are given before the limitations and suggestions for further research are provided. In the sixth and final chapter the central question is answered and the main conclusion of this study given.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study is provided in this chapter. In section 2.1, the concept HR system is described. Then section 2.2 explains Giddens' structuration theory. This theory provides the theoretical lens for this study. So the aspects of structuration theory are linked with the objective of this study, the gap between intended and actual HRM. The end of this chapter provides the research question.

2.1 HUMAN RESOURCE SYSTEMS

Before the causes of the gap between intended and actual HRM could be studied, the concept of HRM should be explained. HRM is often considered with a system perspective, which considers HRM as a HR system (Becker & Gerhart, 1996). HR systems are "patterns of planned human resource activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals" (Wright & McMahan, 1992, p. 298) or according to the definition of Lepak et al. (2006, p. 221) as "a bundle of HR practices or policies oriented towards some overarching goal". In other words, HR systems are specific HR activities, like the implementation of HR practices, to achieve the organisational objectives. To obtain the organisational objectives, HR systems are divided in three levels – HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices (Becker & Gerhart, 1996; Jiang et al., 2012; Lepak et al., 2006).

Before these levels of HR systems are explained, it is important to understand that there are multiple types of HR systems which all have their own specific way to achieve organisational objectives. Within these multiple types of HR systems, two extremes are distinguished. On the one hand, the high performance or commitment HR system, which "tend to create a psychological connection between employees and organizations" (Lepak et al., 2006). On the other hand, the traditional control HR system, in which "the thinking and controlling part of the work is separated from the doing of the work" (Lawler, 1992, p. 28). For example, in high performance HR systems employees are encouraged to perform optimally by creating commitment and binding between the employee and the organisation, while in control-oriented HR systems the employees have to comply with predetermined regulations (Jiang et al., 2012).

If the intended HR system and actual HR system are both different types, this may result in a gap between them. For instance, there is a possibility that the intended HRM formed by the organisation is commitment-oriented. The organisation expect that line managers create commitment and binding to achieve the organisational objectives. Interpretation and implementation of line managers is important here. However, when the line managers expect a more control-oriented focus, where strict rules are imposed, they will have problems with creating binding and commitment. Then, the intended HRM differ from the actual HRM resulting in a gap. This seems to be an acceptable explanation, but further examination of the three levels of HR systems is needed to get a complete understanding of HR systems and how intended and actual HRM systems might differ.

The first level of HR systems is the HR philosophy. An organisation's HR philosophy is "the way the organisation regards its human resources, what role the resources play in the overall success of the business, and how they are to be treated and managed" (Becker & Gerhart, 1996). In a control-oriented HR system, the HR philosophy is to work as efficiently as possible to successfully achieve the organizational objectives while the HR philosophy in a commitment-oriented HR system is that commitment and binding of employees will result in successful achievement of organizational objectives.

The second level of HR systems is those of HR policies. The HR philosophy of an organisation influences and shapes the HR policies (Lepak, Marrone, & Takeuchi, 2004). HR policies "reflect an employee-focused program that influences the choice of HR practices" (Lepak et al., 2006, p. 221). In other words, HR policies provide guidelines about the intention of an organisation about the HR responsibilities that should be performed with the use of specific HR practices. HR policies could be divided in a few groups. Four groups of policies determined by Jiang et al. (2012, p. 76) are applicable for this study, which are staffing policies, consisting of recruitment and selection policies, training policies, performance management policies and job design policies. An example of a job design policy in a control-oriented HR system is to keep the costs low by low wages. An example of an job design policies in a commitment-oriented HR system is to achieve commitment by providing career development or have a pay-for-performance system (Lepak et al., 2006).

HR practices are the third level of HR systems. HR practices are specific organisational actions designed to manage employees (Lepak et al., 2006, p. 221). Often, HR tools are used to manage employees, like annual performance reviews. Those tools are kinds of HR practices. There are several HR practices which are used to attain a variety of HR policies (Lepak et al., 2006, p. 223). If the HR system is control-oriented with an HR philosophy of efficiency and an HR policy of low costs, both performance measurement and on-the-job training as behaviour control are HR practices which achieve the HR policy (Lepak et al., 2004). In case of a commitment-oriented HR systems with a commitment and binding based HR philosophy and career development as HR policy, examples of HR practices are job rotation or action learning (problem solving), but also on-the-job training (Lepak et al., 2004). When the HR policy is pay-for-performance, commission is an appropriate HR practice (Lepak et al., 2006).

So, the HR philosophy, the HR policies and HR practices could be different between intended HRM and actual HRM. Thus, a gap could exist between the intended HR system that contains the HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices that are determined by the organisation and the actual HR system, which are the HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices that are implemented in the organisation by line managers. To get insight into this gap, it is the question why the actual HR system could differ from the intended HR system and which factors play a role in this gap between intended and actual HR systems. To understand these questions, a theoretical lens is needed.

2.2 STRUCTURATION THEORY

The theoretical lens for this study is provided by Antony Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens, 1976, 1979, 1984). Structuration theory examines the interaction between structures, which often is the intended structure of the organisation, and human behaviour, which are the actual actions of line managers (Giddens, 1984). Besides, Giddens uses modalities, which are obstructing or enabling factors in the interaction and alignment of intended structures and actual behaviour. However, it is important to mention that Giddens separated structure and agency to get insight into these concepts, but these concepts are related and depended.

2.2.1 STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

One of the key concepts of structuration theory is agency. Agency concerns events that exist due to actions of individuals, which are called agents, in cases that these agents could have acted differently (Giddens, 1984, p. 9). Agents are humans who are capable of action because they have knowledge about structures. In this study, line managers are considered as agents. The actions of agents are defined as “the capability of agents to ‘make a difference’ to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events” (Giddens, 1984, p.14). Thus actions are the ability of agents to do something to continue or change existing course of events.

Besides the capability of agents to act, they also have the ability to refuse to act or to act differently (Giddens, 1984). This may provide information about the gap between intended and actual HRM. Agency, or actions of agents, is corresponding with actual HRM. Structures as explained in the next paragraph are comparable with intended HRM. Actions of agents are performed to continue or change existing course of events which are determined by the organisation, the intended HRM. However, agents have the freedom to perform actions as intended, to perform actions in another way or refuse to perform the actions resulting in the ability of agents to reproduce or change existing structures or even produce new structures (Giddens, 1984). Using the example of the commitment-oriented HR system from before, where the HR philosophy is that commitment and binding should be created to successfully achieve the organisational objectives, the HR policy is that behavioural interviews should be done twice a year and the HR practice is the availability of an interview tool. The action of the agent, the line managers, should be that the interview tool is used. The line manager has the opportunity to use the interview tool to achieve the organisational objectives, but he also may refuse to use the tool or use another tool. If the line manager does not use the interview tool as expected by the organisation, there is a gap between the intended and actual HRM.

The second key concept of structuration theory is structure, which is defined as “the rules and resources organized as properties of social systems” (Giddens, 1984). It indicates that structures also refer to resources instead of only to rules that play a role in social systems. Structures itself are abstract and “only exist in the mind of individuals as memory traces”, but they are only structures as individuals are aware of it or if they are actually deployed (Giddens, 1984). Because structures exist of rules and resources, Giddens (1984, p. 21) also provided definitions for those concepts.

Rules are “techniques or generalizable procedures applied in the enactment/reproduction of social practices”, while resources are defined as “transformative capacity generating commands over material phenomena or actors” (Giddens, 1984, p.33). In this study, rules are considered as the specific regulations to create and reproduce structures or phenomena, where resources are determined as the humans or equipments that are used to achieve structures. Resources are only useful if they are combined with action, because humans or equipments are only resources when they are part of the process of structuration (Giddens, 1984, p. 33). When structures and HR systems are compared, rules and resources correspond with the levels of HR systems.

HR philosophy and HR policies are equivalent to rules while HR practices are equivalent to resources. HR systems are abstract and only exist if they are actually deployed through HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices even as structures are by rules and resources (Giddens, 1984). So, HR systems are similar to structures and therefore can be called as HR structures. For example, a control-oriented HR structure with its specific rules and resources. The HR philosophy, a rule, is the expectation that the departments work efficiently, which makes the HR policy that the department should have low cost and high productivity. The resources to fulfil these rules could be the HR practices performance measurement or behaviour control by on-the-job training. In a commitment-oriented HR structure, the HR philosophy is that commitment and binding should be created to successfully achieve the organisational objectives. The HR policy, or rule for this could be that behavioural interviews should be done twice a year. An HR practice, or resource, could be the line manager with his knowledge and skills to perform a behavioural interview or the availability of an interview tool. When the gap between intended and actual HRM is examined in the context of structuration theory, intended HRM can be considered as a structure. Both structure and intended HRM are designed as properties of social systems and both contains of equal aspects, namely rules and resources and HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices.

The interaction between structures, intended HRM, and actions, actual HRM, is complex. Structures are not only constraining actions of agents, they are also enabling those actions. Besides, actions of agents could result in a change of renewal of the structure. This interaction is called the duality of structures (Giddens, 1984).

2.2.2 DUALITY OF STRUCTURES

The assumption that structure and actions of agents are a duality instead of ‘two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism’, is a specific feature for structuration theory (Giddens, 1984). Giddens (1984, p. 25) mentioned about the duality of structures that “structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize”. In other words, structures create possibilities and guidelines for actions of agents, but these structures only exist if the actions of agents are in line with the structures. If the agents behave differently, the result will be a different structure. Jones and Karsten (2008) summarized the duality of structures in the statement that ‘action of agents are based on structures while at the same time actions of agents reproduce or change structures or even produce new structures’. The duality of structures is also suitable for this study. To explain the duality of structures, the following example is given. In the previous section is described that intended HRM was equivalent to structures and actual HRM equivalent to actions. This means that the interaction between intended and actual HRM can be seen as a duality as well. This duality may provide insight into the gap between intended and actual HRM. Intended HRM as devised by top management, corresponding to structure, should lead to actual HRM which are the actions of line managers. However, at the same time, intended HRM provides restrictions for actual HRM. For example, intended HRM could be control-oriented in which the HR philosophy is efficiency, the HR policies are the achievement of low costs and high productivity and the HR practice is that the line manager should implement is on-the-job training. So intended HRM enables the line manager to perform actions, but within the rules and resources as designed, the restriction. The actions of line managers, actual HRM, could be in line with the intended HRM. However, line managers can choose to perform different actions even though there are restrictions from intended HRM. Those actions are not in line with the intended HRM as devised by the organisation. If the actual HRM achieve the organisational objectives or if there are no consequences for deviation of the intended HRM, the intended HRM as devised by the organisation could be partially or fully changed. However, if the intended HRM is not changed and the actual HRM is not in line with the intended HRM, there is a gap between them. So, the statement that the gap between intended and actual HRM could be a duality may provide insight into this gap. Therefore, the duality of structures as described by Giddens (1984) should be further explored.

In the description of the duality of structures, Giddens divides every structure in three dimensions. Those three dimensions – signification, domination and legitimation – are corresponding with three dimensions of actions, communication, power and sanction respectively. Structures only exist if those three dimensions are fulfilled by actions and modalities. However, structures are abstract and therefore hard to determine and measure. Therefore modalities are created, which provide the opportunity to consider the abstract structures and also the interaction between the dimensions of structures and actions (Giddens, 1984; Jones & Karsten, 2008). The modalities Giddens has introduced are interpretative schemes, facilities and norms (Giddens, 1984).

A structure contains of all the three dimensions, which are explained below. Giddens provided a framework that illustrates the interactions between structures, modalities and actions (figure 1) (Giddens, 1984). In case of a gap between intended and actual HRM, at least one of the dimensions is imbalanced.

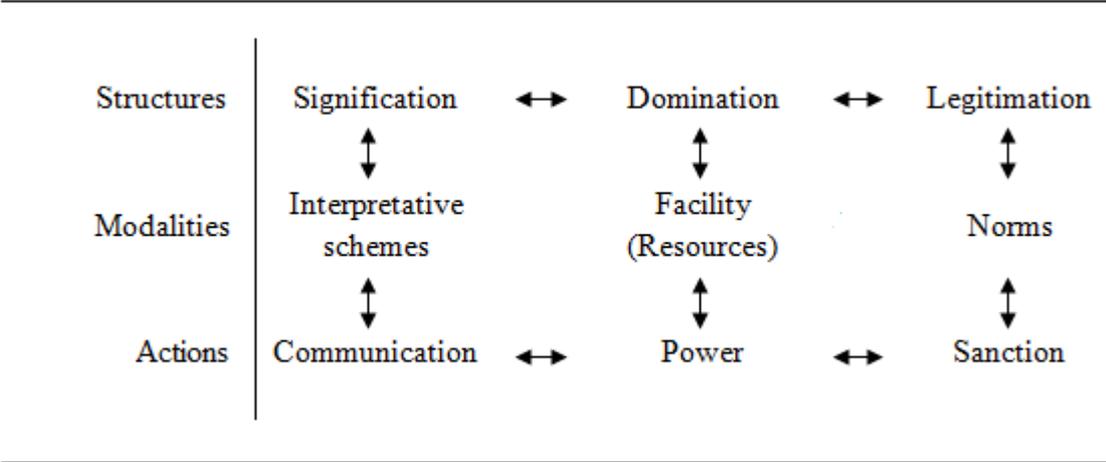


FIGURE 1: DIMENSIONS OF THE DUALITY OF STRUCTURES (BASED ON: GIDDENS, 1984, P. 29)

The first structure Giddens (1984) mentioned is that of signification. Signification represents a structure that agents use to interpret behaviour of humans and social events. In the levels of the HR system, signification is most in accordance with HR philosophy, because both are about interpretations and views of the structure. The interpretation as described in the definition of signification is based on the agents’ interpretative schemes.

Interpretative schemes are defined as “standardized stocks of knowledge that actors draw upon to make sense of themselves and the world” (Orlikowski & Robey, 1991). Interpretative schemes are conceptualizations of cognitive frames, which are “organised knowledge structures that allow individuals to interact with their environment” (Bondarouk, Looise, & Lempink, 2009, p. 475). Bondarouk et al., (2009) have mentioned that the interpretation or perceptions of actors about organizational processes are formed by cognitive frames and such frames are the basis for the achievement of organizational objectives, decision making and actions of line managers. In other words, agents use the knowledge and experiences they have gained during their lives to understand and make sense of themselves and of all that is happening around them and they base their actions on it.

Specifically for this study, the definition of HRM frames is “a subset of cognitive frames that people use to understand HRM in organisations” (Bondarouk et al., 2009, p. 475). This means that humans could communicate meanings and attitudes in their behaviour linked to HRM based on the HRM frames to others. However, the HRM frames of the top management and the line managers could be congruent or incongruent. If the HRM frames are congruent, the top management and line managers have the same expectations about HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices, which lead to effectiveness (Bondarouk et al., 2009). In case the HRM frames of the top management and line managers are incongruent, HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices are different or even contrary, resulting in resistance or conflicting expectations (Bondarouk et al., 2009). The gap between intended and actual HRM is an example of incongruent HRM frames and therefore incongruent interpretative schemes. Interpretative schemes are the link between the structure signification and the action communication and incongruence will create a gap between them. Like, the underlying knowledge of the interpretative schemes is shared through communication and the structure of signification is reproduced if the interpretative schemes are congruent (Giddens, 1984). However, incongruent interpretative schemes will result in a change of signification or even a new structure of signification is produced. Incongruence of interpretative schemes is often familiar between top management and line managers, because they have different backgrounds of culture, knowledge and experiences (Walsham, 2002).

For example, when line managers have to implement an intended HR practice, like 360 degrees performance feedback, their interpretative schemes will influence the way they communicate about the interpretation and implementation of this HR practice. If the line managers do not agree with this HR practice, they may refuse to perform the 360 degrees performance feedback and a gap exists between structure and action.

Domination is the second dimension of structures. Domination represents a structure that agents use to change behaviour of human and social events and it constrains and enables the action 'power'. However, power is not an action itself, but it is a capability of agents to perform actions (Jones & Karsten, 2008). Agents only have power if they are aware of this power and if they actually use it. HR practices, the third level of HR systems are linked to this dimension of structures. Both domination as HR practices are actually performed to achieve certain objectives. Power is important in this dimension. Power is divided in three dimensions (Hardy, 1996; Lukes, 2005). The first dimension of power is 'the power of resources'. This dimension is the nature of decisions that are made to control scarce resources, like firing and expertise, in order to influence behaviour (Hardy, 1996; Lukes, 2005). The second dimension, 'the power of processes' determines the processes and rules where decisions are based on (Lukes, 2005). These processes are procedures and political routines of dominant groups to influence outcomes of other groups (Hardy, 1996, p. 7). The third dimension is 'the power of meaning'. This dimension concerns the way groups legitimize their demands and create domination over others by 'influencing, shaping or determining their wants' (Ferner, Edwards, & Tempel, 2012; Lukes, 2005).

So, for agents to achieve power, they should fulfill the three dimensions of power. First, they should have the availability of appropriate facilities. The facilities agents should have are resources that are needed to perform the action and they should have the ability to allocate equipments and human resources (Ehrenhard, 2009, p. 72; Ferner et al., 2012; Giddens, 1984). In case of intended and actual HRM for example, the line managers should have the ability to hire and fire employees or to create commitment by increasing expertise of employees with development programs. Second, agents should have dominant procedures and protocols where they can base their actions on. In addition to appropriate resources and procedures, agents have to legitimize their behaviour and their use of procedures and protocols to achieve power (Ferner et al., 2012).

For example, line managers could have other ideas about rules used to achieve control-oriented organisational objectives. If those line managers have the right facilities and procedures to demonstrate this to the top management and they could legitimize their choice, they could create domination over the top management and have power. In case of intended and actual HRM, the top management could ask for a control-oriented on-the-job training to control behaviour. However, the line managers have more pay-for-performance procedures and processes at their department and the organisational objectives are achieved. So the protocols of pay-for-performance are dominant and there is legitimation for the choice, because the organisational objectives are achieved. The line managers gain power in all three dimensions. So, in case agents have power, they are able to act as intended, in another way than supposed or they can even refuse to act. So, they have the ability to reproduce or change structures of domination (Giddens, 1984).

The third and last dimension of structures determined by Giddens (1984) is legitimation, which is a structure that agents use to legitimate human behaviour and social events. By using norms or standards of morality, legitimation has the purpose to guide the behaviour of humans towards the required behaviour. The second level of HR systems, HR policies, is in line with legitimation, because both are rules and guidelines that offer a direction to achieve organisational objectives. Examples of those rules are norms. Norms could be divided in informal norms and formal norms. Informal norms are the actual exhibited behaviours as work routines which correspond with actual HRM, because both are actual behaviour (Ehrenhard, 2009; Warren, 2003). Formal norms are the expected behaviour as rules and codes of conduct and because it is expected behaviour, it correspond with intended HRM (Ehrenhard, 2009; Warren, 2003). If human actions do not comply with the formal norms, actions of punishment or rewards are used to achieve required behaviour. These actions are called sanctions (Giddens, 1984). However, norms and sanctions are only valid if the actors are aware of it. Line managers may not be aware of the formal norms and therefore base their behaviour on informal norms. If formal and informal norms are different, sanctions are used. But, in case of the gap between intended and actual HRM, the structure of legitimation was not in line with the sanction. For example, a formal norm is ‘the two HR practices 360 degrees performance feedback and on-the-job training should be implemented’ with a corresponding sanction that the agent is fired if those two HR practices are not implemented.

However, the informal norm like the work routine could be that job rotation is better than on-the-job training. The informal and formal norms are not in line. The question is whether the sanction is powerful enough to align the informal norms with the formal norms (Giddens, 1984). It is a possibility that the norms and sanctions are not sufficient to modify the actions of agents or maybe other norms and sanctions outweigh these ones. A result of continuous exceeding the norm is a change of the structure of legitimation or a new structure of legitimation is produced (Ehrenhard, Muntslag, & Wilderom, 2012; Giddens, 1984; Orlikowski & Robey, 1991).

The three dimensions of structures are in one way or another applicable to HRM systems as described above. Besides, the concepts described in this chapter so far are related to each other. This results in a conceptual model of modalities on the one hand and intended and actual HRM on the other (figure 2).

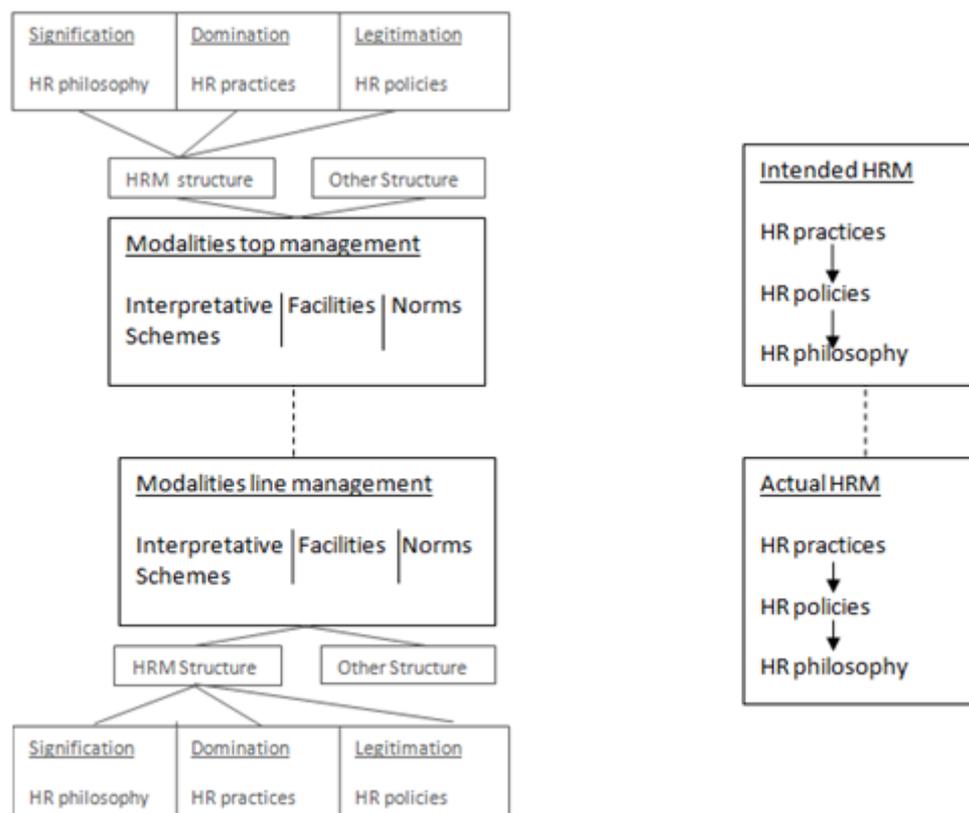


FIGURE 2: CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF INTENDED AND ACTUAL HRM BASED ON STRUCTURATION THEORY (GIDDENS, 1984)

So, the modalities interpretative schemes, facilities and norms are important factors in the duality of structures. The modalities are the link between structures, intended HRM, and actions of agents, actual HRM. Those modalities may provide an explanation in case there is a gap between intended and actual HRM.

To understand the gap between intended and actual HRM, it is important to keep in mind that structures contains of all three dimensions, which makes it necessary that the dimensions and therefore the modalities should be in line. If one of more of these dimensions is imbalanced, a gap between the structures and actions will emerge (Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Khilji & Wang, 2006). The coexistence of multiple structures is a potential cause of the gap between structures and actions of agents. Besides, those multiple structures could interact with each other. Occupational or cultural structures may exist and interact with the HR structure. For example, from an occupational perspective, the line manager could support a control-oriented HR structure, because his experience with a commitment-oriented HR structure was negative. His interpretative schemes differ from the top management, which causes imbalance.

The power of the line managers and the power of the top management in combination with the norms and sanctions of both, play a role in the outcome of the HR structure. So the professional structure, or another structure of line managers, could differ from the top managements' structure. Different backgrounds of culture, knowledge, experiences or roles of agents play a role in this dissimilarity (Walsham, 2002). The varying interpretative schemes, facilities and norms between top management and line managers show that there are multiple structures where line managers could base their actions on. It is also possible that a structure could be valued in different ways (Giddens, 1984), for example different between top management and line managers or even between one line manager and another. Different structures, modalities and actions also influence HRM. Variations may result in contradicting structures of HRM. Thus, 'dissimilarities in structures are a result of divergent modes of life' (Giddens, 1984, p. 198). Contradictions are a structural concept which could result into specific actions of line managers. If line managers feel negatively affected by the differences of the contradicting structures and are able and motivated to act on these differences, they will take action (Giddens, 1984). For example, the top management has a control-oriented structure with the HR philosophy of efficiency, the HR policy of low cost and high productivity and the HR practices of on-the-job training.

Hence, the line manager could be commitment-oriented with the HR philosophy of commitment and binding, the HR policy of pay-for-performance and the HR practices commission. These HR structures are contradictory and the line manager could feel negative affected by the control-oriented HR structure. The line manager could decide to perform actions to change the control-oriented HR structure into a commitment-oriented structure. Examples are a change of the interpretative schemes of the top management by communication, creating power over top management with appropriate facilities for a commitment-oriented structure and/or providing sanctions for the top management over the control-oriented norms like no achievement of organisational objectives.

So, contradictions between intended and actual HRM could result into a gap. If the line manager really takes action in contradictory circumstances, it is called conflict. Conflict can be seen as the 'actual struggle between actors or groups' (Giddens, 1984; Walsham, 2002). In other words, conflict is the gap between intended and actual HRM. Thus, contradictions in modalities could lead to conflict between intended and actual HRM. This statement is applied to the conceptual model of the gap between intended and actual HRM (figure 3).

2.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

The objective of this study is to determine the factors that play a role in the gap between intended and actual HRM. Giddens' structuration theory provided a theoretical lens, which described the link of modalities with intended and actual HRM. The core of Giddens' structuration theory for this study is the constraining and enabling role of structures or modalities on action, but at the same time, action could change existing structures or could produce new ones (Giddens, 1984). Because structures are abstract, the modalities interpretative schemes, facilities and norms are used to shape structures. However, there is no literature found about the influence of these modalities on the gap between intended and actual HR systems. This study contributes to the lack of information about the causes of this gap. The objective of this study from is combined with the theoretical framework and Giddens' structuration theory to formulate the following research question:

Which modalities cause the gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices?

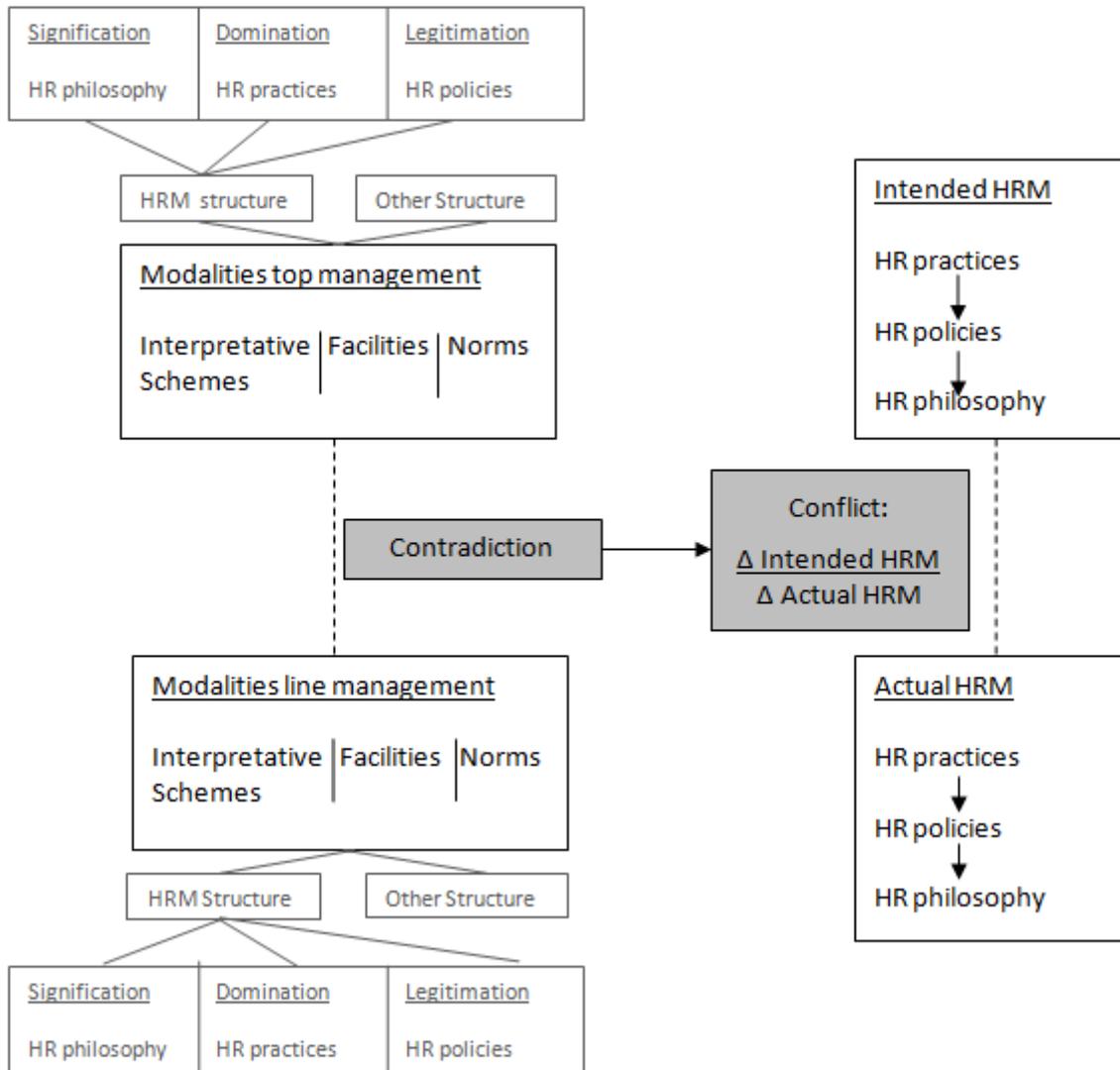


FIGURE 3: CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE GAP BETWEEN INTENDED AND ACTUAL HRM BASED ON GIDDENS' STRUCTURATION THEORY (1984)

3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research method of this case study. A case study is a qualitative descriptive research that is used to study a phenomenon and its related individuals or (small) groups of participants (Swanborn, 2010). A case study examines a phenomenon in depth and within a unit, but also in relation to its environment. Information about the characteristics of the participants is collected and their relationship with the phenomenon is defined (Swanborn, 2010, p. 3). This study examines the phenomenon of the interaction between structure and action which is influenced by modalities using Giddens' structuration theory (1984). Giddens' structuration theory is quite abstract and therefore requires a descriptive research. The structure in this study is an HR structure containing intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices. The influence of modalities on intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices is examined as well. Actions are performed by participants and their relationship with the HR structure is also studied, which is also familiar in case studies.

The results of this case study provide information which may answer the research question. Only one case study is performed, because the phenomenon of interaction between intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices and the influence of modalities is studied in depth. Because only one case study is performed, empirical generalization of this study is not possible. However, theoretical generalization is possible. The theory and methodology used in this study could provide a base for other case studies about the interaction between intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices. Also other studies about structuration theory and influencing factors could use this study.

This chapter is structured as follows. The research setting of this case study is described in section 3.1. This section contains a description of the study population and sample selection of the study. Also the process of data gathering is mentioned. The method of data analysis is described in section 3.2.

3.1 RESEARCH SETTING

To get insight into the gap between intended and actual HRM and to determine how modalities play a role in this gap, this study is performed. An organization with several line managers offers an appropriate setting for this study. Ziekenhuisgroep Twente (ZGT) is the selected organisation for this study. ZGT is a hospital in the eastern part of the Netherlands and has a location in Almelo and in Hengelo. This hospital is originated from a merger in 1998 of the Twenteborg Ziekenhuis at Almelo and the Streekziekenhuis Midden-Twente at Hengelo. ZGT is a general hospital with about 200 medical doctors and 3500 employees who provide care to 250.000 patients a year. In 2012, a reorganisation has taken place in ZGT. This reorganisation resulted in a more specified group of line managers and was accompanied with the devolution of several HR tasks to the line managers. Because of changes due to the reorganisation, it was assumed that ZGT possibly has a gap between the intended HRM, as established by the top management, and the actual HRM, as implemented by the line managers.

3.1.1 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The objective of this study is to examine the causes of the gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices. To examine the intended HR philosophy, policies and practices of ZGT, top management should be studied, while the actual HR philosophy, policies and practices of ZGT could be determined by studying line managers. Therefore, the study population of this study are the top management and line managers of ZGT. The top management contains of the Board of Directors and the business managers. Business managers translate policies as designed by the Board of Directors to the line managers and are the direct supervisors of the line managers. The line managers are the heads of the different departments at the hospital. During the study, ZGT has a Board of Directors of two members, the chairman and a member, eight business managers and there are forty-seven line managers in forty-one departments.

Both the Board of Directors and the business managers as the line managers are only eligible for this study if they perform the function for at least six months. The border of six months is chosen, because the Board of Directors, business managers and line managers needed time to get to know every aspect of the job and to making themselves familiar with the job.

Both top management and line managers should have sufficient amount of knowledge of the organisation and their function and tasks for this study. Both members of the Board of Directors, all eight business managers and all forty-seven line managers perform their function longer than six months. No other exclusion criteria are applicable.

For this case study, a sample of the line managers is taken. It is not feasible to use the total population of line managers in the time frame of this study. Therefore, a random sample is taken. Before the random sample is taken, it is checked if line managers could be divided in groups based on the implementation of the performance management practice of annual performance interviews over the year 2013. The appearance of the HR practice annual performance is chosen, because ZGT finds this HR practice important for line managers to implement (RvB, 2011, p. 8). If it is possible to divide the line managers in these groups, there is a possibility to see if there are differences between the actual HR philosophy, policies and practices. However, it turns out that there was no database available in which is stated if line managers have performed annual reviews. Another possibility to divide line manager in groups in order to see if there is a difference between line managers in the baseline of this study is a division based on the job valuations healthcare (FWG) the line managers are in. The group line managers consist of three FWGs, namely FWG 55, FWG 60 and FWG 65. Each FWG has its own tasks and job conditions (appendix 1). However, it is interesting to determine if the different FWGs are influencing factors of the gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices. Therefore the choice is made to not make a selection based on FWG.

Because no groups are made, the sample for this study is taken over the total group of forty-seven line managers. A random sample is taken in order to get a representative sample of the study population. A simple random sample is chosen based on a blind draw, because it provides an unbiased estimate of the population characteristics (Burns & Bush, 2006). The sample size is depended of data saturation. After eleven line managers, there was data saturation. Therefore, the sample size of line managers for this study is eleven.

Besides the eleven line managers that are selected by a random sample, four managers from the top management complete the study population. Two of those managers are members of the Board of Directors of ZGT. The Board of Directors of ZGT consists of two members.

The other two managers from top management are business managers. ZGT has eight business managers. A random sample is taken in order to get a representative sample of the business managers. Also for business managers a simple random sample based on a blind draw is chosen, because it provides an unbiased estimate of the population characteristics (Burns & Bush, 2006). This sample size is also depended of data saturation. After two business managers, there was data saturation. Therefore, the sample size of business managers for this study is two. So, a total study population of fifteen is used to perform this case study.

3.1.2 DATA GATHERING

The data for this study is gathered between the 1st of February 2014 and the 4th of July 2014. First, a literature review is performed as described in the theoretical framework in chapter two. In April 2014, after the literature review, a support base for the study is created among the top managers and line managers. A support base give the top management and line managers the information about the study, so they can get prepared for the study and whether or not could give their approval for participation in the study. Appointments with top managers and line managers selected for this study are scheduled between 1st of May and the 4th of July 2014.

The data for this study is gathered through a document analysis in which articles and reports related to the reorganization of ZGT have been studied, and through interviews. Interviews are chosen for this case study, because interviews fit best in determining the causes of the gap between intended and actual HRM. Besides, it is also possible to find out the obstructing or enabling factors for this gap with the use of interviews. Interviews offer first-hand information about the subject (Swanborn, 2010, p. 2) and provides a high degree of assurance for obtaining the appropriate information. Interviews offer the possibility to remain questioning till the justified amount and appropriate information is gathered (Plochg, Juttman, & Klazinga, 2007). Interviews with top management provide information about the intended HR philosophy, policies and practices, while interviews with line managers provide information about the actual HR philosophy, policies and practices.

Though, because structures as determined by Giddens (1984) are abstract and individuals are not always aware of them, interviews are the opportunity to find out those underlying structures or more concrete, the underlying modalities.

For example, interpretative schemes of top management and line managers are based on background of culture, knowledge and experiences (Walsham, 2002). Often, these backgrounds are different and therefore the interpretative schemes differ. However, top management and line managers are not always aware of their interpretative schemes they base their choices on. With interviews the interviewer could determine these interpretative schemes by continuous questioning.

The best way to obtain the appropriate and required information for this study is the use of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews give the respondents the possibility to explain their own background, information and experiences, but they could be directed in the appropriate direction by the interviewer. The theoretical constructs of this study could be covered all, even the abstract 'structures' and HR philosophies, core concepts of this study. Semi-structured interviews are also in line with the data gathering of other empirical studies using structuration theory (Ehrenhard et al., 2012; Orlikowski, 2002). Semi-structured interviews offer the possibility to extract information about the abstract structures and modalities of the agents (Plochg et al., 2007).

The interviews are structured by concepts that are studied in the theoretical framework of this study. A few questions are prepared for each concept as a base for the interview. The guidelines are based on HR systems, so about HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices. The dimensions signification, domination and legitimation, the modalities interpretative schemes, facilities and norms and the actions communication, power and sanction are used also. Besides, a few guidelines about contradictions and conflicts are created. Ehrenhard et al. (2012) determined that questions about contradictions and conflicts are control questions for information gathered with preceding questions. Both top management as the line managers are interviewed according to the framework described above. An overview of the prepared questions is provided in an operationalization table. There are two operationalization tables used, one for top management (table 1) and the other for line managers (table 2). The interviews are performed between the 1st of May 2014 and the 4th of July 2014. All interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim.

3.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The transcribed interviews are coded by the researcher. Coding is an interpretative act instead of precise science (Saldana, 2012, p. 4), which provide the opportunity to structure information by topic. Coding extracts useful and appropriate information for the study. Every concept as described in the theoretical framework has its own encoding. So, for every concept, information is gathered from the transcription of each interview through these specific encoding.

3.2.1 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

To maximise the reliability of the interview data, the interviews are taped and transcribed verbatim. There also has been a verification of the study population. The interview data is quite reliable as well, because the operationalization table provides the ability to determine the same theoretical constructs in each subsequent interview. So, if the study is repeated with the same study population, the results will probably be the same, assuming there have no changes taken place in the organisation (Gorden, 1992).

The interview data has also internal and external validity. There is internal validity, because the results are applicable and valid for the respondents of this study. There is also external validity, because the results of this study are useful and valid for the entire study population. Though, it should be ensured that there are no socially desirable answers given. The study is performed anonymously which minimize socially desirable answers (Maxwell, 1992).

TABLE 1: OPERATIONALIZATION TABLE OF THE THEORY – TOP MANAGEMENT

Construct	Definition	Questions
HR system		
HR system	Patterns of planned HR activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its objectives.	
Signification		
HR philosophy	The way the organisation regards its human resources and how they are treated and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Could you briefly describe your view of the tasks and role of line managers? ➤ What were the reasons to assign these tasks and role to line managers? ➤ How did you communicate the tasks and role of the line manager to the line managers? Why in that way? ➤ Are these tasks and role still appropriate or are changes desired/taken place? Why?
Signification	Structure that agents use to interpret behaviour of humans and social events.	
Interpretative schemes	Standardized stocks of knowledge that actors draw upon to make sense of themselves and the world.	
Communication	Action to explain meanings and attitudes in their behaviour to share with others.	
Domination		
HR practices	Specific organisational actions designed to manage employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Which specific actions are designed to manage the line managers (e.g. annual reviews)? ➤ How do you ensure that the line managers act in line with the defined performance? ➤ Which resources or facilities have you provided to the line managers to fulfill the tasks and roles as defined?
Domination	Structure that agents use to change behaviour of human and social events.	
Facility (resources)	The ability of agents to allocate equipments and human resources that are needed to perform the action.	
Power	Capability of agents to perform actions to achieve domination by power of resources, processes and meaning.	
Legitimation		
HR policies	Rules about the intention of an organisation about the HR tasks that should be performed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Which rules or policies are set up to direct the line manager into the direction as defined by you as top management? ➤ What are the consequences for line managers for not performing the tasks and role as you defined?
Legitimation	Structure that agents use to legitimate human behaviour and social events.	
Norms	Rules and codes of conduct that guide agents towards required behaviour.	
Sanction	Actions of punishment or rewards that are used to achieve required behaviour of agents.	
Contradiction and conflict		
Contradiction	Dissimilarities in structures because of divergent modes of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did contradictions exist between your view and the line managers' view¹? ➤ Did conflicts arise as consequence of the contradictions between intended and actual HRM? How did they express themselves¹?
Conflict	Actual struggle between actors or groups, when agents are negatively affected by the differences of the contradicting structures.	

¹ Question based on Ehrenhard (2009)

TABLE 2: OPERATIONALIZATION TABLE OF THE THEORY – LINE MANAGERS

Construct	Definition	Questions
HR system		
HR system	Patterns of planned HR activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals.	
Signification		
HR philosophy	The way the organisation regards its human resources and how they are treated and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Could you briefly describe your view of your tasks and role as line manager? ➤ Why do you think those tasks and roles belong to your function? Based on what? ➤ How important are HR activities? ➤ What do you think of participation? How do you participate and how much? ➤ Do you feel that it is clear enough what is expected from you as line manager? (Knowledge? Communication?)
Signification	Structure that agents use to interpret behaviour of humans and social events.	
Interpretative schemes	Standardized stocks of knowledge that actors draw upon to make sense of themselves and the world.	
Communication	Action to explain meanings and attitudes in their behaviour to share with others.	
Domination		
HR practices	Specific organisational actions designed to manage human resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How do you manage the employees of your department? What do you do to guide them (e.g. annual reviews)? ➤ Which resources or facilities are provided to fulfill your tasks and roles and are they appropriate? ➤ To what extent do you have the possibility to perform other tasks and roles than defined by the Board of Directors or business managers? Which resources and facilities do you have for this?
Domination	Structure that agents use to change behaviour of human and social events.	
Facility (resources)	The ability of agents to allocate equipments and human resources that are needed to perform the action.	
Power	Capability of agents to perform actions to achieve domination by power of resources, processes and meaning.	
Legitimation		
HR policies	Rules about the intention of an organisation about the HR tasks that should be performed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Which rules or policies are set up to direct you as line manager? How do these rules guide you towards intended performance? ➤ What are the consequences for not performing the tasks and role as defined by the Board of Directors?
Legitimation	Structure that agents use to legitimate human behaviour and social events.	
Norms	Rules and codes of conduct that guide agents towards required behaviour.	
Sanction	Actions of punishment or rewards that are used to achieve required behaviour of agents.	
Contradiction and conflict		
Contradiction	Dissimilarities in structures because of divergent modes of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Did contradictions exist between your view and the Board of Directors¹? ➤ Did conflicts arise as consequence of the contradictions between intended and actual HRM? How did they express themselves¹?
Conflict	Actual struggle between actors or groups, when agents are negatively affected by the differences of the contradicting structures.	

¹ Question based on Ehrenhard (2009)

4 RESULTS

This chapter presents the results of this case study according to the structuration theory of Giddens (1984). Section 4.1 contains intended and actual HR philosophy. Because HR philosophy corresponds with the first dimension of Giddens' structuration theory (1984), signification, this section also contains the results of the modality 'interpretative schemes' and the action 'communication' of both top management and line managers. Subsequently, the results of intended and actual HR philosophy, interpretative schemes and communication are compared and contradictions are described. Section 4.2 describes the HR policies which corresponds with the third dimension of Giddens' structuration theory (1984), legitimation. Therefore, this section also includes the results of the modality 'norms' and the action 'sanction'. The results of intended and actual HR policies, norms and sanctions are compared and contributions are identified. Section 4.3 presents the intended and actual HR practices and the corresponding second dimension of Giddens' structuration theory (1984), domination. Further, the results of intended and actual facilities, a modality, and intended and actual power, an action, are mentioned. Also a comparison is made of the results and the contradictions between intended and actual HR practices, facilities and power are provided. The last section, section 4.4 summarizes the contradictions of intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices and determines conflicts between those levels of HR systems.

4.1 INTENDED VERSUS ACTUAL HR PHILOSOPHY

HR philosophy is the first dimension of HR systems and is linked to signification. In this case study, the HR philosophy is "to provide an integrated care with high quality care products from a location transcendent vision that continuously adapt and improve based on evaluations of patients' expectations and all players in health care" (Miltenburg, 2013b, p. 1). According to top management "support for this HR philosophy is created with a decentralized management model in which line managers are able to tune care processes of employees and to organise work from the patients' perspective" (Miltenburg, 2013b, p. 2).

Both business managers stated:

Line managers are responsible for operational management of their departments to achieve high quality care.

Top management underlines the importance of employees, because top management is aware of the fact that employees define the quality of care by conducting care processes. Therefore, top management expect line managers to collect information about these care processes to be able to tune those processes by directing employees when necessary to achieve high quality care. Employees should also respond to market trends by product adjustment and innovation to increase the quality of care (Miltenburg, 2013b, p. 2). Top managers support this. One of the business managers said:

We should constantly adapt the quality of care and keep on innovating. Therefore we have to stimulate and support our employees to come along with these changes.

According to the intended HR philosophy, another important aspect of the HR philosophy is the patients' perspective of care. Top management counts on employees to be aware of the patients' perspective of care, because employees are closely involved with patients. Top management expect from employees to share these patients' perspectives with the line managers and other employees which contributes to quality of care and is in line with the HR philosophy.

Thus, if employees conduct high quality care processes, which are stimulated and directed by line managers, and if they share patients' perspectives with their line managers and other employees, the intended HR philosophy is met according to the top management and organisational success will be achieved.

Top management clarify the HR philosophy by their interpretative schemes and communication. The interpretative scheme of top management is based on quality requirements. The HR philosophy is needed to be able to meet the quality standards of care in the Netherlands.

It also contributes to “a powerful care organization that offers care to residents of the east of the Netherlands” (Miltenburg, 2013a, p. 2). As one top manager also explains in the interview:

The HR philosophy is resulting in more responsibility of line managers, but also of employees. This contributes to knowledge, but also to the performance of care processes.

Also, to achieve the HR philosophy, top management expects line managers to listen to and consult with employees about the things that happen at the department. Problems the department is facing or needs of employees should be discussed. Top management expect line managers to have an overview of the ins and outs of their department and that requires consulting with employees. Like one of the top managers said:

If I ask a line manager how the department is doing and he or she has to ask the secretary, something is going completely wrong.

Top management communicates these interpretative schemes to line managers, but also to employees. They provide quality requirements of care to the employees, but also explain the importance of patients’ perspectives. The top managers stimulate employees to collect these perspectives and respond to them in order to achieve high quality of care that continuously adapts and improves. Though, it is almost always communicated from top management through line managers towards the employees. All four top managers stated:

Line managers are the direct supervisors of the employees and are most appropriate and most able to communicate quality requirements and other expectations of top managers towards the employees.

Line managers also see their employees as a core aspect of achieving the HR philosophy. The results of this study show that line managers are responsible for the daily coordination of care and everything that is necessary to facilitate the daily coordination properly such as HR.

Though, as one of the line managers said:

The employees are the ones that perform care processes and are aware of patients' perspectives. We as line managers can control and direct care processes towards high quality according to the standards of ZGT by managing the employees.

Line managers stimulate and motivate employees to take job responsibility for those care processes. Though, the extent to which the line managers have to correct and direct employees depends on the composition of employees at the department. As one line managers mentioned in the interview:

The composition of employees is an important factor. The quality of care processes is dependent on the knowledge and skills level of employees. Less experienced employees should be linked to experienced, senior employees, because it stimulates the independency of the department. Less experienced employees could ask help from the experienced, senior employees to control and improve the quality of care processes.

An important aspect of the quality of care processes is the notice of responsibility by employees. Line managers said that:

If the employees are able to recognize and to take responsibility of care processes and if the knowledge and skill level of employees at the department is appropriate, they are able to provide high quality care.

As the results of top management provided before, another important aspect of the HR philosophy is the understanding of patients' perspectives to contribute to the continuously adapting and improving quality of care. Also the results of line managers show the importance of these perspectives. Line managers expect employees to collect these perspectives and use them in performing care processes. As one line manager mentioned:

Employees are closely involved with the patients, which makes them able to identify patients' perspectives of care. Employees should use these perspectives in performing care processes, but should also discuss them with other employees.

Line managers clarify the HR philosophy by their interpretative schemes and by communication. To achieve integrated and high quality of care that continuously adapts and improves, line managers think it is important to understand what is happening at the department and to listen to the employees. The interpretative scheme line managers base their actions on is the knowledge of understanding and listening to employees, because line managers know that that is important to allow them to interact with the employees of their department. As one of the line managers stated:

The fact that employees of your department know that you are available when they need you gives them enough confidence to work independently and to recognize responsibility, which contributes to high quality of care.

Line managers clarify their interpretative schemes to employees by communication of their involvement with employees at the department and their accessibility for employees. A few line managers mentioned:

My accessibility for employees is commonly known and employees come to me if they have questions or need advice. It contributes to the performance of employees, but also to my awareness of the individual employee and what happens at the department.

To achieve high quality of care, line managers said that employees should ask for help and advice from senior, experienced employees or from the line manager if they doubt about something. Therefore, as described before, the accessibility of line managers for employees is communicated.

So, the actual HR philosophy of integrated care of high quality that continuously adapts and improves is based on the line managers' understanding, listening and commitment to employees, but also on the recognition of responsibility and the knowledge and skills level of employees.

4.1.1 CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN INTENDED AND ACTUAL HR PHILOSOPHY

The HR philosophy of top management is not that different from the actual HR philosophy. Both top management and line managers recognize that employees are performing care processes and both are stimulating employees to achieve high quality of these care processes.

Besides, both top management and line managers consider employees as closely involved with patients, which makes them aware of patients' perspectives. Both intended as actual HR philosophy underlines the importance of patients' perspectives.

Although the intended and actual HR philosophy corresponds, top management and line managers have slightly different interpretative schemes which they base their HR philosophy on. Top managements' interpretative scheme is based on the quality requirements of care which the employees should fulfill, while the interpretative scheme of line managers is based on listening to employees and understanding of what happens at the department. Though, top management also underline the importance of understanding of the ins and outs of a department. Besides, both top managements' and line managers' interpretative schemes are meant to achieve high quality of care that constantly adapts to its environment.

Employees are aware of the HR philosophy, because it is communicated to them by line managers. Both the quality requirements, the base of the interpretative scheme of top management, as the involvement of line managers with the employees at the department, their interpretative scheme, are communicated to the employees. This communication is meant to (re)produce the HR philosophy. However, there is a small contradiction between top management and line management about the responsibility of the employees. Top management expect line managers to stimulate and motivate employees to take responsibility and to contribute to the achievement of organisational goals and success, but top management attribute the final responsibility to the line manager. The line managers do agree that they have the final responsibility, but they are having trouble with delegating tasks to employees to make the employees responsible for specific tasks. It could be confusing for employees if they should recognize and take responsibility when they have no responsibility over specific tasks.

4.2 INTENDED VERSUS ACTUAL HR POLICIES

The second dimension of HR systems is HR policies, which is linked to legitimation. HR policies provide rules and guidelines that offer a direction to achieve organizational objectives with the use of specific HR practices. The results show four groups of HR policies which are staffing policies, consisting of recruitment policies and selection policies, training policies, performance management policies and job design policies.

Top management has established HR policies, but during this study, a new recruitment policy was applied. Top management decided to set a recruitment freeze, so the recruitment policy was that no new employees are hired. If there were vacancies, the department should fulfill the vacancy internally. The selection policy of top management was based on the knowledge and skills level of new employees. They should have the appropriate knowledge and skills for the specific function. The results of the study show that the selection policy for line managers was not based on knowledge and skills level, but on the function of the line manager before the reorganisation. As all top managers mentioned in one way or another:

Former process coordinators and heads of the departments were selected to become line managers. The selected line managers have performed a development assessment and it turns out that not every line manager had the appropriate level of knowledge and skills. Only one third of the line managers had the appropriate level, one third does not have an appropriate level of knowledge and skills, but there was opportunity to develop and get the appropriate level, and one third does not have and probably will not get the appropriate level of knowledge and skills.

This shows that the selection policy was not maintained. Though, all top managers understand that future line managers should fulfill the assessment with an output of an appropriate level of knowledge and skills. As one business manager said:

I did not agree that there were no assessments conducted before the line managers were selected. If I hire a new line manager, actually for all future line managers, I would recommend that job applicants perform an assessment during the recruitment procedure to ensure the appropriate knowledge and skills level of the line manager.

Top management anticipates a high quality of care if the recruitment and selection policies are respected. Besides, they expect that the training policies they established for line managers and employees contribute to continuous adaptation and improvement of care at the departments. One business manager mentioned:

Line managers should provide regularly training courses to the employees to take the continuously changing environment into account.

Another group of policies are performance management policies. The performance management policy of top management is based on output control, because top management expect line managers and employees to behave and perform in a way to achieve organisational objectives. As one of the members of the Board of Directors stated:

Line managers should perform result-oriented work. Result-oriented work is based on achieving organisational objectives and will optimize the performance of employees and contributes to the performance of the department.

Besides, the results of top management also show the importance of annual performance reviews. Top management also expect line managers to perform annual performance reviews with employees. As both business managers mentioned:

Line managers should perform annual performance reviews with employees to control and manage the behaviour of employees.

Top management has job design policies as well. Top management is not able to describe all tasks every individual employee should fulfill. Top management created organisational objectives the department should fulfill and the line managers may decide how to do that. This creates autonomy for line managers. Top management only expect line managers to manage this autonomy and to make decisions within the law and regulations of care. One of the Board of Directors mentioned:

Line managers are able to make decisions about the performance of the department themselves with understanding of laws and regulations.

Top management provides norms, which are rules and codes of conduct to line managers to offer direction in order to comply with the HR policies. If the line managers do not implement the intended HR policies, top management may use sanctions to modify the behaviour of line managers and ensure the line managers are implementing the intended HR policies.

The norms for recruitment policies are clear. The rule of the recruitment freeze is that no external or new employees are hired.

Top management also set up a guideline for selection policies. The norm is that every new employee in function, from internal or external, should have an appropriate knowledge and skills level based on the competence profile that is established at ZGT. For example, as one of the business managers said:

Last year, a researcher has developed a competence profile for line managers at ZGT. We could use that competence profile as a baseline for the assessment for new line managers during the application process.

Although there are norms for the recruitment and selection policies, top management did not mention very clear which sanctions are following if the norms are not complied. Only one of the top management stated:

If the current line managers deliver insufficient work, even after multiple conversations about it, I have to fire the line manager.

According to top management, training policies should support the recruitment and selection policies and norms. Training policies are based on continuous improvement of employees. Top management mentions no clear norms or sanctions about training policies. However, top management does have clear norms about performance management policies. Top management expect line managers and employees to achieve organisational objectives within the timeframe set for this objectives in which result-oriented work is essential. One of the business managers mentioned that if the organisational objectives are not met, there is a sanction:

Line managers or employees should change their plans until the organisational objectives are met. Exceeding the organisational objectives is not possible.

The job design policies top management set up creates autonomy for line managers and employees. The only norm top management has in job design policies is again the achievement of organisational objectives.

Top management has no norm for line managers and employees how to achieve these organisational objectives. Top management also did not mention any sanction for job design policies in this study.

Line managers also use HR policies to achieve organisational objectives, but those HR policies might be different from top management's HR policies. The results shows that line managers do not always follow the recruitment policy of recruitment freeze. If line managers have vacancies at their department, they try to fulfill the vacancy internally. That is not always possible and in those cases, line managers searching for external candidates. Line manager also have the selection policy of an appropriate knowledge and skills level of new employees. One line manager said:

Employees should have an appropriate knowledge and skills level to work independently. We could use a competence level to determine if internal employees have an appropriate knowledge and skills level for a specific job. If there is no internal fulfilment of the job possible, external employees are searched and they also should have an appropriate level of knowledge and skills.

Besides, training policies are well defined by line managers as well. Line managers expect their department to adapt and improve continuously. Therefore, most line managers provide training and education about specific subjects to employees, so they could develop. One of the line managers mentioned:

I set up a development program to determine the knowledge and skills level of the employees at my department. A competence list is made for every function and this list is transformed into concrete behaviour.

The development of the knowledge and skills level of employees is measured with behavioural and output control. Behavioural and output control is the performance management policy of line managers and is about the achievement of organisational objectives. Line managers achieve behaviour control by managing and optimizing the behaviour of employees with development programs which supports the department to achieve organisational objectives, the output control.

The transformation from the competence list in concrete behaviour is also a result of the line managers' job design policy. Every line manager has descriptions about the contents of the different jobs at the department. This content is set up to create a standard for tasks to be performed at the department in order to maintain a constant high level of quality of care within the law and regulations of care. A few line managers said:

The functions of employees are critically assessed. Employees know which tasks and competences belong to their function and my job is to keep the department running by managing employees.

Line managers also have norms and sanction for HR policies. The rules for recruitment policies are based on the necessity of the fulfilment of the vacancy. If there is no internal solution to fulfill the vacancy appropriately, line managers have to search for external solutions. As one of the line managers said:

If there is no internal solution to fulfill the job, because the competences of the job are not met, an external solution is needed.

The norm for selection policies is an appropriate knowledge and skills level based on competences of the specific function. New and current employees should have the identified competences that belong to their function. If employees do not satisfy the competences, the sanction will be that training is required to achieve development or the employee should leave the department or organisation. One line manager mentioned:

The development program scores employees and this score determines if employees could stay, need training and coaching or should leave the department.

Line managers also have rules for the training policy. Training is part of the development program of several departments and is supporting the achievement of organisational objectives by line managers and employees. There is not a clear definition of line managers how often training should be provided to employees, but training is needed if the employee or the line managers think it is necessary for employees' performances.

One line manager stated:

I have individual feedback sessions with employees who ask for it and with employees from whom I think it is necessary. The opportunities for training and development are discussed during these sessions.

Norms for performance management policies are clear as well. Line managers expect employees to deliver high quality of care and work towards achieving organisational objectives. The behaviour of employees should be in favour of the department and should support the organisational objectives. Related to that, the norm for the job design policy is that line managers and employees should be aware of and act in line with the tasks and competences that belong to their function. If line managers or employees behave otherwise than the defined tasks and competences and if the organisational objectives are not met, sanctions follow. This might be dismissal of the employee or transferring the employee to another department. One line manager said:

Performance management is important to achieve high quality of care. If the employees do not provide sufficient work even after multiple conversations, the employee is dismissed.

So, four groups of HR policies are distinguished and the actual HR policies and associated norms and sanctions are determined. These results should be compared to the intended HR policies, norms and sanctions to determine if there is a gap between them.

4.2.1 CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN INTENDED AND ACTUAL HR POLICIES

The intended and actual HR policies are partly the same. Though, the HR policies, norms and sanctions set by top management are only applied by line managers if line managers are aware of them and if the sanctions are powerful enough to align the behaviour of line managers with the HR policies, norms and sanctions.

The results of this study show that top management does not have full power in case of the recruitment policies. Top management set a recruitment freeze and vacancies should be fulfilled internally.

Line managers go along with this policy, but if the vacancy cannot be fulfilled internally they search for external solutions. Because there is lack of sanction from top management for line managers if the recruitment freeze is exceeded, actual recruitment policies change the intended recruitment policies. Though, in case of selection policies, top management and line managers have the same expectations. Top management expect an appropriate level of knowledge and skills of their employees, as well as line managers. If the knowledge and skills level is not appropriate, both top management and line managers are firing that employee. The intended training policies are not very clear. Top management state that training should lead to continuous adaptation and improvement of care. The actual training policies are in line with the intended training policies, because line managers also underline the importance of continuous adaptation and improvement of care. The norms of training policies are more defined by line managers than by top management. Also the performance management policies are clarified by top management and line management. Both are about achieving organisational objectives. Top management has the rule to achieve objectives with result-oriented work. Line management expect employees to deliver high quality of care and work towards achieving organisational objectives to be in favour of the results of the department. There is no possibility that objectives are not met, because top management controls line managers and make them change plans to make sure the organisational objectives are met. So, intended and actual performance management policies are in line. The job design policy of top management creates autonomy for line managers and employees. Line managers though set up a description of the different functions at their department based on a competence list of the functions. The job design policy of the line manages outweigh the intended job design policy.

Thus, there is a small gap between intended and actual staffing policies, especially between intended and actual recruitment policies. Also the intended job design policy of autonomy is not in line with the actual job design policy, which creates a small gap either. Though, intended and actual selection policies, training policies and performance management policies are in line.

4.3 INTENDED VERSUS ACTUAL HR PRACTICES

The third dimension of HR systems is HR practices, which is linked to domination. HR practices are specific organisational actions designed to manage employees. HR practices are linked to the HR policies, because HR policies provide rules and guidelines that offer a direction to achieve organizational objectives with the use of specific HR practices. This makes it possible to divide HR practices in four groups as well: staffing practices, containing recruitment practices and selection practices, training practices, performance management practices and job design practices.

The intended recruitment practices are internal job interviews. If there is a new vacancy, the use of only internal job interviews and no external job interviews comply with the HR policy of recruitment freeze. Top management expect line managers to conduct job interviews and select new employees from these job interviews using specific selection practices, because these selection practices support line managers to achieve the appropriate knowledge and skills level of new employees. The selection practices top management requires are job competences assessments. One of the business managers said:

A recent study at ZGT provides a competence profile of employees. To ensure an appropriate level of knowledge and skills, the employees should be tested if they fulfill the competence profile.

According to top management, line managers should also provide on-the-job training to ensure proper knowledge and skills of employees to perform high quality care processes. Training practices as training courses should be used to stay up to date with the developments in healthcare which are important for the performances of employees. Top management expect line managers to support and stimulate the employees at their departments to do such training courses. As one of the Board of Directors mentioned:

Line managers are responsible for their departments, also for the continuous improvement of the department and adaptation of the department to the changing environment.

Top management also expects line managers to use performance management practices and job design practices to control and direct employees, which are respectively individual feedback sessions and annual performance reviews and assessments based on legally valid protocols. As one business manager said:

Annual performance reviews are important to manage employees' behaviour. But it is also an opportunity for employees to discuss how things are going and how they should develop themselves.

If top management wants to change the behaviour of line managers and employees, they use their facilities. The results show that top management use facilities like the management development program to increase the knowledge and skills level of line managers. As one of the business managers said:

We provided a management development program to the line managers to increase their expertise and to direct the line managers towards the organisational objectives.

Besides, top management are able to choose which facilities are provided to line managers, which could enable the power of resources of top management. Power of resources is closely related to the modality facilities. If top management have the appropriate facilities, they have power of resources. Though, top management does not have the facilities themselves to control and manage employees, they provide facilities towards line managers. Besides, top management expect line managers to make decisions about the training practices and performance management practices to influence the employees' behaviour towards appropriate behaviour as well. As all four business managers mentioned:

Line managers are responsible for their departments, which contains of their employees, the continuous adaption and improvement of the department and the fulfilment of organisational objectives.

The control of the appropriate level of knowledge and skills is divided between top management and line managers.

Top management use recruitment and selection practices to recruit and select line managers with an appropriate expertise and top management expect line managers to use those practices to recruit and select employees. Also the job design practice of top management that creates autonomy for line managers results in no power of resources for top management. As one of the business managers said:

Line managers should manage and control their employees to create an appropriate knowledge and skills level of the department.

Because power of resources is closely related to the modality facilities and top management does not have the appropriate facilities to manage and control employees, top management does not have power of resources.

Besides power of resources, there is also power of processes. Power of processes is closely related to the modality norms. Top management has power of processes if they have dominant rules, procedures and protocols they could base their behaviour on. Top management expect to have rules and protocols which the line manager will comply with, like the recruitment freeze. The recruitment freeze means that there are only internal job interviews permitted. Top management expect line manager to use internal job interviews to maintain an appropriate knowledge and skills level and behaviour at their departments in order to achieve organisational objectives. As one of the Board of Directors mentioned:

Business managers should manage and control line manager based on the rules we set, so line managers could run their department.

Though, top management does not have power of processes here, because they delegate responsibilities of the department, like HR responsibilities, budget responsibilities and responsibility over the employees, to the line managers. Also the fact that top management does not have specific procedures and protocols about which training practices, performance management practices and job design practices should be maintained show that top management does not have power of processes at the departments.

The third dimension of power is the power of meaning. Top management expect line managers and employees to achieve organisational objectives. The way top management wants line managers and employees to achieve these organisational objectives is not very clear. The only thing top management was really clear about was that line managers and employees should have an appropriate knowledge and skills level based on the competences of the job. Top management legitimize their demands for achieving organisational objectives with the reorganisation policies and the requirements of government agencies in the Netherlands. With legitimizing their choice, top management creates domination over line managers and employees, because they determine ‘the wants’ of line managers and employees, namely the achievement of organisational objectives. One of the business managers explained the domination:

*Line managers should achieve the organisational objectives with their department.
There is no possibility that organisational objectives are not met.*

The way how line managers and employees should fulfill the organisational objectives is not clearly defined by top management. This results in expectations from line managers about HR practices and the use of these HR practices. To align with the recruitment freeze, line managers use internal job interviews to fulfill vacancies internally. Though, in some cases also external job interviews were provided to fulfill a vacancy, because there was not an internal solution possible. The selection practices for new and current employees are based on the competences of the job. Competence assessments are used to measure if employees have the appropriate level of knowledge and skills to fulfill the job. One of the line managers stated:

Competence assessments provide information about the level of knowledge and skills of employees and offers opportunities for development of employees. It provides an appropriate knowledge and skills level of new and current employees.

Training practices are also used by line managers. They provide training courses to employees to achieve continuous improvement of the department. As mentioned in the results of the line managers’ HR philosophy, it is important to adapt to the changing environment.

Therefore, development of the department by training practices is important. These training courses are partly mandatory for the whole department, but are also partly individual oriented. For example individual coaching sessions, which are performed in case employees struggle with particular aspects of their job. Line managers mention that those sessions offer the opportunity to control and stimulate individual employees. One of the line managers said:

I have individual coaching sessions with employees occasionally. Sometimes because I think it is necessary to have such sessions, other times because there is a demand from the employee.

Performance management practices are used to manage employees. Line managers control employees and use individual feedback sessions or annual performance reviews to direct employees in the appropriate direction. This means that employees are directed to a performance that achieves the organisational objectives. One line manager mentioned:

HR practices should be used by line managers to manage employees just as top management use HR practices to manage us, line managers. For example, annual performance reviews are important.

Line managers perform annual performance with all employees once a year, while feedback sessions could be scheduled if necessary. These feedback sessions could be in groups or individually. The job design practices line managers handle is based on job enrichment. Line managers are motivating and stimulating employees by giving them more responsibility at the department. For example, line managers delegate scheduling to employees. As one line manager said:

The employees of my department are busy, because we had to cut some working hours. However, making some of them responsible for specific tasks, I can motivate and stimulate them in their job and improve their performance.

The results show that the HR practices top management established for line managers to manage and control the employees are not always the same HR practices line managers actually use.

This could mean that line managers have power. The results of this study show the power of line managers as well. Line managers achieve power if ‘power of resources’, ‘power of processes’ and ‘power of meaning’ is created.

As shown in the results of top management, line managers have power of resources. Line managers are able to control and manage employees to influence their behaviour. They select and recruit employees, they provide training courses and performance management practices like annual performance reviews and individual feedback sessions to achieve an appropriate knowledge and skills level of employees in order to achieve organisational goals. Besides, they offer job enrichment to influence behaviour of employees by motivating and stimulating employees by giving them more responsibility at the department, for example scheduling. As one of the line managers said:

I perform annual performance reviews with all employees at my department. Such reviews offer me the opportunity to control and manage behaviour of employees, but also offer the opportunity to employees to have their say and to create together an appropriate behaviour of the employees. For example extra tasks could enhance the motivation of the employee. Therefore I delegate scheduling to one of the employees.

Line managers also have power of processes. As described above, top management delegates the responsibility of the department and the employees towards the line managers. Line managers are able to determine which processes, rules and protocols are used to create an appropriate behaviour of their employees. One of the line managers mentioned:

The business manager gives me freedom to perform the tasks that belong to my job. The business manager only checks if organisational objectives are met.

For example, line managers have a dominant rule for recruitment which exceeds the top management rule. Line managers use external job interviews for recruitment if internal job interviews are not offer a solution. This means that rule of the recruitment freeze does not have power to make the line managers handle that rule.

Also their decisions about training practices and performance management practices, for example if they perform annual performance reviews or not, but also decisions about job design creates power of processes. As some line managers said and supported by top management:

As a line manager, I am responsible for the department. So I have to make decisions about the performance of the department. Top management could support me, but I have final responsibility.

The results show that line managers do not have power of meaning. Because top management can legitimize their demands with the policy of the reorganisation and the requirements of government agencies in the Netherlands, they determine ‘the wants’ of line managers and employees. Their wants are the achievement of organisational objectives. This show that top management has power of meaning. Even though it is possible that one line manager use different rules and practices to meet organisational objectives than another line manager, as long as the objectives are met, every line manager could decide by themselves which protocols, rules and practices they use to control and manage the behaviour of the employees at their department and to achieve organisational objectives. As one line manager said:

As long as I can explain to my business manager what I am doing to achieve organisational objectives and how I am doing it, I am able to make decisions for the department.

So, top management have power of meaning. Line managers also have power of resources and power of processes. Both top management and line managers are aware of each other’s power, but they also are aware of their own power. Therefore both top management and line managers have domination in specific fields, which creates (re)production of structures of domination.

4.3.1 CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN INTENDED AND ACTUAL HR PRACTICES

The intended and actual HR selection practices, training practices, performance management practices and job design practices are partly the same, but the recruitment practices are slightly different.

Top management wants line managers to use internal job interviews as recruitment practices and line managers use them. Though, line managers also use external job interviews if internal job interviews do not fulfill the vacancy. This creates a gap between intended and actual HR practices, because line managers exceed the recruitment policy of recruitment freeze with the use of external job interviews. Intended and actual selection and performance management practices align, where training practices are slightly different. There is not a gap between intended and actual training practices, but top management did not clearly describe which training practices they expect. They gave the responsibility of training practices to the line managers. Finally, there is also a same difference as training practices in job design practices. Top management gave autonomy to the line managers to determine the job design practices like job enrichment.

These alignments, gaps and differences between intended and actual HR practices also resulted in a difference of power of top management and line management. First, line managers have power of resources. Line managers have the facilities to influence the behaviour of employees, like annual performance reviews, and therefore have the power of resources over employees. Second, top management does not have power of processes as well, because the responsibility of the department and employee lies at the line managers. Line managers are able to make decisions for the department and employees, like the use of training courses or job enrichment. This ability of line managers to make decisions gave them power of processes. Finally, top management do have power of meaning, because they could legitimize their choice with the policy of the reorganisation and the requirements of government agencies in the Netherlands and therefore determine 'the wants' of line managers and employees, which are the organisational objectives.

4.4 CONFLICTS BETWEEN INTENDED AND ACTUAL HR SYSTEMS

The interview analysis determined the intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices (table 3), which revealed conflicts between intended and actual HR systems.

In the case of the recruitment freeze, its introduction did not lead to the appropriate behaviour as expected by top management. Top management stated that all new vacancies should be fulfilled internally, thus no external job interviews are allowed.

However, line managers were aware of this rule, but noticed that not all vacancies could be fulfilled internally because the selection policies and practices could not be implemented then. In those cases, line managers used external job interviews to achieve the appropriate knowledge and skills level of the new employee to fulfill the vacancy. Top management decided to set a recruitment freeze in order to save on wage costs, because all hospitals have to deal with budget cuts. This means that top management not only base their interpretative schemes on quality requirements, they also use budget cuts. Though, the interpretative scheme of line managers is based on listening to and understanding of employees at their department. Despite the difference between both interpretative schemes, the intended and actual HR philosophies are quite the same. Therefore, there is not a conflict in this case.

Though, there is a small conflict between the achievement of organisational objectives and exceeding these objectives as described by top management and line managers. Top management has power of meaning, because they determine ‘the wants’ of line managers. Besides, according to top management, there is no possibility to not achieve the organisational objectives. As one of the business managers said for example:

The budget is strictly defined. It is not possible to exceed this budget, not even one euro. Line managers have to change their plans to not exceed the budget.

Though, line managers mentioned that they were able to deviate from the organisational objectives if they could explain with good arguments to the business manager. Besides, one of the line managers said:

My business manager said to me that I have to try things and to show some courage to make decisions for my department. If something does not go as it should be, I have to explain why with good arguments and the next time I know to decide different.

Top management clearly mentioned that there is no possibility that objectives are not met, because top management controls line managers and make them change plans to make sure the organisational objectives are met. This means that line managers could have different views of organisational goals, which may cause conflict.

TABLE 3: TOP MANAGEMENT HR SYSTEMS VERSUS LINE MANAGERS HR SYSTEMS

Top management		Line managers
HR philosophy		
➤ HR philosophy	Providing integrated, high quality care that continuously adapt and improve based on evaluations of patients' expectations	Providing high quality care by daily coordination of care with understanding of patients' perspectives
➤ Interpretative schemes	Based on quality requirements and budget cuts to meet the quality standards of care	Based on listening to and understanding of employees at the department
HR policies		
➤ Recruitment policies	Recruitment freeze	Internal or external recruitment
➤ Selection policies	Appropriate knowledge and skills level	Appropriate knowledge and skills level
➤ Training policies	Regular training courses to contribute to the continuously changing environment	Regular training and education based on job competences
➤ Performance management policies	Achieving organisational objectives	Achieving organisational objectives
➤ Job design policies	Autonomy for line managers	Create a competence list
HR practices		
➤ Recruitment practices	Internal job interviews	Internal and/or external job interviews
➤ Selection practices	Job competences assessments	Job competences assessments
➤ Training practices	On-the-job training	Training courses and individual coaching sessions
➤ Performance management practices	Individual feedback sessions and annual performance reviews and assessments	Individual feedback sessions and annual performance reviews and assessments
➤ Job design practices	Autonomy for line managers	Job enrichment

5 DISCUSSION

The fifth chapter will review the findings of this study. First, the key findings of this study are discussed, an evaluation of structuration theory is made and obstructing factors are identified. Second, theoretical implications are given before practical implications and recommendations are described. Finally, limitations and suggestions for further research are provided.

Returning to the objective of this study, the core focus of this study is to explore the causes of the gap between intended and actual HR systems, because there is a lack of information about these causes (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Evidence showed that the actual HR systems are not always in line with the intended HR systems (Hope-Hailey, Farndale, & Truss, 2005; Khilji & Wang, 2006; Purcell, 1999; Truss, 2001) and it is remarkable that the causes of this gap are not known.

5.1 KEY FINDINGS

The theoretical framework of this study described that intended HR systems are equivalent to structure and actual HR systems are equivalent to actions. This made the interaction between intended and actual HR systems a duality according to Giddens' structuration theory (1984). Therefore, the results of the study were divided in HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices, the three levels of HR systems and every level is linked to one of the three dimensions of Giddens' structuration theory. Though, as Giddens' structuration theory has mentioned and the results of the study have shown the three dimensions of structuration are tightly linked. The separation of structures and action in three dimensions is made by Giddens to clarify the complex interaction between them. In this study, a separation was needed for the understanding of the causes of the gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, policies and practices as well.

In this study, HR philosophy seemed to be linked to the first dimension of Giddens' structuration theory (1984), signification. This dimension contains the modality interpretative schemes and the action communication.

The results of this study show that there is no contradiction between the intended and actual HR philosophy, which are both about stimulating employees to achieve high quality of care processes and that there is understanding of and reaction to patients' perspectives. This HR philosophy creates organisational objectives. The achievement of these organisational objectives is the main focus of both top management and line managers. This focus could be explained by the fact that top management is responsible for the performance of the whole organisation which is created by the achievement of organisational objectives by the departments. The line managers are responsible for the contribution of their departments. Both top management and line managers want to achieve high quality of care that continuously adapts and innovates to the changing environment. Though, top management is focused on performance that support the overall business strategy (Boxall & Purcell, 2003) based on quality requirements for care and necessary budget cuts, whereas line managers are focused on the day-to-day performance (Hutchinson & Purcell, 2008). However, a remarkable result of this study is the contradiction between the intended and actual interpretative schemes these HR philosophies are based on. Top management's interpretative scheme is based on the quality requirements of care and on budget cuts, while the interpretative scheme of line managers is based on listening to and understanding of employees. These interpretative schemes show that the modalities facilities and norms have influence as well. The quality requirements of care top management dealing with are examples of norms, while a budget cut is an example of a financial resource, a facility. This overlap shows the linkage between the three dimensions, modalities and actions of Giddens' structuration theory. Nevertheless, both the intended and actual interpretative schemes are supporting intended and actual HR philosophy, which is equal. So, the different interpretative schemes did not result in a gap between intended and actual HR philosophy.

Despite the alignment of intended and actual HR philosophy, the results of this study show that the actual recruitment policy is not in line with the intended recruitment policy. This difference between intended and actual recruitment policies is possible because there is no sanction for this difference. Line managers are able to perform external job interviews if they think it is necessary to select an employee with the appropriate knowledge and skills level. This results in a gap between intended and actual recruitment policies. This gap is influenced by the modality norms, because the actual norm transcends the intended norm. Besides, the gap is also influenced by the modality facilities.

Line managers are able to perform external job interviews, because they know they have the appropriate facilities to do that. Though, these facilities, resources that are needed to perform the action (Lukes, 2005), are not clearly mentioned by the line managers in this study. Examples of these facilities are available financial resources and/or the availability of a tool for external job interviews.

There is also a gap between intended and actual recruitment practices. It could be explained why there is a gap between intended and actual recruitment policies and practices when looking at the selection policies and practices. As mentioned by Carlson et al. (2002) in order to acquire employees with high-quality performance with selection policies and practices, a recruitment policy that attract enough candidates for selection is needed. If line managers have to fulfill a new vacancy and there are not enough candidates for selection internally, they have to select externally to obtain high-quality employees.

The gap between intended and actual recruitment practices is caused by the facilities as described above and the fact that there is no sanction from top management to line managers if the line managers perform other as intended. This illustrates that both the modality facilities and the action sanction influence this gap. Besides, the action power has influence as well. The results of this study about power show important findings. There is a difference in the three dimensions of power of top management and line management. Line management have power of resources, because they have the facilities to control and manage employees. Besides, line managers have power of processes, because the responsibility of the department and employee lies at the line managers. However, top management does have power of meaning, because they could legitimize their choice and demand and determine 'the wants' of line managers and employees. These results also show that the dimensions of Giddens cannot be seen separately. Both the modalities norms and facilities and the actions sanction and power are influencing the gap between intended and actual HR policies and HR practices.

5.2 STRUCTURATION THEORY

As the theoretical framework has described, it is interesting to use Giddens' structuration theory to clarify the gap and the causes of this gap between intended and actual HR systems.

Structures and action correspond with intended and actual HR systems respectively. However, the results of this study show that it is questionable if the structuration theory is valuable for this study. The expectation of this study was that modalities provide an explanation in case there is a gap between intended and actual HRM. This statement is illustrated in the conceptual model of the gap between intended and actual HRM based on Giddens' structuration theory (1984) (figure 3).

As is shown in the results, the modalities facilities and norms are influencing the gap between intended and actual recruitment policies and practices. However, even though the actual recruitment policies and practices transcend the intended ones, the intended recruitment policies and practices are not changed or reproduced. So the statement of Jones and Karsten (2008) about structuration theory that 'action of agents are based on structures while at the same time actions of agents reproduce or change structures or even produce new structures' is not provided in this study. For example, in case of performance management by achieving the organisational objectives, top management is focused on performance that support the overall business strategy (Boxall & Purcell, 2003) based on quality requirements for care and necessary budget cuts, whereas line managers are focused on the day-to-day performance (Hutchinson & Purcell, 2008). The structure top management and line managers base their actions on are different, but they will not change or reproduce each others' structure.

In addition, Giddens' structuration theory describes that all three dimensions have its own modalities. Those modalities are created to provide the opportunity to consider the abstract structures and also the interaction between the dimensions of structures and actions (Giddens, 1984; Jones & Karsten, 2008). Interpretative schemes are assigned to signification, facilities to domination and norms to legitimation. The theoretical framework of this study also assigned these modalities to the three levels of HR systems, HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices respectively. Though, the results of this study show that the levels of HR systems are often influenced by more than one modality. For example both facilities and norms are influencing recruitment policies. This supports the statement Giddens provided that 'every dimension of structuration theory is tightly linked' (Giddens, 1984). This statement and the results of this study show that it is not valuable to separate the three dimensions with its modalities for this study as structuration theory does. The interpretative schemes, facilities and norms could be identified without using structuration theory as well.

It is a possibility to ask the respondents about the underlying ideas and occurrences, the resources they use and the rules they maintain in their performance, for example with in depth interviews (Patton, 2005).

So, the results of this study show that structuration theory does not provide an appropriate base for this study, because structuration theory does not explain the gap between intended and actual HRM systems. When looking back at the conceptual model (figure 3), this model describes that contradictions between intended and actual modalities are resulting in conflict between intended and actual HR systems. In case of the modalities facilities and norms, this is true. Though, in case of interpretative schemes this is not true, because the intended and actual interpretative scheme differ, but do not cause conflict between intended and actual HR philosophy. However, the separation of the three levels of HR systems is valuable in determining the different aspects of both intended and actual HR systems, even though the three levels of HR systems are influencing each other.

These findings results in a change of the conceptual model of the gap between intended and actual HRM (figure 4). Conflicts may arise if the intended HRM is different from the actual HRM, not necessarily if there are contradictions between modalities.

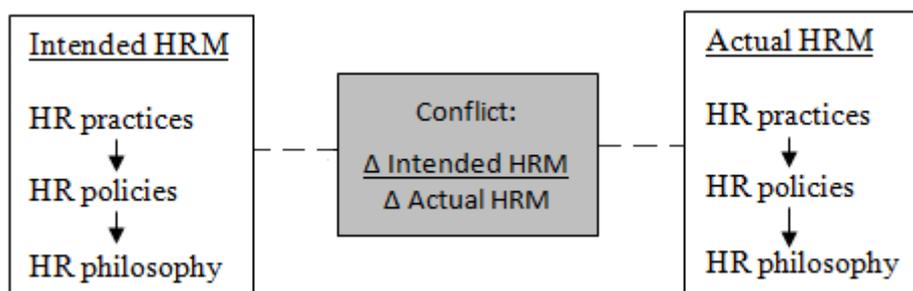


FIGURE 4: CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE GAP BETWEEN INTENDED AND ACTUAL HRM

5.3 OBSTRUCTING FACTORS

As determined in the introduction of this study, apart from the literature about the gap between intended and actual HRM, there is also a research field about the obstructing factors that hinder line managers in implementing intended HRM practices.

Both research fields are always explored in separated studies (e.g. Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Khilji & Wang, 2006). However, it is interesting to merge those research fields to see whether those obstructing factors have a significant role in the gap between intended and actual HRM.

During this study, the hindering factors were not the key focus. Though, they are taken into account to see if they are influencing the gap. The expectations from top management were that line managers have to deal with other resources and obstructing factors, like time pressure and pressure related to achieving both organisational and operational objectives which caused overload for line managers respectively. These expectations were based on literature (McConville, 2006; McGovern, Gratton, Hope-hailey, Stiles, & Truss, 1997; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003) and based on experiences with devolution of tasks because of the reorganisation at ZGT. Many HR responsibilities are devolved to line managers without reducing the original responsibilities of the line managers, which probably creates feelings of overload (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Though, this study shows no clear results about the influence of obstructing factors like feelings of overload on the gap between intended and actual HR systems, because the data gathered in the interviews does not show an influence of obstructing factors.

However, some of the line managers mentioned in the interviews that they deal with time pressure, because a several tasks are delegated from the business managers to them. Though, they do not think that it is influencing their performance. Besides, some line managers described the feeling of being torn into two, because of expectations from employees on the one hand and on the other hand the expectations from top management. Though, it did not result in feelings of overload, because line managers said that they were able to explain the choices their made with good arguments to satisfy both top management and employees.

It is remarkable that line managers do experience time pressure and sometimes also have feelings of being torn in two because of contradictory demands and varying priorities between operational tasks and HR responsibilities, but that they do not think that it is affecting their performance. Literature shows a limited opportunity for line managers to fulfil the HR tasks when line managers experience insufficient time and overload (Bos-Nehles, Riemsijk, & Looise, 2013, p. 866). Though, line managers are supported by the fact that there is almost no gap between intended and actual HR systems. Other obstructing factors are not found in this study.

So, obstructing factors could have influence on the gap between intended and actual HR systems, but that is not clarified with this study. Though, this does underline that structuration theory does not explain the causes of the gap between intended and actual HR systems with the modalities only.

5.4 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study contribute to the existing knowledge and research about the gap and the causes of the gap between intended and actual HR systems. First, the theoretical lens of this study is provided by Giddens' structuration theory (Giddens, 1984). This lens should give insight in the behaviour of top management and line managers and the underlying reasons for this behaviour. The results of this study show that structuration theory is not very valuable to explain the gap between intended and actual HR systems. The separation of structures, modalities and actions are not necessary, because all are interconnected and are influencing each other. Besides, based on structuration theory the contradictions in interpretative schemes of top management and line managers should result in a conflict, but that did not happen. This supports the statement that structuration theory is not valuable for this study. In addition, other obstructing factors could have influence on the gap as well, for example pressure related to achieving both organisational and operational objectives. So future studies should determine the underlying ideas and occurrences, the resources they use and the rules they maintain in their performance and other influencing factors to determine the causes of the gap between intended and actual HR systems.

Second, this study contributes to literature about the gap between intended and actual HR systems by combining two research fields. One about the gap between intended and actual HRM, the other is about obstructing factors that hinder line managers in implementing intended HR practices studies. Other studies only performed research in one of the specific research fields (e.g. Hope-Hailey et al., 2005; Khilji & Wang, 2006). This study merges those research fields to see whether those obstructing factors have a role in the gap between intended and actual HRM. This study has provided a first step to fill this gap. The theory and methodology used in this study could provide information for other case studies about the interaction between intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices, which creates theoretical generalization.

The theory used in this study is not valuable to determine the causes of the gap between intended and actual HR systems, though the methodology of a literature review, a document analysis and conducting interviews could provide a base for other studies about the gap between intended and actual HR systems.

Finally, this study shows that it is important in which dimension of power top management and line managers have power. Line managers have power of resources and power of processes. This means that they have power over their employees and they are able to determine the procedures and processes of work at their department. However, top management has power of meaning, so they decide which objectives the line managers have to achieve at their department. Top management gives freedom to line managers how to perform the tasks they should perform, but manage them by establishing organisational objectives the line managers should achieve. Future studies can use this result in their studies. Power is important, but power of meaning overrules power of resources and power of processes. Power of meaning is influenced by interpretative schemes and norms, because the wants of the organisation are based on knowledge, underlying ideas and rules. So, top management decide what the wants of the line managers are. Line managers are able to control and manage employees and determine procedures and processes, because they have power of resources and power of processes, but this is controlled by organisational objectives established by top management they should achieve.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study also has implications and recommendations for practitioners, specifically in this case for top management and line managers of ZGT. Though, it could be interesting for top managers and line managers of other organisations.

First, if top management will align the actual recruitment policies and practices with the intended ones, they should change the available facilities and power of line managers. Line managers have the facilities to achieve power of resources and power of processes, which gave them the opportunity to determine the performance of the department.

As long as top management keep power of meaning, line managers could have power of resources and power of processes, because in this case power of meaning transcend power of resources and power of processes. Top management should only change the facilities of line managers to perform external job interviews, because that conflicts with the norm of recruitment freeze.

Second, top management could use sanctions more often to align the actual norms with the intended norms, for example in the case of recruitment policies. To avoid the exceeding, top management should obliging line managers to behave according to the intended norms, because otherwise the line manager will be dismissed. This sanctioning will stimulate line managers to align their norms with the intended norms.

Besides, a recommendation could be that top management changes their intended recruitment policies and practices into the actual recruitment policies and practices in case they understand and agree with actual recruitment policies and practices to avoid the gap between intended and actual HR policies and practices.

Finally, the communication of interpretative schemes could be stimulated to create understanding of the intended interpretative schemes in line managers and the actual interpretative schemes in top management.

5.6 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This study tried to determine which modalities causes the gap between intended and actual HR philosophies, HR policies and HR practices. Therefore, a case study is performed using semi-structured interviews. A case study examines a phenomenon in depth and within a unit, but also in relation to its environment. Because of the restricted timeframe of the study and the intensive form of data gathering, this study is limited to one case study. The result is that empirical generalization of this study is not possible. Though, theoretical generalization is possible. Further research should be performed to create empirical generalization. Several case studies in different organizations and settings are needed to achieve that.

Another limitation of the study could be the focus of the study. This study tries to merge the research fields of obstructing factors for line managers in implementing HR systems and the gap between intended and actual HR systems. Though, the focus lies on the gap between intended and actual HR systems and not on obstructing factors, partly due to the restricted timeframe of the study. It could be that the researcher did not recognize these obstructing factors in the interviews with top management and line managers. Further research should focus on the influence of obstructing factors on the gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, policies and practices.

The study could also be limited by the possibility of the Hawthorne effect. This effect refers to ‘a phenomenon where a study subject’s behaviour and/or study outcomes are altered as a result of the subjects’ awareness of being under observation’ (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939). It is possible that top management and line managers answer the questions of the interviews in a way they think is the socially desirable and not their real answers. Even though semi-structured interviews offer the possibility to remain questioning till the justified amount and appropriate information is gathered (Plochg, Juttmann, & Klazinga, 2007) and give the respondents the possibility to explain their own background, information and experiences, it is not clear if the answers are socially desirable. Socially desirable answers are not wanted in this study, because this study tries to determine how top management and line managers implement HR systems, not the way they think they should implement or perform it. To eliminate the Hawthorne effect as much as possible, this study is conducted anonymous and the importance and relevance of the study is explicitly emphasized.

Another possibility for further research is to perform research with employees to determine their view and influence on the HR responsibilities of line managers. Line managers are the direct supervisors of employees, but having the interpretative scheme of understanding and listening could give employees power to affect the actual HR philosophy, policies and practices of line managers.

6 CONCLUSION

The sixth and final chapter answers the central question and provides the conclusion of this study. This study tried to answer the question which modalities cause the gap between intended and actual HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices.

This study shows that there is no gap between intended and actual HR philosophy. Even though the corresponding modality, interpretative schemes, is not the same for top management and line management, the HR philosophies are equal. Most intended and actual HR policies and HR practices are in line as well, which means that there is no gap between them. Though, there is a gap between intended and actual recruitment policies and practices. The actual recruitment policies and practices exceed the internal recruitment policies and practices which are influenced by the modalities facilities and norms and the actions power and sanctions. The modality norms has influence on this gap, because the actual norm exceeds the intended norm and no sanction is following. This means that intended HR policies and intended HR norms are changed by actual HR policies and norms. The modality facilities and the action power have influence on this gap either, because line managers have the facilities and power to perform the actual recruitment practices and to exceed the intended norm. There is also no sanction following, which means that intended recruitment practices are changed by actual recruitment practices.

To conclude, there is only a gap between the intended and actual recruitment policies and practices. The results of this study show that both the modality facilities as the modality norms are influencing the gap, but also other obstructing factors might play a role. Though, there is no gap between intended and actual HR philosophy and the other groups of intended and actual HR policies and practices.

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8 APPENDIX

8.1 JOB VALUATIONS OF THE HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENTS IN ZIEKENHUISGROEP TWENTE

The head of the department is cooperative and provides ongoing visible presence in the teams, which are under the head of the departments' responsibility. Besides, the head of the department performs managerial tasks.

The head of the department supports the board of the result accountability units (RVE), which exist of a business manager and a medical manager. The head of the department is hierarchically placed under the business manager. Together, policies and arrangements are made to realize the results concerning quality, production volume and cost of care processes in the RVE as determined by the board of directors. The head of the department ensures the controlling of the employees in the workplace and has specific tasks on human domain. The span of control of the head of the department is determined by a combination of the complexity of the processes that belong to the head of the departments units and the amount of fulltime equivalents (fte) of the department. The head of departments are placed in three groups of job valuations with each specific tasks and job conditions.

FWG 55:

- Span of control (30 fte)
- Provides operational leadership to a team up to 30 fte
- Leadership within the cooperative function and employable in the relevant department, guideline is 50 %. Specific tasks are further specified
- Can perform work on location transcending

FWG 60:

- Span of control (20 – 60 fte)
- Provides direct leadership to a large unit with homogeneous activities (40-60 fte) or a medium-sized specialist department (20-40 fte) with varying activities
- Works depending on the size and complexity of the department, specified percentage is in progress. Guideline is 25 %. Specific tasks are further specified
- Can perform work on location transcending

FWG 65:

- Manages, indirect or direct, a large department (>50 fte) with varying activities or directly manages a small specialist department (at least 40 fte) with varying activities where there is evidence of complex consultation situations
- Due to the high complexity of the department, these head of departments do not have a role with structural cooperative characteristics, but the head of the department is visibly present in the department.
- Can perform work on location transcending

The functions of head unit are carried out in at least 32 hours.