

The first line manager as implementer of HRM at TNT Mail

What are the challenges of effective HR implementation?



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Preface

This master thesis is the final master assignment of the study business administration (specialisation in human resource management). It is the result of a research project that is conducted at the business unit Operations of TNT Mail Netherlands. The primary objective of this master thesis is to find out whether first line managers at TNT Mail Netherlands experience hindrances that prevent them of implementing HRM effectively.

I have to say that human resource management always interested me and this interest also motivated me to conduct research on human resource management. Although human resource management as a subject of study is quite extended, I preferred to conduct research on the implementation of human resource management. I still have the opinion that it is not only necessary (for organisations) to develop a sound HR system in order to let HR succeed; the implementation of an HR system is important to the same extent. With this in mind, it was nothing more than a logical choice to get involved into the implementation of HRM. From the beginning up till the end of the research, it was interesting to learn more about the devolvement of HR tasks to first line managers and the way in which this is experienced by them. During the research processes, I was supported by many people and I would like to seize the opportunity to thank some persons who supported me the last few months.

I would like to thank Anna Nehles and Jan Kees Looise for supervising my final master assignment. Their advice, support and positive critics were valuable to a great intensity. I also want to thank Nienke Duisterhout and Arnold Rinzema for offering me the opportunity to conduct this research at TNT Mail. It was also their advice and support that always kept me motivated to go 'the extra mile'. Next to that, I would also thank my girlfriend and family for supporting my efforts while I was living in The Hague in order to conduct this research. Finally, I would want to thank all those people who were always interested in my research activities and those who enabled me, in what way howsoever, to conduct this research.

Jeroen Meijerink
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Management Summary

Rationale

In general, HR (human resource) tasks have been devolved to first line managers (FLMs). FLMs at TNT Mail Netherlands, who are called teamcoaches, are no exception compared to colleague line managers in other organisations. By taking this into consideration, the HRM literature states that the implementation of an HR system is as important as the development of the HR system. Therefore, teamcoaches have a crucial role in implementing HRM. They need to implement HRM effectively in a way that was intended in advance, in order to contribute to the effectiveness of the HR system of TNT Mail Netherlands.

Objective & research question

The objective of this research is to find out whether the teamcoaches at TNT Mail Netherlands experience hindrances that prevent them of implementing HRM effectively. These hindrances do not come by themselves and therefore, the organisational context will be taken into account in order to give possible for experienced hindrances. Therefore, the main research question of this research is:

Which factors do the teamcoaches at TNT Mail experience as hindering in implementing HRM effectively and how do these factors come forth out of the organisational context?

Interfering factors & organisational context

According to the literature, FLMs are hindered in implementing HRM effectively by five interfering factors. These interfering factors are (1) desire, (2) capacity, (3) competencies, (4) support and (5) policies & procedures. The factor desire deals with the fact that FLMs need to be willing to implement HRM. The factor capacity deals with the fact that FLMs need to have a sufficient amount of time to implement HRM effectively. Regarding competencies, FLMs also need to sufficiently possess HR-related competencies in order to implement HRM effectively. Besides that, FLMs also need to be supported by HR specialists in order to implement HRM effectively. And finally, FLMs need to rely on HR-related policies and procedures in order to implement HRM effectively. These five interfering factors will be studied in order to determine the extent and way in which teamcoaches are hindered in implementing HRM.

Next to that, it is believed that the interfering factors are related to the internal organisational context. The organisational context comprises of the following context factors: (1) business strategy, (2) culture, (3) technology, (4) organisational structure, (5) size and (6) HR system.

Methodology

In order to study the internal organisational context, I conducted a content analysis and interviewed five employees/managers who work within the BU Operations. The interfering factors were studied by applying a questionnaire and by interviewing sixteen teamcoaches. The questionnaire was sent to 242 teamcoaches in five areas¹, during June 2008. In total, 88 questionnaires (37%) were filled in and sent back. Next to that, 16 teamcoaches were interviewed. The number of teamcoaches was evenly distributed over these five areas¹. On an average, the interviews lasted 1,5 hours. In the end, the results are based upon the perceptions of teamcoaches, because a questionnaire and interviews were applied as research methods.

¹ The area West was not taken into account

Results

In general, all interfering factors are hindering to some extent, except the factor desire.

The teamcoaches are willing to implement HRM, because they find it appealing to implement HRM and more important, they have the opinion that HR activities contribute to the performance of their team(s). Next to that, the HR-related performances of the teamcoaches are appraised and this motivates them to implement HRM as well. It has to be said that situations show up in which teamcoaches postpone their HR activities, due to short-term pressures. However, postponed HR activities are always executed later on, because the teamcoaches want their team to be performing well in the long run or do not want to be reprimanded for not executing their HR activities.

However, the factor capacity is hindering to some extent. Teamcoaches indicated that their actual time spent on implementing HRM is not the same as the time they would like to spend; they spent less time on HRM than is needed. The results show that teamcoaches especially want more time to execute people-oriented HR activities, like e.g. (socially) accompanying employees and to make a personnel planning. However, the teamcoaches only experience a capacity hindrance if operational pressures (in 50% of the cases) or personnel planning problems (in 75% of the cases) are present, under the premise that they do not know how to spend their time effectively in order to both solve these problems and implement HRM. There is a group of teamcoaches (37%) who do not get into time troubles and are able to solve e.g. operational pressures and implement HRM, because they are able to prioritise and arrange their work effectively. Finally, the teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection and distribution process experience a capacity hindrance to the largest extent, because their span of control is quite voluminous (average = 73 employees). Next to that, these teamcoaches experience an increased pastime, because the collection and distribution processes take place separately in time.

The factor competencies is interfering to some extent. In general, teamcoaches indicated that they attended a sufficient amount of HR-related training courses and these training courses are sufficient in terms of quality as well. Next to that, teamcoaches indicated that their HR-related experience is sufficient as well. However, starting teamcoaches indicated that their HR-related competencies are interfering to some extent. Their HR-related experience is not sufficient. Next to that, a group of teamcoaches (27%) indicated that starting teamcoach do not attend elementary HR-related training courses. The HR policy of the BU Operations prescribes that teamcoaches should follow these trainings. However, it seems that the HR policy is not consistently implemented when it comes to the delivery of training courses for starting teamcoaches.

Regarding support, the teamcoaches indicated that the support they receive lives up to the support they need in a quantitative and qualitative way. However, the factor support is interfering to some extent, because a substantial group of teamcoaches (33%) indicated that they experience difficulties with finding the right person who is able to support them. Next to that, the right person is not always accessible if the teamcoach has found this person. Finally, in some areas, the teamcoaches collection cannot rely on an HR specialist during the evenings or after 5 p.m., when the collection process takes place.

Finally, the factor policies and procedures seems to be interfering to some extent. In general, the teamcoaches know for which HR issues they are responsible, mainly due to experience or due to attended trainings. A role uncertainty is only perceived if teamcoaches are confronted with unfamiliar or rare HR issues. The communication of the HR procedures, however, seems to be interfering to some extent. First of all, a group of teamcoaches (12,5%) has never seen an HR procedure or does not know that HR procedures have been set up. Second, a substantial group of teamcoaches (73%), who are aware of the existence of HR procedures, indicate that they face difficulties with finding HR

procedures. They indicated that the intranet is too voluminous and perceive an information overload because of that. Finally, almost all teamcoaches (86%) indicated that teamcoaches implement HRM inconsistently.

Recommendations

The following recommendations can be applied in order to reduce the hindrances that are presented above.

1. **Offer a time management training course.** A time management training course is a useful instrument to make the teamcoaches competent to effectively arrange their jobs, through prioritisation and by making a decent planning. In the end, this should enable them to arrange their working hours in such a way that either operational pressures or personnel planning problems are solved and that HRM is implemented effectively.
2. **Place collection employees under the supervision of a teamcoach collection** in order to decrease the capacity hindrance that is experienced by the teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection and distribution processes. One option is to place the collection employees under the supervision of a teamcoach collection, if the span of control of the teamcoaches collection does not become too extended. Otherwise, part-time teamcoaches collection can be hired that supervise the collection employees.
3. **Set up a standard training programme for starting teamcoaches.** In the end, the HR consultants and supervisors should be motivated, through institutional reinforcement, to offer this standard training programme to the teamcoaches. The training programme should consist of the following trainings: (1) trainings regarding HR-related administration tools (Harmony and HeRMES), (2) trainings related to conversations and the management of employees (e.g. selection interviews, job evaluation conversations, work meetings, absence conversations, correction conversations and solving conflicts).
4. **The HR consultant should be the primary Service Provider.** By applying this construction, teamcoaches do not have to search for other HR specialists. They can go to an HR consultant, who is able to support them or can put them through to other (secondary) Service Providers.
5. **Develop a list of HR contact persons.** It could be the case that HR consultants are not accessible. Then, this list of HR contact persons should enable the teamcoaches to get into direct contact with an HR specialist themselves. In the end, this should result in a situation in which the teamcoaches do not have to search for HR specialists who can support them.
6. **HR-hotline after 5 o'clock p.m.** In some areas, teamcoaches collection can not rely on support after 5 o'clock p.m. I recommend that the HR consultants, who support the teamcoaches, are accessible by telephone after 5 o'clock p.m. in order to support the teamcoaches collection through advisory services.
7. **Intranet portal for teamcoaches.** Intranets are more effective if the information on the intranet is tailored to the users of the intranet. Therefore, I would recommend to make an intranet portal for teamcoaches on which they can easily find HR procedures, HR forms and HR contact persons.
8. **Coordination by HR consultants.** In order to ensure a consistent implementation of HRM, the HR consultants should monitor whether teamcoaches implement HRM as was intended in advance, by e.g. checking HR forms or reports of work meetings.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	- 6 -
1.1 More devolvment to the line.....	- 6 -
1.2 Devolvment at TNT Mail Netherlands.....	- 7 -
1.3 Research Question	- 8 -
2. Theoretical Framework	- 11 -
2.1 The need for an effective HRM implementation	- 11 -
2.2 The interfering factors.....	- 12 -
2.3 Relationships between the interfering factors.....	- 14 -
2.4 The context of HRM.....	- 18 -
2.5 Research model.....	- 24 -
3. Methodology	- 25 -
3.1 Presentation of the research methods.....	- 25 -
3.2 Operationalisation of the variables	- 29 -
4. Results.....	- 39 -
4.1 The organisational context factors and the HR system	- 39 -
4.2 Characteristics of the teamcoaches (descriptive results)	- 49 -
4.3 The interfering factors.....	- 49 -
4.4 Relations between organisational context, HR system and interfering factors	- 75 -
5. Discussion.....	- 82 -
5.1 Desire.....	- 82 -
5.2 Capacity.....	- 84 -
5.3 Competencies	- 87 -
5.4 Support	- 90 -
5.5 Policies and procedures	- 93 -
5.6 Research model.....	- 95 -
6. Conclusions	- 98 -
6.1 Research findings conclusions	- 98 -
6.2 Research model conclusions.....	- 101 -
6.3 Limitations and further research	- 103 -
7. Recommendations	- 105 -
Literature	- 110 -
Appendixes	- 115 -

1. Introduction

1.1 More devolvement to the line

This master thesis will address the devolvement of human resource practices to first line managers (FLMs) at TNT Mail Netherlands, business unit Operations. The activities that come along with human resource management (HRM) were supposed to be integrated into line management since the offset of human resource management. (Guest, 1987; Storey, 1992). The main reason why line managers are involved in HRM, is because HRM is 'too important to be left to (often) marginally located personnel managers' (Guest, 1987, p. 506). Thus, both personnel managers and line management are supposed to be responsible for human resource management, resulting in the fact that FLMs are responsible for implementing HRM. Thus, FLMs have a crucial role in HRM (Guest, 1987; Lowe, 1992; McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Renwick, 2003; Storey, 1992). Since the offset of HRM in the 1980s, HR responsibilities have increasingly been devolved to (first) line managers (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Harris *et al.*, 2002; Larsen & Brewster, 2003; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003). Several reasons can be found, which clarify why this increased devolvement takes place.

Brewster & Larsen (2000) identified five reasons why organisations increasingly devolve HR responsibilities to the line. The first reason is the trend of managing organisations through cost-centre or profit-centre based approaches. This means that line managers should also have the responsibility for managing the costs and profits gained 'through' personnel.

Second, HR responsibilities are increasingly devolved to line managers because of a growing influence of service industries. In the service sector, employees need to be responsive to the customer, in a way that they need to deliver direct quality, in time. Besides that, employees need to be flexible in order to secure the competitiveness of the service company. Since the line manager is responsible for the service towards the customer to a large extent, he or she should also be responsible for managing the workforce that delivers services to the customer.

The third reason lies in the fact that decisions are increasingly made in real time and the pace of management is increasing. Staffing decisions with respect to task allocation, competencies and staffing levels are linked to other decisions (Brewster & Larsen, 2000). Therefore, decision time would increase if HR decisions would be made separately from other decisions, because these decisions are made by e.g. an HR specialist. Therefore, the line manager should have the responsibility of making HR-related decisions in order to decrease decision time, resulting in a higher management pace.

Fourth, relevant changes in management philosophy and organisational structure resulted into the fact that HR responsibilities are more devolved to the line. In general, organisations try to become more competitive through diminishing or limiting 'overhead'. This would mean that the size of the HR department should be as limited as possible, resulting in the fact that several HR responsibilities are increasingly devolved to the line. Thus, the more a company wants to diminish overhead, the more responsibilities are devolved to the line (or sometimes not implemented at all).

The fifth and final reason for the increased devolvement of HR responsibilities to the line is the argument that a need is present for a comprehensive approach to people management. This is achieved through assigning responsibilities to managers with a day-to-day responsibility for managing their personnel. The rationale behind this, is that line managers are in direct contact with their workers and therefore, they are in a better position to control and reward their employees, resulting in a more coherent way of managing the human resources of an organisation.

This final reason also brings me to the definition of what a first line manager is. According to Hales (2005) FLMs are 'representing the first level of management to whom non-managerial employees report' (p. 473). As Hales (2005) found out, FLMs primarily engage in performance-oriented supervision concerning day-to-day coordination and control of the work group or process. The main tasks of a FLM are to monitor, report and improve work performance. These tasks, which are related to performance-oriented supervision, can be considered as the core tasks of a FLM. However, FLMs acquired other managerial responsibilities, which are related to stewardship, translating strategy into practice, unit management and resourcing (Hales, 2005). This last responsibility indicates that FLMs

should also have human resource responsibilities. In order to give a definition of the first line manager, the following aspects need to be taken into account: (1) a FLM is the lowest line manager to whom non-managerial employees report, (2) who is responsible for managing the workforce on a day-to-day basis in order to achieve and improve performance and (3) who has acquired HR responsibilities. Thus, by taking into account these premises, a first line manager can be defined as the lowest line manager to whom non-managerial employees report and who is responsible for both managing the workforce on a day-to-day basis in order to achieve and improve performance and implementing HR practices.

Although an increasing number of HR responsibilities have been devolved the line, research about the implementation effectiveness of HRM by FLMs is not as numerous as the research about the effectiveness of HRM and firm performance. Although the relationship between HRM and firm performance is hotly debated (Boselie *et al.*, 2001; Hope Haily *et al.*, 2005), the implementation of HRM within companies has not been evenly studied (Hall & Torrington, 1998). This is quite a contradiction, when we take into account that the development of HR policies and practices needs to be sound, but also the implementation of them. According to authors like Guest (1987), Storey (1992) and Gratton & Truss (2003), an effective implementation of HR policies is as important as an effective development of these HR policies. Therefore, the main topic of this research will be the challenges that are faced by FLMs that might undermine an effective implementation of HRM. Although the implementation effectiveness of HR policies has not been studied to a large extent, the devolution theory (e.g. Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Renwick, 2000; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003) gives insight into several factors that might undermine the HR implementation effectiveness of FLMs. An example of such a factor, is the fact that FLMs lack sufficient HR-related skills in order to effectively implement HRM. If FLMs lack or have insufficient HR-related skills, then the HR department could support them in order to gain more HR-related skills. However, if the HR department does not, then the effectiveness of the implementation is even more undermined. Later on will be discussed which factors undermine the HR implementation effectiveness of FLMs. First the current situation with respect to the devolvment of HR responsibilities at TNT Mail will be described.

1.2 Devolvment at TNT Mail Netherlands

TNT Mail is part of the TNT Group, which consists of TNT Mail and TNT Express. TNT is operating in more than 200 countries worldwide. The subject of this study, will be TNT Mail Netherlands, which has its headquarter situated in The Hague. TNT Mail Netherlands is primarily responsible for the collection, sorting and distribution of mail and has a long history in the Dutch postal sector. TNT Mail Netherlands started as a state-owned company, called PTT. The PTT was responsible for collecting and distributing mail and next to that, it was also responsible for delivering telecommunication services in The Netherlands. During the end of the 1980's the PTT changed its name into KPN (Koninklijke PPT Nederland) and in 1989 the State sold 30% percent of its shares, which can be considered as the start of an increasing privatisation of KPN. In 1998 another major change took place: the postal services were split of from the telecommunication services. From that moment, the postal services were operating as an independent company and changed its name into TPG Mail in 2002. Finally, in 2006, the State sold the last of it shares and TPG Mail was from that moment on, called TNT Mail. The reason why it has been called TNT Mail nowadays, is because of the fact that KPN took over the Australian company 'Thomas Nationwide Transport' (TNT) in 1996. The name TNT should result into a strong and common-known name under which TPG Mail could operate.

At the beginning of 2008, TNT Mail Netherlands comprises of three business units: Operations, Marketing & Sales and Parcels. The business unit that will be studied is the BU Operations. The BU Operations is primarily responsible for collecting, sorting, transporting and distributing mail. The distribution of the mail is done by mailmen and so called part-time mail deliverers. The part-time mail deliverers gradually replace(d) a part of the mailmen workforce. A part-time mail deliverer is different compared to a mailman. A part-time mail deliverer is far less educated, has fewer responsibilities,

receives lower wages and of course, works part-time. This shift from mailmen towards part-time mail deliverers fits within a program of change within TNT Mail. This program of change is characterised by a program of downsizing and cutting costs, which is called 'Master Plan 2'. TNT can reduce costs by e.g. applying part-time mail deliverers who receive lower wages compared to the former mailmen. Besides that, TNT also wants to lay off employees in the next few years in order to reduce costs and therefore, remain competitive.

The changes which are described also affected the position and function of the teamcoaches within TNT Mail Netherlands. One of the most influential changes for the teamcoaches was the Newco project. The result of the Newco project was that TNT Mail Netherlands established six new areas, replacing the former twelve districts (rayons). During this project the staff functions in the areas were reorganised, resulting into the fact that the HR departments were scaled down. Because of that, a lot of residual HR responsibilities were devolved to the teamcoaches and other line managers. Therefore, as a result of the Newco project and other reorganisations, HR responsibilities were increasingly devolved to the line. Next to that, other HR responsibilities were developed in order to achieve a better business performance. However, these HR responsibilities needed to be allocated. As a result of that, some of these HR responsibilities were added to the list of devolved HR responsibilities of the teamcoaches.

Recently, a new reorganisation project has been started under the name Toekomst VBG/Master Plan 2. This second Master Plan can be characterised as a program of downsizing and operational management development. This means that the teamcoaches are increasingly responsible for the management of their team and therefore, the management of their human resources in a way that they e.g. deliver on-the-job trainings. The main HR responsibilities which are devolved to the teamcoaches at TNT Mail Netherlands can be categorised into the following groups: personnel planning and mutations, conducting performance and assessment interviews, handling absenteeism and inconvenience of employees, selection of new employees, development of employees and outflow of employees. Which HR responsibilities actually have been devolved to the teamcoaches will be discussed more in detail later. However, it can be concluded that HR responsibilities have been devolved to the teamcoaches at TNT Mail Netherlands, as a result of several reorganisation programs and new developed HR responsibilities. In the remaining part of the introduction, the research question with the related sub-questions will be presented and explained.

1.3 Research Question

As the forgoing shows, HR responsibilities are increasingly devolved to line managers and the teamcoaches at TNT Mail experience the same devolvement. During the first part of the introduction, it became clear that the implementation effectiveness of FLMS significantly contributes to the effectiveness of an HR system of an organisation. Therefore, the main goal of this research is to find out whether the teamcoaches at TNT experience hindrances that prevent them of implementing HRM effectively. It is believed that these hindrances do not come by themselves. Therefore, the organisational context will be taken into account in order to give possible explanations for experienced hindrances. If this has become clear, then it should be possible to develop solutions to these hindrances.

Thus, based upon these goals the following research question can be developed:

Which factors do the teamcoaches at TNT Mail experience as hindering in implementing HRM effectively and how do these factors come forth out of the organisational context?

In order to give an answer to this research question, several sub-questions need to be answered first. First of all, it must be found out which HR responsibilities have been devolved to the teamcoaches at TNT Mail Netherlands. The reason why this is done, is because of the fact that it is illogical to

investigate whether the teamcoaches are hindered in implementing HRM effectively, when it is not clear which HR responsibilities are devolved to them.

Secondly, it is necessary to find out, based upon the literature about HRM and devolution theory, in what way the implementation of HR policies contributes to the overall effectiveness of an HR system. Besides that, the devolution literature should be studied in order to find out which interfering factors affect an effective implementation of HRM by FLMs. This means that (1) it needs to be explained how and why an effective implementation of HRM contributes to the effectiveness of an HR system and (2) the reasons why FLMs are hindered in implementing HRM need to be identified in the form of interfering factors.

Thirdly, the organisational context could be of influence on the interfering factors. Therefore, it has to be found out, based upon the literature about organisational contexts and HRM, how an organisational context can be characterised and how it influences the interfering factors. Thus, it has to be found out which contextual factors have a possible influence on the identified interfering factors.

Fourthly, based upon the interfering factors, it has to be found out to what extent the teamcoaches experience the presence of these interfering factors, in relation to the organisational context. By doing so, it should be possible to determine which hindrances are experienced by teamcoaches that prevent them of implementing HRM effectively. Besides that, the reasons why teamcoaches are experiencing these difficulties will be addressed also, because the organisational context is taken into account; it is believed that these difficulties emerge out of the organisational context.

Thus, based upon the forgoing, the following sub-questions need to be addressed:

1. To what extent have HR responsibilities been devolved to the teamcoaches at TNT and for which HR issues are the teamcoaches responsible?
2. In what way does the implementation of HRM contribute to the overall HR system effectiveness and which interfering factors affect the implementation effectiveness of HRM by FLMs, according to the literature?
3. Of which contextual factors does an organisational context comprise, and how are these contextual factors related to the interfering factors, according to the literature?
4. Which interfering factors do the teamcoaches experience as being present or hindering and how can this situation be explained based upon the organisational context?

The outcome of this research has several relevancies. The first is a scientific one. Although the development of an HR system has been discussed by a lot of authors, the actual implementation and the effectiveness of this implementation have not been studied to the same extent. This research does not contribute to the investigation of the relationship between the interfering factors and the effectiveness of an HR system. However, this research gives a better insight into the experience of these interfering factors by FLMs. Next to that, the organisational context will be taken into account also. By doing so, it is possible to gain a better insight into the organisational context factors that have the possibility to determine the effectiveness of an HR system. Next to that, the assumption is held that the organisational context is related to the interfering factors, in a way that the interfering factors are shaped by the organisational environment. By addressing this relationship, it is possible to gain better insights into the relatedness of the organisational context and the interfering factors.

The second relevancy is a social/practical one. The outcome of this research should provide insights into the fact whether the teamcoaches at TNT Mail Netherlands experience hindrances that prevent them of implementing HRM effectively. If the teamcoaches actually experience these hindrances in a way that several interfering factors are present, then a solution needs to be developed for TNT Mail Netherlands. This solution, in the form of recommendations, should help TNT Mail Netherlands to let teamcoaches implement HRM better or at least implement HRM with less hindrances. Next to that, TNT Mail Netherlands gains more insights into their current situation in which they have devolved HR responsibilities to the teamcoaches. It can be decided, based upon this situation, whether it is acceptable or possible to devolve more HR responsibilities to the teamcoaches.

The remaining part of the master thesis will be as follows. First, in chapter two the theoretical framework will be developed that highlights the relevance of an effective implementation of an HR system. Next to that, and even more important, the interfering factors will be discussed that could hinder a FLM in effectively implementing HRM, in relationship to the context of the organisation. In chapter three, the methodology section will be presented, which will describe how the research will be conducted in order to come up with results. The results will be presented in chapter four, followed by a discussion (chapter five) and conclusions (chapter six) & recommendations (chapter seven).

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The need for an effective HRM implementation

It was initially proposed that human resource management comprises of a set of policies, designed to maximize organisational integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality of work (Guest, 1987), in order to improve organisational performance (Boselie *et al.*, 2001). This means that developed HR policies should result into so called HR outcomes, which are related to organisational performance (Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Paauwe & Richardson, 1997). The relationship between HR policies, which are implemented in the form of HR practices and HR outcomes are mediated by the abilities, motivation and opportunities of employees (Appelbaum *et al.*, 2000). When discussing this so called 'performance causal chain' (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007), it becomes clear that authors like Boxall & Purcell (2003), Gratton & Truss (2003), Guest (1987), Paauwe & Richardson (1997), Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) and Storey (1992) have developed a model that looks like the one which is shortly summarised above and which is presented in the figure below.

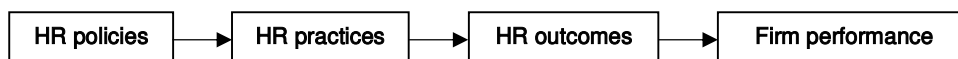


Figure 1: HR performance causal chain (derived from Purcell & Hutchinson (1997))

As has been discussed before, the relationships among these variables have been studied intensively (Boselie *et al.*, 2001; Hope Haily *et al.*, 2005) in order to reveal the 'black box' that links HRM and (firm) performance. For example, Verburg (1998) found out that selective selection (HR-practice) is negatively related to employee turnover (HR-outcome) (see: Boselie *et al.*, 2001). These kinds of studies only reveal the HRM black box, however, they do not directly contribute to the effectiveness of an HR system. These findings only can be considered as 'building blocks' in order to design an HR system. To mention the study of Verburg (1998) again, if decreasing turnover is a main goal of a company's HR policy, then selective selection can be applied in order to decrease turnover. However, an HR system does not simply consist of several 'building blocks' which are put together and therefore can be regarded as an effective HR system. What determines the effectiveness of an HR system, are so called vertical and horizontal integration and the implementation of an HR system (Gratton & Truss, 2003; Guest, 1987; Huselid *et al.*, 1997; Storey, 1992).

Vertical integration deals with the fact that the HR policies of an organisation are developed based upon the business strategy, which means that HR policies (and practices) reflect, reinforce and support the goals of the organisation in order to provide the organisation a significant competitive advantage (Guest, 1987; Gratton & Truss, 2003; Huselid *et al.*, 1997; Storey, 1992). Vertical integration alone is not sufficient when an effective HR system needs to be developed (Gratton & Truss, 2003). An HR system also needs to be horizontally integrated. This means that different HR policy areas, like recruitment & selection, training & development and performance appraisal, need to be coherent and should therefore complement each other (Gratton & Truss, 2003; Guest, 1987; Huselid *et al.*, 1997; Storey, 1992). A lack of horizontal integration would result into the fact that different policy areas are inconsistent, resulting in developed HR policies that counteract, which in turn will lead to the undermining of the HR system effectiveness.

In this way, an effective HR system can metaphorically be considered as a robust wall of a castle, which of course consists of building blocks. A robust wall should be one of the components of a castle that ensures shelter to the outside world (vertical integration with the overall strategy). Next to that, the building blocks of the wall need to be coherently placed upon each other (horizontal integration), otherwise the wall will collapse. Finally, the wall needs to be properly built (implementation), otherwise it will collapse anyhow. Therefore, vertical and horizontal integration is not only achieved at the 'drawing board' but also by the persons who build the wall or implement the HR system. In the latter case, the builders do not rely on the building plan strictly in order to coherently place the building

blocks, but they regard the building plan as the framework in which they self need to coherently place the building blocks. The same goes for an effective HR system. Some authors, like Gratton & Truss (2003), Guest (1987) and Storey (1992) hold the assumption that vertical and horizontal integration needs to be secured through the development of an HR system at the 'drawing board'. Other authors, like Baird & Meshoulam (1988) and Becker & Huselid (in press), hold the assumption that vertical and horizontal integration is also secured through the implementation of HRM, by taking e.g. HRM into account in management decision-making. These authors hold the notion that horizontal and vertical integration is secured through the implementation of the HR system.

Although both groups of authors are opposed to each other when it comes to the application of vertical and horizontal integration, they all agree on the notion that the effectiveness of an HR system is secured if both vertical and horizontal integration are achieved. However, there is one situation in which the effectiveness of an HR system can still be undermined; if the line managers do not implement HRM effectively (Hope Haily *et al.*, 2005; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Line managers are believed to be key figures in implementing HRM (Storey, 1992), so they can 'make or break' an HR system. In general, this means that line managers must realise that they are responsible for implementing human resource management (Gratton & Truss, 2003; Guest, 1987). If line managers do not effectively implement an HR system, then the overall HR system effectiveness is still undermined.

Thus, to conclude, an ineffective HR system is either characterised by an ineffective implementation of the right policies and practices (vertical and horizontal integration present) or an effective implementation of the wrong policies and practices (vertical and horizontal integration not present). Only if vertical and horizontal integration is achieved and the HR system has been effectively implemented, then the overall effectiveness of an HR system is secured. The figure below summarises what the preconditions are in order to ensure the overall effectiveness of an HR system.



Figure 2: Determinants of the overall HR system effectiveness

2.2 The interfering factors

If the implementation effectiveness of line managers determines the overall HR system effectiveness, then it needs to be investigated which factors, when present, enable a FLM to effectively implement HRM. If these factors are not present or interfering, then it is believed that such a situation hinders the FLMS to effectively implement HRM. When studying the literature about devolution theory (e.g. Brewster & Larsen, 2000; McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Renwick, 2003), it becomes clear that FLMS either do not have the motivation (desire), do not have enough time (capacity), lack HR-related skills (competencies), do not receive enough support of HR specialists or FLMS cannot rely on well developed policies and procedures. Next to that, it also seems to be the case that the interfering factors are related to each other and therefore could reinforce their effect on the implementation effectiveness of FLMS by strengthening each other. Renwick (2003) for instance, found out if line managers felt they did not receive enough support of the HR department that their motivation to implement HR policies dropped. Thus, the devolution literature will also be studied in order to find out the possible relationships between the interfering factors. However, first the interfering factors will be discussed independently and after that, the interrelatedness of these factors will be discussed.

2.2.1 Desire

In order to implement HRM effectively, first line managers should be willing to fulfil HR practices (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Although a lot of FLMs are eager to fulfil HR tasks and implement HRM, some studies have demonstrated that FLMs sometimes lack the willingness or desire to implement HRM (Harris *et al.*, 2002; Larsen & Brewster, 2003). It could also be the case that they are reluctant to do so (Hall & Torrington, 1998; Hope Haily *et al.*, 2005).

Generally spoken, three explanations are apparent which form the basis for an unwillingness of FLMs to implement HRM. It could be the case that FLMs do not possess personal motivation (McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007), they are not motivated by institutional reinforcement (Harris, 2001; McGovern *et al.*, 1997) or they face short-termism (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999). Some FLMs said to have a low personal motivation, because they had the feeling that their HR responsibilities were dumped upon them in a top-down way and therefore, they do not want to have those HR responsibilities (Harris *et al.*, 2002; Hope Haily *et al.*, 2005). This would indicate that FLMs do not accept the HR responsibilities that have been devolved to them and therefore do not have any personal motivation to implement HRM. Institutional reinforcement, could also motivate FLMs to implement HRM (McGovern *et al.*, 1997). However, it has been demonstrated that FLMs sometimes are not motivated by institutional reinforcement (Harris, 2001; McGovern, 1997; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003), because e.g. FLMs are not measured on implementing HRM (Hope Haily *et al.*, 2005; McGovern *et al.*, 1997). Finally, short-termism results into the fact that FLMs do not give a high priority to implementing HRM. Short-termism is demonstrated when 'hard' business goals prevail over 'soft' HR goals and therefore, FLMs are not focused on implementing HRM (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003). The result of this is, that FLMs are not motivated to implement HRM, since implementing HRM is situated on the end of their list of priorities.

2.2.2 Capacity

FLMs also need a sufficient amount time in order to implement HRM effectively. Therefore, the second interfering factor that could hinder first line managers in effectively implementing HRM is time or capacity. The result of having insufficient time to implement HRM will result in the fact that HR practices are not executed at all or HRM will be implemented in an ineffective way. Harris *et al.* (2002) for instance, found out that 'line managers who are too busy (and therefore have limited spare time) adopt a minimalist approach to HRM' (p. 226). A reason why FLMs do not have sufficient spare time for implementing HRM, is because they have no spare time at all or are already overworked (Hall & Torrington, 1998; Renwick, 2003). In such situations, HR responsibilities could have been devolved to them without any reduction of other (non-HR-related) responsibilities (Brewster & Larsen, 2000).

2.2.3 Competencies

FLMs also need to possess HR-related competencies in order to implement HRM effectively. Renwick (2003) found out that line managers perform HR practices sufficiently, when they 'have the ability to do so and are adequately trained' (p. 274). However, several studies found out that FLMs lack HR-related skills and therefore, FLMs have an inability to perform HR activities effectively (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Harris *et al.*, 2002; Hope Haily *et al.*, 2005; Lowe, 1992). A main reason why FLMs do not have specialist skills or expertise in HRM, is because of the fact that FLMs do not have any experience in implementing HRM (Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Harris *et al.*, 2002). In the past the HR specialists were the only ones who dealt with HR issues. Therefore, FLMs did not acquire specialist skills in HRM, which resulted in insufficient or little HR-related competencies of FLMs. Since FLMs do not have specialist skills or expertise, they implement HRM based on common-sense and things they already know. Brewster & Larsen (2000) call this conservatism; FLMs implement HRM based upon outdated and old-fashioned ways of doing things, rather than implementing HRM based upon up-to-date HR thinking. Therefore, it is necessary to deliver sufficient and adequate training programmes to FLMs, in order to increase the specialist skills or expertise in HRM (Gennard & Kelly, 1997; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Lowe, 1992; Renwick, 2003). However, research has shown that FLMs do not receive any trainings (Brewster & Larsen,

2000; Harris *et al.*, 2002), or some trainings are provided, however insufficiently (Bond & Wise, 2003; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Harris *et al.*, 2002) or the trainings do not address specialist expertise in HRM (Lowe, 1992; Harris *et al.*, 2002).

2.2.4 Support

FLMs also need to be supported by the HR department or HR specialists, in order to implement HRM effectively (Gennard & Kelly, 1997; Lowe, 1992). However, several authors found out that FLMs are sometimes insufficiently or inadequately supported by HR specialist (Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Harris *et al.*, 2002; Thornhill & Saunders, 1998). It seems that consensus is a precondition to achieve mutual accepted support (Renwick, 2000; 2003). When FLMs and HR specialists are in conflict, either the FLMs will not accept the support of the specialists, or the specialists are unwilling to support the FLMs. However, if the relationship between the HR specialists and the line is consensual, then the HR specialists can offer support to the FLMs which can be done by several ways. The first way, in which FLMs can be supported, is through consultancy services. This would mean that HR specialists are internal consultants who offer these HR services to the line (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Gennard & Kelly, 1997; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Harris *et al.*, 2001). The second way in which FLMs can be supported, is through partnership. A partnership is characterised by a supportive and collaborative relationship between the line and the HR specialists (Tomlinson, 1993) and is a more ideal type of support. The first way of support (consultancy services) can be considered as a one-way type of support, in which HR specialists offer services to the line. However, a partnership is characterised by mutual support, in which the line and the HR specialists jointly solve problems (Gennard & Kelly, 1997). Therefore, the line and the HR specialists together get involved into the development and implementation of HR policies (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Gennard & Kelly, 1997; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003) in a way that the line takes a business point of view and the HR specialists contribute by applying their HR expertise or taking an HR point of view (Gennard & Kelly, 1997). Therefore, the main objective of a partnership is to develop jointly agreeable policies, which are realistic to implement (Brewster & Larsen, 2000).

2.2.5 Policies & procedures

Finally, FLMs need well developed and codified policies and procedures in order to enhance their implementation effectiveness. FLMs rely on well developed policies and procedures, for several reasons.

Firstly, well developed policies and procedures describe *what* FLMs need to do with respect to HRM, and *how* it should be done (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Gennard & Kelly, 1997; McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Thus, the HR policies indicate which HR responsibilities FLMs have and the related procedures should act as guidelines, telling FLMs how they can handle particular HR issues.

Secondly, policies and procedures also serve the function of consistency. Different studies found out that inconsistency of HR applications exist (see: Bond & Wise, 2003). This could for instance indicate that FLMs implement HRM differently or ineffectively. Because of that, several authors advice to design HR policies and procedures (Bond & Wise, 2003; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Harris *et al.*, 2002; Lowe, 1992) in order to prevent an inconsistent implementation of HRM among FLMs.

2.3 Relationships between the interfering factors

The interfering factors which are presented, are believed to hinder FLMs in implementing HRM effectively. Therefore the interfering factors can be considered as the independent variable and the implementation effectiveness of FLMs as the dependent variable. However, the interfering factors are not as independent as it seems in advance. It seems that the interfering factors are also related to each other. If this is the case, then a single interfering factor is also a mediating variable between another interfering factor and the implementation effectiveness of FLMs. If two interfering factors are interrelated, then it could be argued that these interfering factors are strengthening each other. In the following section the possible relationships between the interfering factors will be discussed.

2.3.1 Relatedness of desire and the other four interfering factors

The first factor that will be discussed and which seems to be related to the other four factors, is the factor desire. Some studies confirm that desire is related to other interfering factors, which are in this case the interfering factors capacity and competencies.

The first possible relationship is the relationship between the factors desire and capacity. If FLMs are not willing to implement HRM, then it could be the case that they do not want to spend their spare time on implementing HRM. It has been demonstrated that this is the case when FLMs are not motivated by institutional reinforcement or when FLMs are facing short-termism (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Harris *et al.*, 2002; McGovern *et al.*, 1997). For instance Harris *et al.* (2002) found out that line managers were not motivated to devote their spare time on implementing HRM, because of the fact that they were only appraised on operational day-to-day issues and not on implementing HRM. McGovern *et al.* (1997) found out that short-termism also made line managers reluctant to devote their spare time on implementing HRM. Thus, if FLMs are not motivated to implement HRM and they do not have sufficient time, the result will be that they devote (practically) no time on implementing HRM, since they lack the motivation to do so.

The second possible relationship is the relationship between the factors desire and competencies. As has been discussed before, FLMs do not always have sufficient experience in HRM and therefore lack HR-related competencies. Therefore, they need to acquire HR-related skills, in order to implement HRM effectively. However, an unwillingness of FLMs to engage in HRM could result into a situation in which they are also not willing to acquire HR-related skills. If FLMs lack HR-related skills, then it is necessary that FLMs attend trainings in order to increase their HR-related competencies. McGovern *et al.* (1997) found out that, if line managers do not have the personal motivation to implement HRM, that their motivation to follow trainings is also lacking; they simply do not want to follow trainings and therefore their HR-related skills do not increase. This is in line with the finding of Hall & Torrington (1998), who state that line managers are hesitant to following trainings, because they are not motivated to implement HRM, resulting into the fact that it is unlikely that their HR-related skills will increase. Thus, if FLMs are not motivated to implement HRM, the result will be that their HR-related skills will remain insufficient if these skills were already insufficient, because FLMs simply are not willing to acquire HR-related skills.

The other two factors, support and policies and procedures, seem to be unrelated. In the past, studies did not confirm a relationship between desire and these two factors. Two hypotheses can be developed, based upon the relationship between desire and capacity and competencies respectively:

Hypothesis 1: An absence of institutional reinforcement or the existence of short-termism will make FLMs unwilling to spend their spare time on implementing HRM.

Hypothesis 2: Unwilling FLMs who do not want to implement HRM, are reluctant to acquire HR-related competencies.

2.3.2 Relatedness of capacity and the other four interfering factors

Some studies confirm that the factor capacity is related to the factors desire and competencies.

First, capacity seems to be related to desire. McGovern *et al.* (1997) found out that capacity is related to personal motivation. It has to be said that this relationship only partly exists. McGovern *et al.* (1997) found out that FLMs were not motivated to perform soft HR issues, when they had little spare time left to implement HRM. Soft HR issues take a lot of the spare time of FLMs and therefore these issues will be abandoned first (McGovern *et al.*, 1997). Next to that, Hall & Torrington (1998) found out that line managers, who are already overworked, felt that their HR responsibilities were dumped upon them. And as e.g. Harris *et al.* (2002) found out, line managers who feel that their HR responsibilities are dumped upon them, are less motivated to implement HRM.

Second, as has been discussed, FLMs do not implement HRM at all if they have insufficient spare time and as a result of that, FLMs will not acquire any experience in HRM. However, the HR-related skills of FLMs increase when they gain more experience in implementing HRM (Cunningham &

Hyman, 1999; Harris *et al.*, 2002). Thus, the result of FLMs having sufficient time to implement HRM, will result in the fact that FLMs do not gain extra experience in HRM and therefore, their HR-related competencies do not increase.

Third, it could be the case that capacity is related to competencies in another way. As has been discussed before, FLMs could lack HR-related skills and therefore they need to attend trainings to increase these skills (Gennard & Kelly, 1997; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Lowe, 1992; Renwick, 2003). However, if FLMs have no spare time, then it could be argued that they do not have the time to attend these trainings. Hall & Torrington (1998) found out that line managers do not have any spare time (or lack capacity) and therefore do not undergo these trainings, resulting in the fact that their HR-related skills do not increase.

It is possible to develop the following hypotheses based upon these three assumptions:

Hypothesis 3: A lack of spare time makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM.

One side note needs to be placed by this hypothesis, because hypothesis 1 also addresses the relationship between desire and capacity. However, both hypotheses will be addressed, because it is not exactly clear which factor is the dependent or independent variable. The other two hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 4: A lack of spare time results in the fact that the HR-related competencies (gained through experience) of FLMs do not increase.

Hypothesis 5: A lack of spare time makes FLMs unable to attend trainings and therefore, their HR-related competencies do not increase.

2.3.3 Relatedness of competencies and the other four interfering factors

The factor competencies seems to be related to the interfering factors desire and capacity. Several studies found out that these factors strengthen each other.

First, Harris *et al.* (2002) found a strong relationship between competencies and desire. FLMs are afraid of implementing HRM in a wrong way if they have the feeling that they do not or insufficiently possess HR-related competencies (Harris *et al.*, 2002). This results in the fact that FLMs do not have the desire or motivation to implement HRM, because they are afraid of implementing HRM in a wrong way, resulting into a possible reprimand. Renwick (2003), next to Harris *et al.* (2002), addressed the fact that FLMs are more committed to implementing HRM when they possess HR-related skills. Thus, if FLMs are unsure whether they possess sufficient HR-related skills, then they are likely to be unwilling to implement HRM, because they have the feeling that they will implement it wrong and get punished because of that.

Second, it could be possible that an insufficiency in HR-related skills can result in less capacity for FLMs. Competencies are supposed to be related to capacity in a way that an insufficiency in HR-related skills will result in the fact that FLMs need more time to implement HRM. Therefore the time which FLMs need to implement HRM might exceed the spare time which the FLMs actually have, resulting in the fact that the spare capacity of FLMs is becoming limited or even insufficient.

Based upon these assumptions, the following hypotheses can be developed:

Hypothesis 6: An insufficiency in HR-related competencies makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM.

Hypothesis 7: An insufficiency in HR-related competencies results into a diminished capacity for FLMs in order to implement HRM.

2.3.4 Relatedness of support and the other four interfering factors

The support which FLMs receive from HR specialists seems to be related to three other factors. The factors that seem to be influenced by the factor support are desire, competencies and policies and procedures.

Firstly, it seems that support and desire are related. As has been discussed before, FLMs need advice or support of HR specialists in order to implement HRM effectively. Renwick (2003) found out that FLMs who do not receive support or support that is unhelpful, will not accept devolution willingly. This could indicate that FLMs, if they do not receive support, are not motivated to implement HRM and therefore, do not have the desire to implement HRM. Thus, if FLMs do not receive support in a sufficient or adequate way, then they are less willing to implement HRM.

Secondly, support and desire are related in another, more indirect way. As has been discussed before, consensus between HR specialists and FLMs is an important precondition if support needs to be established (Renwick, 2000; 2003). A consensual relationship could e.g. be characterised by a situation in which HR specialists argue: 'If the line helps us with implementing HRM, then we want to help (support) them with those issues'. The FLMs could argue the same, vice versa. It could be argued that a non-consensual relationship between HR specialists and FLMs results into a situation that has a negative effect on the motivation of FLMs. Renwick (2003) found out that line managers lacked discipline, when conducting performance appraisals, because they were in conflict with HR specialists. Although a lack of discipline is not an item that is related to the interfering factor desire, it could be argued that discipline is an indicator of the interfering factor desire, because of the assumption that unmotivated line managers are also not motivated to keep up a high level of discipline with respect to the execution of HR tasks. Therefore, a conflicting or non-consensual relationship between HR specialists and FLMs could result into the fact that FLMs are unwilling to implement HRM.

Based upon these assumptions, the following hypotheses can be developed:

Hypothesis 8: An insufficiency or inadequacy of support offered by HR specialists makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM.

Hypothesis 9: A conflicting situation between HR specialists and FLMs makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM.

2.3.5 Relatedness of policies & procedures and the other four interfering factors

The last factor policies and procedures seem to be related to desire and capacity.

Firstly, policies and procedures are related to desire, in a way that the role (the *what* part of the HR policy) of FLMs needs to be institutionalised. This is demonstrated by the findings of McGovern *et al.* (1997). They found out that, if an HR policy states how the HR role of the FLM looks like and for what HR issues the FLM is responsible, that the result will be that the motivation of the FLM to engage in HRM is secured. Thus, if the policies and procedures do not prescribe for which HR issues the FLMs are responsible, then the result will be that they are less willing to implement HRM. However, one side note needs to be placed, because the degree of communication needs to be taken into account. It could be the case that FLMs do not know that they are responsible for several HR issues, because it has not been communicated to them. If this is the case, then FLMs simply do not implement HRM because they do not know they have some HR responsibilities. Thus, if the HR policies and procedures have not been communicated to the FLMs, then it is debatable whether they really are unwilling or that they simply do not implement HRM because they do not know they have these responsibilities. Therefore, the assumption that, if policies and procedures do not prescribe for which HR issues the FLMs are responsible, results in a situation in which FLMs are unwilling to implement HRM is only valid when these policies and procedures have been clearly communicated to the FLMs.

Second, policies and procedures could be related to capacity. This relationship can be considered the same as the relationship between competencies and capacity. Policies and procedures also prescribe *how* FLMs can address HR issues for which they are responsible, in a way that procedures act as guidelines. If FLMs cannot rely on these guidelines or if guidelines are not user-friendly in a way that

they describe *how* the FLM should act, then they first have to decide themselves how they want to address an HR issue. However, this takes extra time. If FLMs first have to decide how they want to address an HR issue, then the time which is left to actually address the issue is shortened and therefore the FLMs' capacity has been decreased. Thus, if FLMs cannot rely on user-friendly guidelines, their capacity decreases. It has to be acknowledged that this possible relationship has not been studied before. However, the possible relationship is still plausible.

Based upon these propositions, the following hypotheses can be developed:

Hypothesis 10: If the policies and procedures do not define for which HR issues the FLMs are responsible, then the FLMs become unwilling to implement HRM (under the premise that the policies and procedures have been clearly communicated).

Hypothesis 11: If FLMs cannot rely on user-friendly guidelines, then their capacity decreases.

2.4 The context of HRM

As has been demonstrated above, the interfering factors are related to each other and determine the implementation effectiveness of FLMs. However, these interfering factors cannot come into 'existence' by themselves. This means that these factors do not show up without a reason and therefore, it is needed to investigate what the possible determinants are of these interfering factors. For instance, McGovern *et al.* (1997) argued that the personal motivation of line managers is influenced by their organisational environment. Next to that, several researchers like Fields *et al.* (2000) and Jackson *et al.* (1989) studied whether the organisational context is related to HRM. Jackson *et al.* (1989) found out that several organisational characteristics, like competitive strategy or structure are related to distinct bundles of HR practices. Next to that, Fields *et al.* (2000) found out that some context variables are related to the HR strategy of companies.

Which context factors were studied by these and other authors, will be discussed later on, because a problem needs to be addressed first. This problem is characterised by the fact that the studies with respect to organisational context factors only took into account the relationship between the organisational context and the HR system of an organisation. This means that the relationship between the organisational context and the interfering factors has not been studied, which indicates that the organisational context has an indirect influence on the interfering factors, in a way that the HR system of an organisation acts as an intervening variable. Because of that, the concept of an HR system needs to be defined first in order to be able to discuss the relationship between the organisational context, HR system and the interfering factors.

2.4.1 The HR system

Schuler (1992) suggests that 'human resource management has many different components, including policies, culture, values and practices' (p. 18). Therefore, an HR system comprises of several components and in this case the HR system will consist of four components.

The first three components of an HR system, are based upon the 5P-model of Schuler (1992). This 5P-model consists of a human resource philosophy, policies, programs, practices and processes. These five components were later on brought back to three components, which together represent the first part of an HR system. These three components are: HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). The HR philosophy deals with the fact how employees need to be treated and managed, and how they can contribute to the success of the organisation (Schuler, 1992). The HR policies, which come forth out of the HR philosophy, establish guidelines for action and address the goals which are related to HRM. HR practices define which HR activities need to be carried out, which come forth out of the HR policies (Schuler, 1992).

The fourth and last component of an HR system addresses the fact which HR roles need to be carried out. The HR roles deal with addressing responsibility among employees and managers for designing an HR philosophy and HR policies and for executing or implementing the HR practices. Caldwell

(2003) states that four types of HR roles can be adopted by several parties in an organisation. These four HR roles are: Advisor, Change Agent, Service Provider and Regulator. Advisors are the ones who develop HR policies, advise senior management and accommodate devolution. Change Agents are responsible for implementing and monitoring change. Service Providers need to support line management and execute non-interventionary HR activities. Regulators are responsible for implementing interventionary HR activities and maintaining psychological contracts with employees. The reader should keep in mind that these roles are ideal types of roles. None of these roles can be allocated to one type of HR specialist and vice versa. The reason why the four roles of Caldwell (2003) are adopted is because of the fact that these four HR roles address both fact that HR specialists have more advisor and consultancy roles towards the line and top management and the fact that line managers are increasingly responsible for implementing HRM. A visual presentation of the four HR roles of Caldwell (2003) can be found in the figure below.

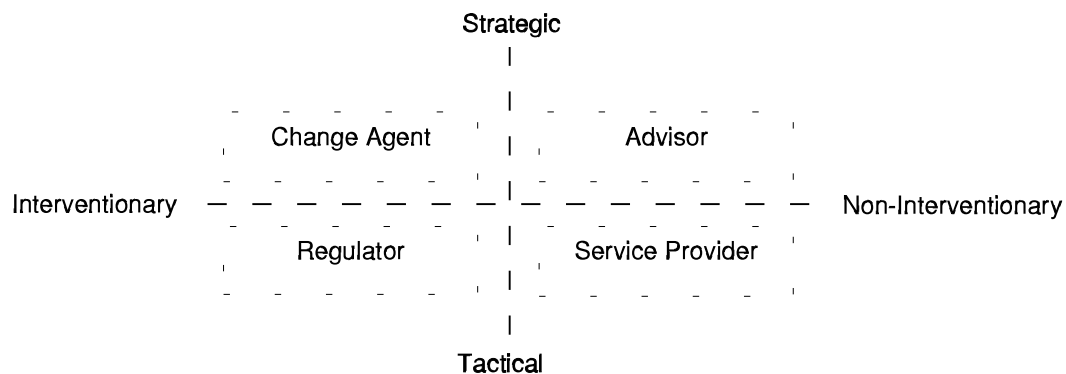


Figure 3: HR roles (derived from Caldwell (2003))

Thus, to conclude, an HR system comprises of an HR philosophy, HR policies, HR practices and HR roles. After discussing the concept of the HR system, it is possible to address the relationship between the organisational context, HR system and the interfering factors. First the relationship between the HR system and the interfering factors will be addressed and after that, the relationship between the organisational context and the HR system will be taken into account.

2.4.2 The IIR system and the interfering factors

It seems that the HR system of an organisation and the interfering factors are related. How this relationship is characterised, is discussed in the section below.

Several researchers (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Truss & Gratton, 1994; Wright & Snell, 1998) implicitly state that the HR practices of an organisation are related to the five interfering factors, because these authors make a distinction between intended HR practices and actual HR practices. The intended HR practices are the HR practices that are codified in the HR policies of an organisation. The actual HR practices are the practices which are actually implemented by e.g. FLMS. This means that the actual practices can differ compared to the intended practices. Such a difference can be a result of the way in which FLMS implement HRM. The five interfering factors shape the way in which FLMS execute (the actual) HR practices and therefore, the intended HR practices (which are a component of an HR system) and the interfering factors seem to be related, because the interfering factors (partly) determine the differences between the intended and actual practices. However, this line of reasoning can be extended.

As has been discussed before, HR practices are based upon HR policies and HR policies are based upon the HR philosophy of an organisation (Schuler, 1995). Therefore, if the intended HR practices are affected by the five interfering factors, then the intended HR policies and the intended HR philosophy are also indirectly influenced by the interfering factors, because FLMS do not actually implement the intended HR policies and do not communicate the HR philosophy as was intended in

advance. Therefore, the HR philosophy, HR policies and the HR practices are related to the interfering factors, because the interfering factors determine the difference between the actual and intended HR practices and therefore the difference between the intended and actual HR philosophy and HR policies.

The work of Truss & Gratton (1994) adds another view point to the relationship between actual and intended practices. According to Truss & Gratton (1994) the relationship between intended and realised HR practices is mediated or influenced by the strategic HRM context. The strategic HRM context is made up of several HR-related context factors that affect the implementation of HRM (Truss & Gratton, 1994). One HR-related context factor that affects the implementation of HRM is the allocation of HR roles (Truss & Gratton, 1995). Therefore, not only the interfering factors have an influence on the way in which FLMs implement HRM, but also the allocation of HR roles has an influence on the way in which FLMs implement HRM. However, it could be the case that the allocation of HR roles also has an influence on the interfering factors. For instance, if the role of Service Provider is not allocated to e.g. an HR specialist, then this could result in the fact that the HR specialists only engage in policy making and therefore, are too focused on the strategic and not the tactical side of HRM. In such a situation it could be possible that the FLMs do not receive (sufficient) support of the HR department. Therefore the allocation of HR roles does not only influence the way in which FLMs implement directly, but also indirectly, because it might be possible that the allocation of the HR roles determines the presence of the interfering factors, which in turn influence the way in which FLMs implement HRM.

What the work of Purcell & Hutchinson (2007), Truss & Gratton (1994) and Wright & Snell (1998) shows, is that the intended HR system of an organisation is related to the interfering factors, which in turn determine the actual way in which FLMs implement the HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices. However, as will be discussed next, the HR system is also influenced by several organisational context factors. And because of that, the interfering factors are also indirectly influenced by these organisational context factors. The organisational context factors will be discussed next.

2.4.3 The organisational context and the HR system

The strategic human resource management literature gives an insight into the organisational context or context factors that are related to the HR system of an organisation. Before these context factors will be discussed, two remarks need to be made. The first remark, is that only the internal context factors will be taken into account. The reason why this is done, is because of the fact that the context factors only have an explanatory function and the relationship between the external context and the HR system is also more unclear (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). Next to that, it is believed that it takes too much time to study the external context also. Therefore, only the internal context will be taken into account. The second remark, is that these contextual factors are treated as if they were independent and not related to each other. This research only wants to address whether the HR system and the interfering factors are influenced by individual context factors and not whether the context factors are related to each other. Possible relationships between the context factors will not be studied because of that.

In the section below, the context factors that are related to the HR system of an organisation will be discussed. The context factors that will be taken into account are: organisational structure, business strategy, technology, size, and culture. The reason why these context factors are discussed, is because of the fact that preliminary research has demonstrated that these context factors are related to the HR system of an organisation (see: Jackson & Schuler, 1995).

Organisational structure

Jackson *et al.* (1989) studied the relationship between the organisational context and HR practices, and they found out that the structure of an organisation is related to a distinct bundle of HR practices. Jackson *et al.* (1989) demonstrated this, by making a distinction between two types of departmentalisation: product-based divisions versus function-based divisions. According to Jackson *et al.* (1989) product-based divisions are more feasible when a company produces and sells multiple

products or services. Function-based divisions are more feasible when a company sells only one product or service. The major finding of Jackson *et al.* (1989) was that employees in product-based divisions received other HR practices than employees in function-based divisions. Jackson *et al.* (1989) only adopted departmentalisation as a variable for organisational structure. However, organisational structure comprises of more variables. According to Child (1977) the organisational structure does describe how the tasks and responsibilities are allocated among individuals and departments. Next to that, the organisational structure also takes into account the formal reporting relationships and the grouping of individuals within the organisation (Child, 1977). A final characteristic of an organisational structure, in relation to HRM, is the centrality of the HR department in the top management team (Fields *et al.*, 2000). However, I hold the assumption that the decentrality of the HR department is also important, because it could determine e.g. the support which FLMs might received. To summarise, the organisational structure, which is related to the HR system of an organisation, comprises of the following variables: type of departmentalisation, hierarchy, formal reporting relationships and the (de)centrality of the HR department.

Business strategy

The second context factor that is related to the HR system of a company is the business strategy. The business strategy as a context factor is first of all related to vertical integration, because the HR system needs to be aligned with the business strategy (Guest, 1987; Storey, 1992; Huselid *et al.*, 1997; Gratton & Truss, 2003). Miles & Snow (1984) were the ones who identified several business strategies with respect to HRM, based upon several types of organisations. They made a distinction between prospectors, analyzers, defenders and reactors, in order to define the business strategy of these types of organisations. Prospectors try to achieve growth through innovation by developing new products and markets. Analyzers also try to grow, but in a more stable and predictable way, by internally developing new products. Defenders do not try to differentiate, but try to achieve high volumes and therefore, low costs. Finally, reactors try to imitate other companies and are more following by nature (Miles & Snow, 1984).

The framework developed by Porter (1985) is also a widely accepted framework that distinguishes different types of competitive strategies. According to Porter (1985) organisations adopt a strategy that is either based upon cost leadership, differentiation or a focus. By doing so, four possible types of strategies can be made up: cost leadership, differentiation, cost focus or differentiation focus. Based upon the model of Porter (1985), Faulkner & Bowman (1995) developed a framework that is based upon the principle that organisations achieve a competitive advantage by providing their customers with what they want, better than their competitors. The framework which Faulkner & Bowman (1995) developed is called 'the strategic clock', which is based upon the variables perceived product or service benefits and price. The strategic clock runs from a 'no frills' strategy up till a focused differentiation. This reason why this strategic clock framework is discussed, is because of the fact that it better specifies which strategies a company might adopt, by taking into account quality or differentiation as a variable in relation to the price of a product. Therefore, this framework will be adopted, because it offers more possible strategies which an organisation can adopt and more important, this framework offers the possibility to address the quality-price ratio better than the framework of Miles & Snow (1984) and Porter (1985), because these frameworks do not take into account the fact that companies can adopt a combination of a differentiation strategy and a low price strategy. The framework of Faulkner & Bowman (1995), however, does suppose that several types of companies do adopt such types of strategies in the form of a so called 'hybrid' strategy.

Jackson *et al.* (1989) were the ones who demonstrated that the business strategy of a company is related to the HR system. They found out that companies who adopted for instance an innovation strategy (differentiation) used HR practices that made employees engage more in risk taking and made them to adopt a long-term focus, which are behaviours that are believed to support innovation. By compensating employees for this type of behaviour, the HR system was aligned with the innovation strategy of the company. Therefore, the HR system is influenced by the business strategy of a company.

Technology

Technology is also related to the HR system of a company (Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Jackson & Schuler, 1995). In general, 'technology refers to the tools, machines and actions used to transform organisational inputs (materials, ideas, information) into outputs (products or services)' (Daft, 2001, p. 199). This indicates that the context factor technology comprises of a large set of variables. The process of transforming inputs into outputs is made up out of several dimensions, like manufacturing technology (Woodward, 1965), degree of routines (Perrow, 1967) and interdependencies among departments (Thompson, 1967). Woodward (1965) made a distinction between three types of manufacturing technologies. She made a distinction between small-batch, mass or continuous process production (Woodward, 1965).

The degree of routines is also a dimension of technology, which is determined by two continua that together make up a four-fold table. These two continua are: degree of exceptions and nature of the search process. Based upon these two variables, Perrow (1967) made up four possible types of technology with respect to the degree of routines. The four types of technology are craft industries (few exceptions, unanalysable problems), routine (few exceptions, analysable problems), engineering (many exceptions, analysable problems) and non-routine technologies (many exceptions, unanalysable problems). Next to that, Perrow (1967) also developed a one-dimensional continuum with respect to the degree of routines, running from routine as one extreme end up till non-routine as the other extreme end of the continuum.

Finally, the interdependencies among departments, which deal with the dependence of departments on resources and information of other departments, can be categorised into the following types: pooled, sequential and reciprocal interdependencies (Thompson, 1967).

Jackson *et al.* (1989) found out that technology is related to the HR system in a way that e.g. in a flexible specialisation technology, performance appraisals are used in order to determine the compensation of employees. Next to that, Zammuto & O'Connor (1992) stated that HRM could help if a new technology needs to be implemented.

Size

The fourth factor that is related to the HR system is company size (Boxall & Purcell, 2003; Gomez, 2004; Kok & Uhlaner, 2001; Jackson & Schuler, 1995). The HR system of a company seems to be influenced by the company size, because large organisations need to control more workers and have to be more conscious about their corporate image, because the visibility of large companies is believed to be high (Fields *et al.*, 2000; Jackson & Schuler, 1995). In general, large firms formalise their HR practices more intensively than small firms (Kok & Uhlaner, 2001) and several studies have shown that large firms adopt several HR practices, like temporary staff recruitment and development possibilities more often than small firms (see: Jackson & Schuler, 1995).

Culture

The organisational culture is related to the HR system of a company and practically almost determines it (Gomez, 2004; Schuler & Jackson, 1996; Sparrow *et al.*, 1994). The organisational culture can be considered as 'the set of values, guiding believes, understandings and ways of thinking that is shared by members of an organisation and taught to new members as correct' (Daft, 2001, p. 314). Denison & Mishra (1995) identified four types of culture: involvement, consistency, adaptability and mission cultures, based upon two variables. These variables are strategic focus and degree of change. The strategic focus deals with the fact whether an organisation has an external orientation or an internal integration perspective. The degree of change is a continuum running from change and flexibility towards stability and direction. This last continuum is also addressed by Beer *et al.* (1984) with respect to the variable organisational culture. Beer *et al.* (1984) identified three types of culture: a bureaucratic, market and clan culture. A bureaucratic culture is more feasible in stable and predictable environments and therefore can be compared to a consistency culture, with an internal focus. A clan culture, however, is more suitable in a dynamic and changing environment and is based upon some

sort of kinship or family-like atmosphere (Beer *et al.*, 1984). Because of that, a clan culture can be compared to an involvement culture, with a focus towards change and flexibility. A market culture is mainly dominated by an explicit exchange between the organisation and its employees, with a subcontract as the ideal type of exchange. Next to that, organisations which are situated in a rapidly changing environment adopt a market culture most of the time (Beer *et al.*, 1984). Because of that, the market culture can be compared with the adaptability culture, in which both the organisation and its employees are external orientated. Beer *et al.* (1984) state that these three types of culture are ideal types of organisational culture, which means that (several parts of) two or even three types of cultures can be adopted by a company.

When the four types of culture of Denison & Mishra (1995) and the three types of culture of Beer *et al.* (1984) are combined, the following organisational culture framework can be developed (figure 4).

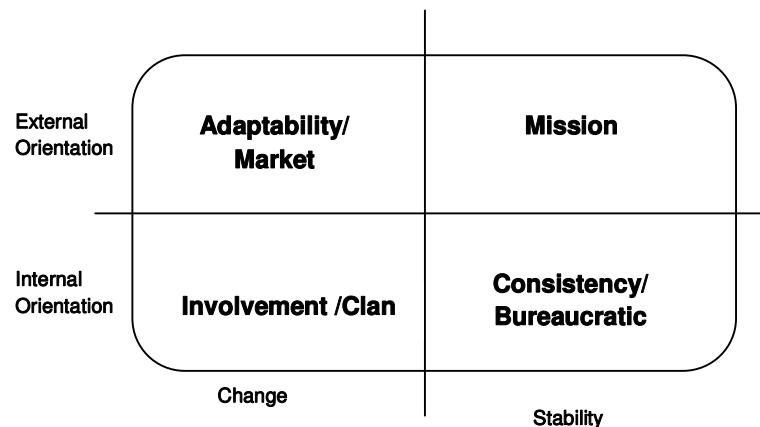


Figure 4: Organisational culture framework (derived from Denison & Mishra (1995) and Beer *et al.* (1984))

It has to be said that these types of culture are observable and explicit. However, the culture of an organisation can be regarded as an iceberg, because unobservable and underlying values, beliefs and ways of thinking are also apparent, resulting in the fact that several levels of culture exist (Schein, 1985). Schein (1985) identifies three levels of organisational culture: artifacts, values and underlying assumptions. Artifacts are visible components of organisational cultures. Values and underlying assumptions are more invisible components of a culture, like unconscious beliefs, that are taken for granted.

A final important aspect of culture is the management philosophy (Daft, 2001; Gomez, 2004), which stands for the values and beliefs which are carried out by the top management. Because of that, the culture of an organisation almost determines the HR system of a company, because the HR philosophy is most of the times a blueprint of the organisational culture (Schuler & Jackson, 1996). For instance, if the top management of a company wants to establish a culture of empowerment, diversity and equality, then the top management will develop an HR philosophy that enables and supports such a culture (Sparrow *et al.*, 1994). Finally, it has to be taken into account that a company not only has an organisational culture, but also several sub-cultures (Denison & Mishra, 1995). This would e.g. mean that the culture in a particular area or division is different than the culture in another area or division.

To conclude, it has been demonstrated that the organisational context is related to the HR system of an organisation, in a way that the organisation context determines the design of the HR system. Next to that, the HR system is related to the five interfering factors, which hinder or enable FLMs in effectively implementing HRM. Therefore, the organisational context is related to these interfering factors, in a way that the context factors can be seen as explanations for the existence of the interfering factors.

2.5 Research model

At this moment, it is possible to develop a research model that is based upon the literature that has been discussed above. As has been said before, FLMs are key figures when it comes down to the implementation of HRM and therefore they contribute to the effectiveness of an HR system. However, five factors seem to enable or impede the implementation effectiveness FLMs. These five factors are: desire, capacity, competencies, support and policies and procedures. This means that FLMs must have the motivation, time and HR-related skills in order to implement HRM effectively. Next to that, FLMs also need to be supported by HR specialists and FLMs need to rely on well developed policies and procedures. These five factors directly contribute to the implementation effectiveness of FLMs. However, these factors also seem to be interrelating, which could result in the fact that the interfering factors might strengthen each other.

It will be investigated to what extent the five factors are present and which factors are actually interrelated and because of that, the central aspect of the research model are the five interfering factors and their interrelatedness. However, the five factors do not come by themselves and therefore, it is needed to take into account the HR system and the organisational context of a company. It is believed that these context variables have an influence on the five interfering factors. However, it has never been demonstrated that the organisational context is directly related to the interfering factors and because of that, an intermediating variable is used in the form of a company's HR system. The HR system of a company is made up out of an HR philosophy, HR policies, HR practices and the distribution of the HR roles. The organisational context which is related to the HR system comprises of the organisational culture, the business strategy, technology, the organisational structure and the size of an organisation. It is possible to develop a research model, based upon these variables. This means that the research model will take into account the five interfering factors, their interrelatedness and the influence of the organisational context through the intervenience of the HR system.

What the research model below shows, is that the organisational context influences the HR system of a company, which in turn influences the degree of presence of the interfering factors that are believed to be interrelating.

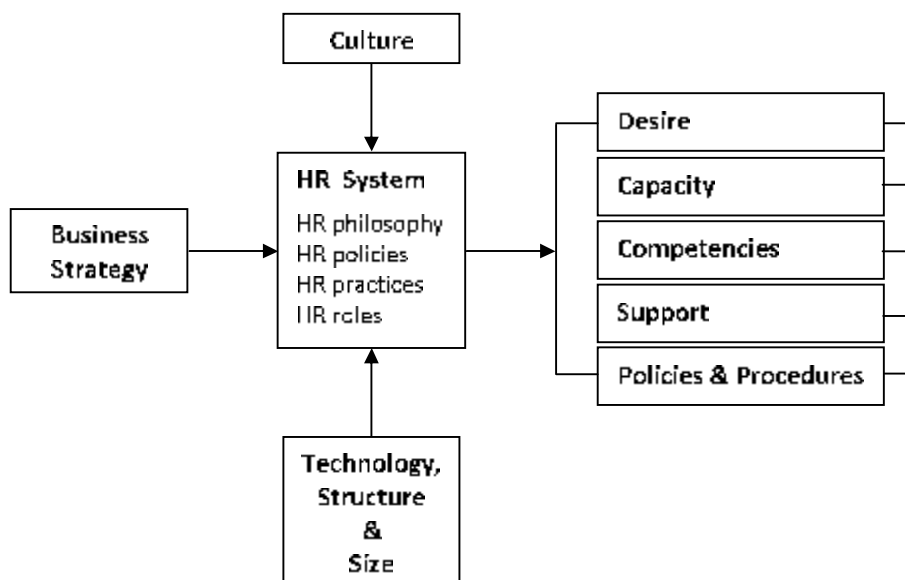


Figure 5: Research model

In the next chapter the methodology will be presented, that will describe which research method will be used, which population/subject of study will be studied and which sample will be selected. Next to that, the variables that were discussed will be operationalised in the methodology section.

3. Methodology

In this chapter, the blueprint of the research will be presented. Paragraph 3.1 focuses on the variables were studied and which research methods were applied. Paragraph 3.2 focuses on the operationalisation of the variables that were presented in the theoretical framework.

3.1 Presentation of the research methods

In the section below, the variables that were presented in the theoretical framework, will be presented again. However, this time I will describe which research methods I applied in order to study the accompanied variable(s). First, I will discuss how the independent variables (organisational context and the HR system) were studied. Second, I will discuss the research methods that were applied in order to study the dependent variables (the interfering factors).

3.1.1 Organisational context factors

In general, I studied the organisational context factors by conducting a content analysis, in which several documents were analysed. However, I also conducted interviews with several relevant informants, as the documents did not provide sufficient and adequate information about the organisational context factors. The variables and their accompanying research methods will be presented next.

Organisational structure

I analysed documents in order to study the organisational structure. The following documents were analysed: the annual report of TNT, the organisation charts of TNT, TNT Mail and the BU Operations, the description of the business lines and business unit on the intranet of TNT Mail and a summary of the average span of control of the first, second and third line managers. Next to that, I interviewed managers and employees who offered more insights into the organisational structure. The managers and employees that were interviewed are a chain manager, who is responsible for the distribution of postal items in one of the six areas and a senior advisor in logistics strategy. Finally, during the interviews with the teamcoaches, I asked questions about their span of control and their formal reporting relationships. The interviews with the teamcoaches were an important part of the research and therefore, will be described in more detail later on.

Business strategy

In order to study the business strategy, I analysed the (social) annual report of TNT and documents on the intranet of TNT Mail that describe the business strategy of TNT Mail Netherlands and the BU Operations. Next to that, I interviewed informants (managers and employees) as well, in order to get a better insight into the business strategy of TNT Mail Netherlands and the BU Operations. The informants that were interviewed with respect to the business strategy are the chain manager and the senior advisor in logistics strategy (that were mentioned before). The HR director and two HR managers were interviewed also, in order to get a better insight into the business strategy. Finally, during the interviews with the teamcoaches, I asked them how they interpret the business strategy of TNT Mail Netherlands.

Size

In order to come up with the size of TNT Mail Netherlands and the BU Operations, I used data that was provided by the HR Shared Service Centre. This data gave insight into the number of employees and fte's of the workforce of TNT and its business units.

Technology

The variable technology was mainly studied by interviewing managers and employees, because no adequate or sufficient information could be found in documents. Therefore, I interviewed a process manager, who is familiar with the collection, sorting and distribution processes of the BU Operations.

Next to that, I visited a collection, sorting and distribution establishment as well, in order to study these processes. Finally, I asked the teamcoaches how they perceive the technology of the BU Operations.

Culture

The organisational culture is not always sufficiently and adequately documented. However, I retrieved and analysed some data about the organisational culture. This data is documented in the (social) annual report of TNT and on the intranet. However, I also interviewed the HR director, two HR managers, a process manager, a chain manager and a senior advisor in logistics strategy. These respondents were able to tell more about the organisational culture of TNT and the BU Operations. Finally, during the interviews with the teamcoaches, I asked questions about the culture on the work floor.

3.1.2 HR system

In order to study the HR system, I analysed the social annual report, HR-related policies and procedures and job descriptions of the teamcoaches, HR consultants and personnel assistants. I analysed the social annual report and the HR-related policies and procedures in order to define the content of the HR philosophy, policies and practices of TNT Mail. The BU Operations has set up the same documents. I analysed these documents as well, in order to define the content of the HR philosophy, policies and practices of the BU Operations. The job descriptions were analysed in order to define how the HR roles are distributed among the teamcoaches and the HR specialists. The part of the HR system that deserved special attention is the bundle of HR responsibilities of the teamcoaches. This bundle of HR responsibilities was partially found in the job description of the teamcoaches and the HR-related procedures. However, these documents alone did not clarify completely for which HR issues the teamcoaches are responsible. Therefore, I analysed extra document, which is set up by the program team which is responsible for the project Rationalisation Administration of Operations. During this project, all the responsibilities of the teamcoaches, including their HR responsibilities, were identified and mapped out. Therefore, it was possible to define all the HR responsibilities of the teamcoaches, based upon the so called 'administration list of teamcoaches'. The original 'administration list of teamcoaches' and the list of HR responsibilities of the teamcoaches can be found in appendix 1 and appendix 2 respectively.

Next to that, I interviewed two HR managers and the HR director of the BU Operations, who were able to provide additional information about the HR system of the BU Operations. The two HR managers are responsible for the HR issues in the area North-West and the area West respectively.

3.1.3 Content analysis and interviews

Thus, I analysed the organisational context factors and the HR system by conducting a content analysis and by interviewing six relevant key employees and managers. These employees and managers and the information they provided are put into the table below. Next to that, I took the internal organisational context and the HR system into account during the interviews with the teamcoaches.

Function	HR system	Strategy	Culture	Technology	Structure
HR director	X	X	X		
HR managers	X	X	X		
Process manager		X	X	X	
Chain manager		X	X	X	X
Sr. advisor logistics strategy		X	X	X	X

Table 1: Interviewed employees and managers

3.1.4 Interfering factors

The central part of this research are the five interfering factors, because I measured to what extent and in what way these five interfering factors are experienced by the teamcoaches. Next to that, several possible relationships between the five interfering factors will be tested as well. I needed to gather quantitative data, in order to study the extent to which the five interfering factors are experienced by the teamcoaches and the interrelatedness of the five interfering factors. Therefore, I used a questionnaire that was sent to 242 teamcoaches (total response was 88 (36%)). However, I needed to gather qualitative data as well, in order to get more insight into the way in which the teamcoaches experience any hindrance of the interfering factors. I interviewed 16 teamcoaches to come up with the quantitative data. Next, I will elaborate more on the application of the questionnaire and the interviews.

Questionnaire

Self-administrated questionnaires are a good instrument to measure the experiences and attitudes of a large population (Babbie, 2004). In this case, the population of teamcoaches is approximately 720. The main objective of this study is to identify the experiences, attitudes and perceptions of the teamcoaches regarding the five interfering factors and therefore, I applied a self-administrated questionnaire.

The questionnaire that was used, is based upon the questionnaire that has been developed by Nehles et al. (2006). This questionnaire was made congruent with the context of the teamcoaches, in a way that only those HR activities were taken into account for which the teamcoaches are responsible and next to that, several statements have been simplified. The self-administrated questionnaire only took into account items regarding the five interfering factors and not the organisational context items. This was done, because the questionnaire would otherwise become too lengthy and would therefore take too much time of the teamcoaches.

The questionnaire started with the conception of what the possible HR responsibilities of the teamcoaches are, in order to prevent confusion among the teamcoaches of what is meant by the HR responsibility concept. After that, the respondents proceeded by giving an opinion on several statements. These opinions were filled in on a five-point Likert scale, running from 'I disagree' to 'I agree'.

Before the respondents filled in the questionnaire, a letter was sent to them first. This letter was sent in order to provide the respondents with the needed background information about the goal of the research and the questionnaire. This letter and the questionnaire were sent by the HR director. By doing so, it was possible to motivate the respondents to fill in the questionnaire. The letter made clear to the respondents that the questionnaire is the mean to express their experiences and attitudes. The questionnaire was sent to the respondents on hardcopy. After that, a reminder was sent to the teamcoaches after one week and after two weeks respectively. The reminder was sent by the HR director as well. The teamcoaches had four weeks to fill in the questionnaire. The letter and reminder can be found in appendix 3.

Not all three 'types' of teamcoaches or FLMs were asked to fill in the questionnaire. As has been said before, the BU Operations can be split up into three main processes: collection, sorting and distribution. Only the teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection and distribution process were taken into account. The FLMs who are responsible for the sorting process, who are called production team leaders, were not taken into account because of the following reasons. First of all, production team leaders are not responsible for a fixed team. The team of sorting employees who report to a production team leader constantly changes from day to day and even from hour to hour. Because of that, the production team leaders execute less HR activities which are related to the 'teams' of the production team leaders. Secondly, the production team leaders are mainly involved in the sorting process. They have several deadlines during their shifts, resulting in the fact that they can

be regarded more as process fire-fighters than as teamcoaches. Every time the sorting process stagnates, the production team leader has to solve the related problem instantly, in order to achieve his or her deadline. Finally, the sorting process can be regarded as a capital-intensive process, in which the sorting employees are mainly responsible for keeping the sorting machines going. Because of these reasons, only the teamcoaches who are responsible for the collecting and distribution processes had to fill in the questionnaire.

It has to be acknowledged that the number of teamcoaches is constantly changing. However, this number can be considered as stable in the medium-long run. The number of teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection process is 71 and the number of teamcoaches who are responsible for the distribution process is 648, resulting into a population of 719 teamcoaches in total. It has to be said, however, that the teamcoaches in the area West were not taken into account, because these teamcoaches were already involved in several other studies. The total number of teamcoaches in the area West is 73. Therefore, the population of teamcoaches that is taken into account in this research is 646. The sample of teamcoaches who received a questionnaire is 242, when applying a confidence interval of 95%.

Additional data shows that the number of teamcoaches is not evenly distributed among the five areas. Because of that, I selected the same relative number of responding teamcoaches in all the five areas. Next to that, I took into account the fact that the number of teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection process is relatively small (approximately 10%) compared to the teamcoaches who are responsible for the distribution process (approximately 90%). In the end, the total response was 88 (36%).

Interview

Next to the questionnaire, sixteen teamcoaches were interviewed as well, in order to get a better insight into the experiences of the teamcoaches regarding the interfering factors. By doing so, it was possible for me to gather more qualitative and better detailed information about the interfering factors. Next to that, it was possible to get a better insight into the relationship between the organisational context of TNT Mail Netherlands and the experienced interfering factors. In the end, I am able to come up with better recommendations, because the reasons for the experienced interfering factors, which come forth out of the organisational context, were put forward in the interviews.

During the interviews, the interviewee was asked what he or she regards as HR responsibilities first. After that, a list with all the HR responsibilities of the teamcoaches was presented. Subsequently, I asked whether the interviewee actually carried these HR responsibilities. This was done, in order to prevent confusion of what is meant by the HR responsibility concept. Finally, questions were posed about the interfering factors, in a semi-structured way. I asked for a further elaboration why the interviewee identifies a particular interfering factor. In other words, if an interviewee indicated e.g. to have no desire to execute HR activities, then I asked whether and why he or she indicates this based upon the related (sub-) items of the factor desire. Questions regarding the interrelations between the interfering factors were posed as well. And if it was needed, I subsidized the interviewee if he or she gave an answer that was not convincing. Finally, the organisational context was taken into account when an interviewee identified a particular interfering factor. If, for instance an interviewee indicated to have no spare time, then I asked whether e.g. his span of control is too large, resulting into the fact that he needs to apply his HR practices to too many employees. The interview protocol can be found in appendix 4.

In total, sixteen teamcoaches were interviewed (n=16). Because the teamcoaches in the area West are excluded from this study, I interviewed three teamcoaches per one of the five other areas. In the North-East, four teamcoaches were interviewed. In total, I interviewed fourteen teamcoaches who are responsible for the distribution process and two who are responsible for the collection process. Several teamcoaches who were responsible for the distribution process, were partially responsible for

the collection process as well. All but one of the teamcoaches who were interviewed were selected in a random way. One teamcoach refused to get interviewed and two teamcoaches were interviewed simultaneously.

3.1.5 Sequence of the research

Not all variables were studied simultaneously. First, the organisational context and the HR system of TNT Mail Netherlands were studied. The reason why I did this first, is because the knowledge about the organisation context factors and the HR system could be applied during the interviews. In other words, a study of the organisational context and the HR system offered some background information, which could be taken into account when the interviews about the interfering factors were conducted.

Initially I proposed to send the questionnaire to the respondents during the content analysis. And after the questionnaire was filled in and analysed, I wanted to conduct the interviews. By doing so, the results that came out of the questionnaire could be used as background information about the interfering factors during the interviews. However, due to labour strikes, it was not possible to apply this plan of action. Because of that, the interviews were conducted and the questionnaires were sent and filled in simultaneously. Because of that, the interviews were conducted without the information that came out of the questionnaire. However, while the interviews were conducted, the interviews themselves provided some background information. This information could be taken into account during the subsequent interviews. In other words: I accumulated knowledge about the interfering factors during the interview process.

The summary of variables (organisational context, HR system, and interfering factors), research methods (content analysis, questionnaire, and interviews) and the several 'sources of information' (teamcoaches, relevant key employees and managers, and documents) is presented in the table below. This table shows which sources of information provide what type of information and how that information is retrieved.

Source of information Variables studied	Teamcoaches	Relevant key employees and managers	Documents
1: Organisational context	<i>(Interviews)</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Content analysis</i>
2: HR system	<i>(Interviews)</i>	<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Content analysis</i>
3: Interfering factors	<i>Questionnaire Interviews</i>		

Table 2: Research methods and 'sources of information'

3.2 Operationalisation of the variables

In this section the variables that were discussed in the theoretical framework, will be further operationalised in order to construct the questionnaire and the interview protocol. The variables that will be operationalised first, are the interfering factors. After that, the context factors will be operationalised. The interfering factors will be operationalised twice; first for the questionnaire and second for the interviews. The reason why this is done, is because of the fact that the items in the questionnaire of Nehles et al. (2006) are operationalised in a slightly different way.

3.2.1 Interfering factors for the interviews

Desire

The desire concept deals with the willingness and personal motivation of FLMs to implement HRM. Regarding the questionnaire, the desire concept is operationalised as the personal motivation of FLMs. This personal motivation is based upon the self-determination of FLMs and the perceived added value for executing HR activities. Self-determination to execute HR activities deals with the fact

that FLMs implement HRM for their own benefits or because they have the personal motivation to do so. Next to that, FLMs are more willing or motivated to implement HRM if they perceive an added value as a result of executing HR activities.

Self-determination is measured by the Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS) of Guay *et al.* (2000) and contains the following constructs: intrinsic motivation, identified motivation, external motivation, amotivation (Guay *et al.*, 2000). Intrinsic motivation measures the personal enjoyment for executing HR activities. Identified regulation deals with the fact that FLMs are formally obliged to implement HRM. External regulation measures an obligation to implement HRM, in a way that other persons have the expectation that FLMs need to execute several HR activities. Amotivation measures the opposite of motivation. However, the reverse of amotivation will be taken into account in order to determine the willingness of FLMs. The perceived added value for executing HR activities is measured by the value added construct, which has been developed based upon a pilot case study of Nehles *et al.* (2006). This construct measures the extent to which FLMs hold the assumption that implementing HRM adds some sort of value to the performance of their team.

For the interviews, the desire concept is operationalised as the willingness of FLMs to implement HRM. The willingness to implement HR is measured by the personal motivation of FLMs, institutional reinforcement and short-termism.

Personal motivation is measured by the following two constructs: contribution of HR tasks to the team and enjoyment of having HR responsibilities. First, FLMs should see the contribution of HR tasks to the motivation, atmosphere and performance of their employees. Next to that, FLMs need to enjoy the HR responsibilities that have been devolved to them or they could interpret executing HR tasks as an enjoyment.

Institutional reinforcement comprises of the following constructs: job description, authority and performance appraisal. FLMs could have the feeling that the HR responsibilities are dumped upon them if the HR responsibilities of FLMs are not part of their job description. FLMs could also hold the assumption that implementing HRM is not a formal part of their function if it is not taken into account in their job description. Authority indicates that the responsible person has the 'ability to act or decide on one's own' (Lowe, 1992, p. 149). If HR authority is formally granted to FLMs, then they could also be more willing to implement HRM. Performance measurement is based upon the assumption 'what you measure, is what you get'. FLMs feel institutional pressure, if their performance with respect to implementing HRM is measured.

Finally, short-termism is measured by the constructs business policy and priority for implementing HRM. If the business policy of an organisation is characterised by a dominance of hard business goals, like financial targets, then the soft HR goals are left aside. This in turn, could result into the fact that implementing HRM is situated on the end of the list of priorities of FLMs. The reverse of the short-termism measure will be used as a result in order to determine the willingness of FLMs.

Capacity

Capacity deals with the time FLMs have to implement HRM. In other words, FLMs need to have sufficient time in order to execute HR activities. Regarding the questionnaire, this sufficiency of time is measured by the construct role overload (Role overload of the housewife scale: Reilly, 1982). Role overload measures whether FLMs need to handle HR issues that go beyond their available time and energy. Therefore, a possible role overload may lead to a situation in which FLMs devote too little time to implementing HRM. I will take the reverse of the role overload measure into account in order to define whether the FLMs have sufficient time to implement HRM.

Regarding the interviews, the capacity concept is operationalised as a sufficiency of time in order to implement HRM. I will measure this sufficiency of time by taken into account the discrepancy between the time FLMs need to implement HRM and the time which FLMs actually have to implement HRM. Next to that, a sufficiency of time is measured by the extent to which FLMs indicate to need extra time to implement HRM. The actual time spent on implementing HRM can be determined by several

factors. These factors are: reduction of other non-HR-related duties, extra spare time and degree of systematic overtime. The extra time that is needed by the teamcoaches measures whether the teamcoaches need extra time to perform their HR tasks better. I will adopt the reverse of the extra time needed construct in order to determine the sufficiency of time.

Competencies

The competencies concept deals with the sufficiency of HR-related competencies of FLMs. Regarding the questionnaire, the competencies concept is operationalised by the self-perceived knowledge of HR activities and the importance and sufficiency of HR-related trainings and experiences in HRM. The self-perceived knowledge of FLMs is measured by applying the occupational self efficacy scale of Schyns & Van Collani (2002). The self efficacy of FLMs measures the self-perceived personal capability of FLMs to adequately implement HRM. The HR-related trainings and experiences in HRM are measured by the constructs trainings and experience, which have been developed based upon a pilot case study of Nehles *et al.* (2006). These constructs measure the importance and sufficiency of the training courses followed and the experience of FLMs in a supervisory function.

In the interviews, a sufficiency of HR-related competencies will be measured by attended trainings, experience in HRM, attended trainings and conservatism. It has to be found out, whether FLMs score sufficiently on the first two measures and negatively on the third measure. First, the HR-related competencies of FLMs increase, when they attend trainings. Therefore, it will be measured, how much training courses were attended by the FLMs. Next to that, FLMs can also indicate whether the trainings were valuable. Secondly, the experience of FLMs in HRM can be measured by the years of experience in HRM. It is also important to find out whether the FLMs value this amount of experience as sufficient. Finally, conservatism (Brewster & Larsen, 2000) indicates the level of HR-related skills. Conservatism is demonstrated when FLMs implement HRM based upon outdated and old-fashioned ways of doing things, rather than implementing HRM based upon up-to-date HR thinking. Next to that, FLMs rely on common-sense, when they implement HRM in a conservative way. Therefore, the degree of conservatism is measured by the degree of up-to-date HR knowledge of FLMs and common sense. I will adopt the reverse of the conservatism measure in order to determine the HR-related competencies of the FLMs.

Support

The support concept deals with a sufficient HR-related support which is offered by HR specialists. Regarding the questionnaire, the support concept is operationalised by the perceived HR service effectiveness of support which FLMs receive from HR specialists. The HR service effectiveness is measured by the SERQUAL scale on service quality of Parasuraman *et al.* (1998). The SERQUAL scale consists of five constructs, however, the following four constructs were adopted: reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. These constructs measure the overall perception of the quality of the services that are related to HR, as perceived by the FLMs.

In the interviews, the sufficiency of the HR-related support is measured by the kind and amount of support that is needed by the FLMs and by the kind, amount and usefulness of support that is offered to the FLMs. A sufficiency in support is demonstrated when FLMs experience a match between the support which they need and the support which they receive from the HR specialists. The types of support that FLMs may need or receive are co-development in partnerships and consultancy services offered by HR specialists.

Next to that, support can be based upon consensus between the line and the HR department as well. Thus, a sufficiency in support can be a result of a consensual situation, in which both the FLMs accepts the support of the HR specialists and the HR specialists want to offer support to the FLMs.

Policies and procedures

FLMs need to rely on clear policies and procedures as well. Therefore, the policies and procedures concept deals with the fact whether FLMs rely on clear policies and procedures. In the questionnaire the policy and procedures concept is measured by the perceived clearness of HR responsibilities, and the usefulness and clarity of HR forms, instruments and guidelines. The perceived clearness is measured by role ambiguity and role conflict scale of Rizzo *et al.* (1970). This scale measures the role conflict and role ambiguity, in order to define whether the FLMs know which HR responsibilities they exactly bear. The reverse of these two constructs will be adopted in order to measure the perceived clearness of HR responsibilities. The usefulness and clarity of HR forms, instruments and guidelines will be measured by adopting the user friendliness of HR forms scale, which has been developed by Nehles *et al.* (2006). This construct measures whether the FLMs can rely on clear procedures, which describe how to use HR practices effectively.

Regarding the interviews, the policies and procedures concept is measured by the clearness of the HR policies and procedures, which is measured by role uncertainty, clear description, consistency and communication. Role uncertainty is demonstrated when FLMs do not exactly know for what HR issues they are responsible. In more detail, this means that FLMs should know exactly for which HR issues they are responsible. Next to that, a clear description of the procedures could result into the fact that FLMs do know how to implement HRM. A clear description of HR procedures is demonstrated when the procedures act as guidelines and when they are concrete. A final measure which is related to clear policies and procedures is consistency. The communication of the policies and procedures needs to be sound and sufficient as well. This means that the policies and procedures should be accessible and the FLMs need to be aware of the existence of the policies and procedures. Finally, policies and procedures should be standardised and formalised in order secure a consistent implementation of HRM among FLMs. If these policies and procedures are not formalised, then the result could be that FLMs implement HRM in a way that is dominated by their own interpretations, resulting in an overall implementation that is based upon multiple interpretations.

The operationalisation of the five factors is summarised in the table on the following to pages. Two tables have been set up; table 3 summarises the operationalisation of the questionnaire concepts and table 4 summarises the operationalisation of the interview concepts.

Concept	Operationalisation	Measures
Desire	Personal motivation of FLMs: Self-determination of FLMs	Situational Motivation Scale (SIMS; Guay <i>et al.</i> , 2000): • Intrinsic motivation • Identified motivation • External regulation • Amotivation (R)
	Perceived added value for executing HR activities	Nehles <i>et al.</i> (2006): • Value added
Capacity	Sufficient time for performing HR activities	Role overload of the housewife scale (Reilly, 1982): • Role overload (R)
Competencies	HR-related competencies: Self-perceived knowledge of HR activities	Occupational self-efficacy (Schyns & Van Collani, 2002): • Self-efficacy
	Importance and sufficiency of HR-related trainings and experience in HRM	Nehles <i>et al.</i> (2006): • Trainings • Experience
Support	HR service effectiveness	SERQUAL scale on service quality (Parasuraman <i>et al.</i> , 1998): • Reliability • Responsiveness • Assurance • Empathy
Policies & Procedures	Clear policies and procedures: Perceived clearness of HR responsibilities	Role ambiguity and role conflict scale (Rizzo <i>et al.</i> , 1970): • Role conflict (R) • Role ambiguity (R)
	Usefulness and clarity of HR forms, instruments and guidelines	Nehles <i>et al.</i> (2006): • User friendliness of HR forms

Table 3: Operationalisation of interfering factors (Questionnaire, derived from Nehles *et al.*, 2006)

Factor	Operationalisation	Measures
Desire	Willingness to implement HRM: Personal motivation	Contribution of HR tasks to the team Enjoyment of having HR responsibilities
	Institutional reinforcement	Job description Authority Performance appraisal
	Short-termism (R)	Business policy Priority for HR tasks
Capacity	Sufficiency of time in order to implement HRM: Time needed vs. actual time spent	Average time needed vs. average time spent, based upon spare time or structural overtime and reduction of other duties
	Extra time needed (R)	Extra time needed to perform HR tasks better
Competencies	Sufficiency of HR-related competencies: Attended trainings	Value and number of attended trainings
	Experience in HRM	Value and number of years involved in executing HR tasks
	Conservatism (R)	Degree of up-to-date HR knowledge Handling HR issues based upon common-sense
Support	Sufficient support from the HR specialists : Support needed	Kind and amount of support needed
	Actual support received	Kind, amount and usefulness of support received
	Consensus between HR and the line	Willingness of FLMs to accept support Willingness of HR specialists to deliver support
Policies & Procedures	Clear HR policies and procedures: Role uncertainty (R)	Knowledge about HR responsibilities
	Clear description	Concreteness of procedures Guidelines for HR tasks
	Communication	FLM awareness of existence Accessible
	Consistency	Standardisation and formalisation of procedures

Table 4: Operationalisation of interfering factors (Interviews)

3.2.2. IIR system & organisational context factors

Next to the interfering factors, the organisational context factors also need to be operationalised. First, the operationalisation with respect to the HR system will be addressed. After that the other organisational context factors will be operationalised.

HR system

As has been discussed in the theoretical framework, an HR system comprises of the HR philosophy, HR policies, HR practices and the HR roles (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). According to Schuler (1992) the HR philosophy does describe how the employees of an organisation need to be treated and management, and how they can contribute to the success of the organisation. Most of the time the HR philosophy can be found in the statement of business values. Therefore, the HR philosophy can be operationalised as the business value statement with respect to its employees, which describes how the employees need to be treated and managed and how they contribute to the success of the organisation.

The HR policies establish guidelines and address the concrete goals which are related to HRM (Schuler, 1992). The HR policies can be considered as the HR strategy of an organisation. In the HR strategy should be mentioned which goals with respect to HRM need to be attained and the plans and programs which will be initiated to achieve those goals.

The HR practices define the concrete HR activities (the plans and programs) which need to be carried out (Schuler, 1992). Since it is not possible to identify all possible tasks or responsibilities which are related to HRM, only the HR activities which carried out by the teamcoaches will be identified.

The HR roles can be defined, based upon two sub-items: interventionary versus non-interventionary orientation and strategic versus tactical orientation (Caldwell, 2003). Based upon these sub-items, four HR role types can be distinguished: Advisor (non-interventionary, strategic), Change Agent (interventionary, strategic), Service Provider (non-interventionary, tactical) and Regulator (interventionary, tactical).

Organisational structure

The organisational structure is made up out of several items, which are: type of departmentalisation, hierarchy and formal reporting relationships and the (de)centrality of the HR department. The type of departmentalisation can either be characterised by product-based or function-based divisions. Next to that, the divisions can be based upon a particular geographic area.

Hierarchy and formal reporting relationships are taken together under the name hierarchy, because the hierarchy is made up out of all the formal reporting relationships in a company. Hierarchy is measured by the levels of horizontal formal reporting relationships (Child, 1977) or chain of command and span of control, which are demonstrated in an organisational chart. The chain of command illustrates the authority structure of an organisation (Daft, 2001). However, with authority comes responsibility and accountability. This means that a person with authority has to report to its supervisor about his responsibilities and accountabilities (Daft, 2001). This can be considered the same as the formal reporting relationships within a company. Next to that, the span of control, is linked to the formal relationships, in a way that the span of control is based upon the number of employees who report to their supervisor.

Finally, the organisational structure is measured by the location of the staff functions and therefore the centrality of the HR department (Fields *et al.*, 2000). The other items with respect to the organisational structure that were discussed above, are related to the structure of the line management. However, the organisational structure is also made up out of staff functions, which provide specialists skills to the line. In this case, the staff function that will be taken into account is the (centrality of) HR department in the top management. Next to that, the decentrality of the HR department is also measured by the extent to which the HR department is situated as a staff function near the divisions or the line.

Business strategy

The business strategy is based upon the strategic clock (Faulkner & Bowman, 1995), which is based upon the sub-items perceived product/service benefits and price. The perceived product/service benefit is measured by the degree of requirements of customers; some customers only want their threshold requirements to be attained, others want a premium product. The price is measured by the relative price of the products offered, compared to the prices of competitors. Based upon the perceived product/service benefits and price, the following types of strategies can be distinguished: no frill strategy (low perceived benefits, low price), low price strategy (same perceived benefits, low price), hybrid strategy (high perceived benefits, low price), differentiation strategy (high perceived benefits, same price) and focused differentiation (high perceived benefits, high price).

Size

The size of a company is measured by the number of employees which are employed by the organisation. Not only the size of the company itself will be taken into account, also the size of the business units will be taken into account. A distinction will be made between number of employees which are employed (headcount) and the amount of fte's.

Technology

Technology is made up out of the items manufacturing technology, degree of routines and interdependencies among people. The item manufacturing technology can be measured by the sub-items batch size, degree of standardised products and use of machinery (Woodward, 1965). The batch size can be measured by the number of products that are handled during one batch. The degree of standardised products is measured by the scope of the product line, which is based upon the number of products or services and organisations produces or offers. The use of machinery can be measured by the ratio between manual labour and utilisation of machinery.

The item degree of routines can be measured by the sub-items degree of exceptions and nature of the search process (Perrow, 1967). The degree of exceptions can be measured by the extent of perceived stimuli as familiar or unfamiliar. The degree of exceptions is high, when a lot of unfamiliar stimuli are perceived. Next to that, the nature of the search process can be measured by the extent to which problems are solved on a logical and analytical basis.

The final item interdependency among departments deals with the extent to which departments depend on each other (Thompson, 1967). The more resources are exchanged, the more dependant the departments are on each other. Therefore, the degree of exchanged resources is a sub-item that is related to the interdependencies among departments. When more resources are exchanged, then the coordination and interaction among the departments should increase also. Therefore, coordination and interaction are also two sub-items of interdependency. The degree of exchanged resources is measured by the extent to which other departments need perfect created resources of other departments in time or vice versa. The degree of coordination and interaction can be measured, based upon the degree of exchanging information. If departments need to exchange a lot of information, then they also need to coordinate and interact.

Culture

The variable culture has a visible and invisible component or level. Especially the invisible component makes it difficult 'to grab', since the variable culture is not a sound object. The visible component of culture is demonstrated by so called artifacts and creations, like symbols, stories, slogans and ceremonies which are partly influenced by the management philosophy. However, two levels of culture are more invisible: values of employees and basic assumptions. The values of employees are a sense of what is ought to be and the basic assumptions are correct ways of coping with the environment, which are taken for granted. Therefore the culture can be measures based upon the item artifacts and creations, values of employees and basic assumptions.

The organisational culture will be operationalised as the strategic focus (internal vs. external orientation) and adaptability to change (change vs. stability) of the organisation and its employees (Denison & Mishra, 1984), that is demonstrated in the artifacts, values of employees and basic assumptions. The following types of cultures are possible (based upon Denison & Mishra, 1984; Beer et al., 1984 respectively): adaptability / market culture (external orientation, change, mission culture (external orientation, stability), involvement / clan culture (internal orientation, change) and consistency / bureaucratic culture (internal orientation, stability).

The operationalisation of the internal context factors is summarised in table 5.

Context factor	Operationalisation	Measures	Sub-measures
HR System	HR philosophy (Schuler, 1992; Jackson & Schuler, 1995)	Business value statement with respect to employees	The way in which employees need to be treated The way in which employees contribute to the success of the organisation
	HR policies (Schuler, 1992; Jackson & Schuler, 1995)	Concrete goals General plans	HR-related objectives The way in which the HR philosophy can be attained
	HR practices (Schuler, 1992; Jackson & Schuler, 1995)	Concrete HR activities of FLMs	Recruitment, selection, evaluation, development, pay, personnel planning, guidance motivate and outflow
	HR roles (Schuler, 1992; Jackson & Schuler, 1995)	Advisor Change Agent Service Provider Regulator	Non-interventionary / strategic Interventionary / strategic Non-interventionary / tactical Interventionary / tactical
Organisational structure	Departement – alisation (Jackson <i>et al.</i> , 1989)	Product based Function based	Departments are arranged by their distinct products/services Departments are arranged by their distinct functions
	Hierarchy (Child, 1977; Daft, 2000)	Reporting relationships Span of control	Responsibility towards supervisor Number of employees who report to their supervisor
	Location of staff functions (Fields <i>et al.</i> , 1995)	(De)centrality of the HR department	HR department serving the top management HR department serving the line management / divisions

Business strategy	Perceived product/service benefits in combination with relative price (Faulkner & Bowman, 1995)	No frills strategy	Low perceived benefits / low price
		Low price strategy	Same perceived benefits / low price
		Hybrid strategy	High perceived benefits / low price
		Differentiation strategy	High perceived benefits / same price (or slightly higher)
		Focused differentiation strategy	High perceived benefits / high price
Size	Size	Employees	Number of employees who are employed by the organisation
		Fte's	Number of full time equivalents employed by the organisation
Technology	Manufacturing technology (Woodward, 1965)	Batch size	Relative number of products handled per batch
		Standardised products	Number of products/services an organisation produces or offers
		Use of machinery	Ratio between manual labour and utilisation of machines
	Degree of routines (Perrow, 1967)	Degree of exceptions	Number of unfamiliar stimuli
		Nature of the search process	Degree to which problems are solved in a logical and analytical way
	Interdependency among departments (Thompson, 1967)	Exchange of resources	Degree whether other departments need perfect resources of others
		Coordination and interaction	Degree whether information is exchanged among departments
Culture	Strategic focus and adaptability towards change that are demonstrated in artifacts and creations, values of employees and basic assumptions (Denison & Mishra, 1995; Beer <i>et al.</i> , 1984)	Adaptability / market culture	External orientation / change
		Mission culture	External orientation / stability
		Involvement / clan culture	Internal orientation / change
		Consistency / bureaucratic culture	Internal orientation / stability

Table 5: Operationalisation of the organisational context factors

4. Results

In this chapter, the results will be presented. In paragraph 4.1, the organisational context factors and the HR system will be presented. Paragraph 4.2 focuses on the characteristics of the teamcoaches. Paragraph 4.3 focuses on the interfering factors. Finally, paragraph 4.4 focuses on the relatedness of the internal organisational context, HR system and the interfering factors.

4.1 The organisational context factors and the HR system

First, the results regarding the organisational context factors will be presented and after that, the results regarding the HR system will be presented. The sequence in which the organisational context factors will be discussed is business strategy, culture, organisational structure, technology and size.

4.1.1 Business strategy

The business strategy that will be discussed is the business strategy of TNT Mail Netherlands, because the BU Operations is part of this division. As has been mentioned in the introduction, TNT Mail Netherlands has experienced several major changes in the past, like a partial liberalisation of the postal market. And within a few years, TNT will experience another major change again, which is characterised by a full liberalisation of the Dutch postal market. Because of this full liberalisation, TNT Mail Netherlands will probably experience an increase in competition, which could result in a mail volume decline. It has to be said that TNT Mail Netherlands is already experiencing a mail volume decline, due to an increase of competition and substitute services like e-mail. Therefore, the strategy of TNT Mail Netherlands is primarily designed to cope with this situation.

How does TNT Mail Netherlands prepare itself for this situation? In the annual report of 2007, the Board of TNT stated that TNT Mail Netherlands prepares itself for the full liberalisation and the increasing competition by adopting, as TNT calls it, a price differentiation strategy. This price differentiation strategy is demonstrated by the fact that TNT Mail Netherlands offers more or less standardised services, however, at a price that is negotiable. The main customers of TNT, like e.g. banks or governmental agencies, can be offered variable price reductions. In order to make this happen, TNT Mail Netherlands wants its BU Operations to be the benchmark of the Dutch postal market with respect to quality of customer service and efficiency. This results in the fact that the BU Operations needs to operate as efficiently as possible and should provide a supreme service quality. However, what is meant by service quality? In practice, this comes down to the fact that the customers of TNT want their mail to be delivered on the moment they request, at the right address (degree of accuracy) and without any damage to the postal items. The moment on which the postal items need to be delivered is either on a specific day (once a week) or the day after the postal item has been sent. Besides that, a group of customers does not have a time preference. In order to meet these customer requirements, TNT Mail Netherlands is able to deliver postal items six days a week with an accuracy of 99%. In practice, this comes down to the fact that (almost) all postal items can be delivered within a day at the right address. Normally, the competitors of TNT Mail Netherlands do not deliver postal items six days a week. Their normal frequency of delivery is twice a week, with an accuracy that is slightly less than TNT Mail Netherlands. However, these competitors are quite flexible and because of that, they are also able to deliver postal items on a requested moment. It has to be said, however, that the accuracy of TNT Mail Netherlands is better. However, on an average, the services of both TNT Mail Netherlands and its competitors are quite homogeneous. Therefore, the only way in which TNT can gain an advantage over its competitors, is by offering a lower price for the same services and a better service quality. In the end this is achieved, by adopting the price differentiation strategy that has been described above.

By taking these considerations into account, it can be said that TNT Mail Netherlands tries to gain an advantage over its competitors, by adopting a low-price strategy. This can be concluded, because TNT Mail Netherlands offers its customers non-differentiated perceived service benefits at variable

prices, in order to offer its services at prices that are lower than the prices of its competitors. It could be argued that TNT Mail Netherlands has adopted a hybrid strategy in which both product differentiation and a lower price are the main goals of a company. However, TNT Mail Netherlands does not really differentiate its services compared to its competitors, because its competitors offer practically the same services. Because of that, TNT Mail Netherlands has adopted a strategy that is more low-price oriented than hybrid oriented. In the end, the BU Operations is able to contribute to this low-price strategy by operating as efficiently as possible in order to lower the production costs. Besides that, the BU Operations is also primarily responsible for the fact that postal items are delivered on time, at the right address without any damage to the post items. By operating as effective as possible, the BU Operations is also able to secure a premium quality for its customers.

4.1.2 Culture

Before I will discuss the culture in more detail, an important remark needs to be made. TNT Mail Netherlands has experienced several changes and is still experiencing major changes that affect the nature and strategy of TNT Mail Netherlands. These changes also had an impact on the organisational culture of TNT Mail Netherlands and resulted in the fact that the culture within TNT Mail Netherlands is changing at this moment. Therefore, the old culture will be taken into account first, next to the present culture.

The old culture can be considered as a consistency culture, mixed with a clan culture. In the past, TNT Mail Netherlands was rather internally focused and there was no need for change. The main reason why TNT Mail Netherlands had a consistency culture, was because of the fact that TNT Mail Netherlands was a monopolist and a state-owned company. This resulted into a situation in which TNT Mail Netherlands did not need to be flexible to changing needs of the postal market, due to the fact that TNT Mail Netherlands could be considered as 'the postal market'. Besides that, the old culture at TNT Mail Netherlands could also partially be characterised as a clan culture in which TNT Mail Netherlands could be regarded as a large family. The employees of TNT Mail Netherlands were loyal to their company and to their supervisors, because TNT Mail Netherlands always treated its employees in a way that always suited the employees best. Because of that, the employees of TNT Mail Netherlands were proud to be part of the 'family' which is called TNT Mail Netherlands.

However, the development towards full liberalisation of the postal market gradually changed the culture of TNT Mail Netherlands. TNT Mail Netherlands needed to be more adaptable to change and needed to adopt a more external orientation in order to cope with competing entrants in the postal market. Next to that, the liberalisation made TNT Mail Netherlands reorganise in a rather radical way in order to become a competitive player on the postal market. However, these radical reorganisations did not suit the employees of TNT Mail Netherlands. In other words, the quality of work life was not as good as it was before the liberalisation. Because of that, the employees at TNT Mail Netherlands became more critical and resistant to several changes and the clan culture disappeared, since employees were not that proud to be part of the 'TNT-family' anymore.

Therefore, a new type of culture started to emerge within TNT Mail Netherlands. TNT Mail Netherlands still has some characteristics of the old consistency culture. However, the culture is increasingly shifting towards a mission culture in which achievement needs to be attained. The reason why this type of culture is emerging, is because of the fact that TNT Mail Netherlands needs to be more quality and customer orientated, in order to outstrip its competitors or to remain competitive. Therefore, TNT Mail Netherlands needs to satisfy the needs of its customers more than ever before. Next to that, the employees of TNT Mail Netherlands needed to be proud of something again. In the past this pride was characterised as an internal pride, in which employees were proud to be part of the 'TNT-family'. However, nowadays the employees are proud to work for a company that is better than its competitors. This motivation of being better than its competitors and the fact that TNT Mail Netherlands is more externally orientated in order to remain competitive, makes it that TNT Mail

Netherlands has adopted a mission strategy that offers a direction for its employees. This direction is: 'being better than our competitors by serving our customers' needs'.

It could be argued that TNT Mail Netherlands has adopted a more change orientated culture like an adaptability culture, because TNT Mail Netherlands needed to change several times, due to regulatory changes that undermined their monopolistic position. However, a large part of the workforce is still not adaptable to change. In most of the cases, the top and middle management and a group of first line managers indicate the need for change and because of that, these managers are willing to change. However, several (first) line managers and several groups of employees are still not in favour of change and prefer stability and direction. Because of that, I would argue that the culture of TNT Mail Netherlands is a mission culture.

The mission culture is apparent in all the six areas. However, several sub-cultures do exist within the overall mission culture. These sub-cultures can be made up because of the fact that several business establishments (so called VBGs) are more resistant to change and/or next to that, several business establishment do not have a complete external orientation. For instance, several business establishments exist in which the employees and their managers are less customer focused compared to other business establishments that are more customer focused. And next to that, several business establishments are not as adaptable to change compared to other business establishments, because the non-adaptable business establishments are e.g. more conservative by nature.

To conclude, the culture of TNT Mail Netherlands is gradually changing towards a mission culture which replaced the consistency and clan culture that was established in the past. This mission culture can be found throughout TNT Mail Netherlands, however, several sub-cultures exist which are based upon the degree of change and the internal or external orientation of business establishments.

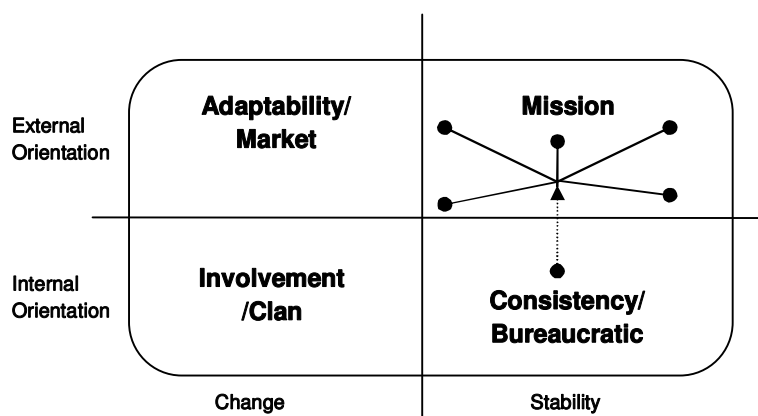


Figure 6: Culture of TNT Mail Netherlands

4.1.3 Organisational structure

First of all, TNT as a whole is divided into two divisions: the Mail division and the Express division. TNT Mail deals with the transfer of documents with day-uncertain delivery (however, in practice, 99% of the mail in the Netherlands is delivered within a day). TNT Express' business focuses on transferring documents, parcels and pallets that require time- or day-certain delivery. Thus, both divisions provide another type of service and because of that, TNT as a whole is departmentalised based upon services. The Mail division will be discussed in more detail, because the BU Operations is a part of this division.

The Mail division is split up into so called business lines, which are based upon four types of services.

These four business lines are Mail Netherlands, European Mail Networks (EMN), Spring (cross-border mail) and Cendris (data and document management). The first three business lines distribute mail in The Netherlands, Europe and in three continents respectively. Cendris offers direct communication, data management and document management services. The business line Mail Netherlands will be discussed in more detail next.

The business line Mail Netherlands is made up out of three business units: Commerce, Operations and Parcels. These three business units can be categorised into two types of departments, in which the business unit Operations falls into both types. The business units Commerce and Operations are different based upon the function they have. And the business units Operations and Parcels are different based upon the service they deliver. However, it has to be said that the departmentalisation of the three business units is more service based than function based, because of the fact that the business units Commerce and Operations are increasingly collaborating. Therefore, these two business units can be considered as one. Because of that, the business unit of the business line Mail Netherlands is primarily departmentalised based upon services.

Regarding reporting relationships, the business unit Operations has its own managing director to whom six area directors support. Each of these six directors is responsible for the collection, sorting and distribution processes in one area. Within the areas, three so called chain managers need to report to the area director. Each of them is responsible for either the collection, sorting or distribution process. Next to that, three groups of second line managers report to the chain manager. The CG-managers report to the chain manager collection, the factory managers report to the chain manager sorting and the VBG managers report to the chain manager distribution. Finally three groups of FLMs need to report to their manager. The teamcoach collection reports to a CG-manager, the production team leader reports to a factory manager and the teamcoach distribution reports to a VBG-manager. And finally the production employees report to their teamcoach or production team leader. The complete structure of (1) TNT, (2) TNT Mail (Netherlands) and (3) the business unit Operations can be found in appendix 5.

In general, the teamcoaches at TNT Mail BU Operations have a span of control of approximately 56 employees, however, some difference between the areas are apparent. Regarding collection, the teamcoaches in the area South-East have the lowest span of control of 28 employees. The teamcoaches collection in the area West have the highest span of control of 55 employees. Regarding distribution, the teamcoaches in the area North-West have the lowest span of control of 52 employees. The teamcoaches distribution in the area West have the highest span of control of 62 employees. The average span of control of the teamcoaches collection is 40 employees and the average span of control of teamcoaches distribution is 59 employees. However, the above mentioned spans of controls are averages. It became clear during the interviews that teamcoaches also have a span of control that are large extensive (> 59 employees) than the average span of control. The largest span of control that was measured, is 102 employees. The teamcoaches who are responsible for both the collection and distribution process have the highest average span of control (73 employees). It seems however, that the operational span of control is less. The operational span of control of approximately 40 employees, because not all employees work all days a week. If, for instance the employees who work only on Saturdays are excluded, then the span of control would be 40 employees. Finally, the second and third line managers have an average span of control of between two up till forty-four managers. The span of control of the first, second and third line management can be found in table 6.

Line manager	Collection	Sorting	Distribution
Chain manager	2 – 5 CG-managers	6 – 10 factory managers	14 – 44 VBG managers
CG- and VBG manager and factory manager	2 – 4 teamcoaches	3 – 6 production team leaders	3 – 5 teamcoaches
Teamcoach and production team leader	40 employees	42 – 59 employees	59 employees

Table 6: Span of control of 1st, 2nd and 3rd line managers

The HR department of TNT Mail can be considered as a staff function, next to other staff functions like finance & control, public affairs and communication. First of all, the personnel department (Personeelszaken Nederland) can be considered as the central HR department of TNT Mail. However, TNT Mail BU Operations also has its own central HR department. Both the personnel department of TNT Mail Netherlands and the HR department of the BU Operations are more policy and top management oriented. However, the HR department of the BU Operations is split up into one central HR department and six decentralised HR department. The central HR department is a staff function of the BU Operations. The decentralised HR departments can be considered the staff functions of the line management in the areas. This is also demonstrated in the fact that HR and the line engage into 'result oriented collaboration'.

Both types of HR departments have two distinct functions. This distinction comes forth out of one of the five guiding principles of the BU Operations: 'policy centralised, implementation decentralised'. Because of that, the central HR department is responsible for developing HR policies and practices and serving the top management. The decentralised HR departments are responsible for a correct implementation and transfer of those policies and practices. The guiding principle 'result oriented collaboration' results into the fact that the decentralised HR departments are responsible for supporting line management.

4.1.4 Technology

Because TNT Mail Netherlands collects, sorts and distributes postal items, the production process of the BU Operations is split up into a collection process, a sorting process and a distribution process and the teamcoaches are either responsible for collection process or the distribution process. First, the postal items are collected and distributed to one of the six sorting centres (each area has its own sorting centre). After the postal items have been sorted, they are delivered by mailmen or part-time mail deliverers.

The three processes are partially non-routine, because of the fact that the employees and the teamcoaches are sometimes confronted with problems that are difficult to solve. The most grinding problems are related to the time span in which the mail should be delivered, the number of postal items (mail volume) that need to be handled and the continuity of the personnel planning. Although these problems look the same in advance, in reality they are not. In reality, these problems are differently in character every time. A teamcoach does not know exactly how many postal items he will receive on a given day (especially the teamcoaches at collection). Therefore, it is like laying a puzzle, however, without a completely clear example of how that puzzle is going to look like in the end. However, the teamcoaches cannot apply as many employees as they wish in order to cope with an unexpected high mail volume, because the personnel planning has to match the predicted mail volume. Otherwise, the teamcoach will exceed his personnel planning budget. Therefore, teamcoaches always "need to make a tight personnel planning".

"We have no standard solutions for making a personnel planning. I do not know how many mail needs to be delivered on a given day. However, you need to adjust your personnel planning to the mail volume".

Second, the teamcoaches can not always rely on a sufficient number of employees, due to the outflow of fulltime mailmen or because employees do not show up at work. Therefore, the teamcoaches do not only have to solve an unclear puzzle; they can not always rely on the puzzle pieces they need as well. The situation becomes even more problematic if employees sign off right before or during the process. An interviewed teamcoach indicated: "sometimes I do not have enough employees at hand ... then I think; how to proceed next and how do I need to solve this problem? It really makes me sweat out". Next to that, they cannot apply standardised solutions. It takes some time and creativity to solve them. However, the problems (operational pressures) that show up if the personnel planning is sound, are rather familiar and can be easily solved by applying a standardised solution. These operational pressures are familiar, because these problems are present frequently. Therefore, operational pressures can be regarded as routine.

The whole process of collection, sorting and distribution can be considered as a mass production process. Although the BU Operations is not a production company, it does collect, sort and distribute different kinds of postal items (products). The number of different postal items is not rather extended and because of that, the postal items can be considered as standardised products. In practice, the products that are processed by the BU Operations are: small letters, large letters and parcels. Because of that, it is possible to collect, sort and distribute large batches of postal items. For instance, during the sorting process, large numbers of e.g. small letters can be sorted during one batch. The sorting process is also the process in which a lot of machinery is used. Approximately 85% of all the postal items are sorted by machines and 15% is sorted by hand. The postal items in collection and distribution process are mainly processed by hand.

Finally, the three processes are quite dependent on each other for both the information which the three processes share among each other and the postal items that are exchanged. For instance, the sorting departments need to know how many postal items they can expect that are collected during the collection process, in order to determine how many employees need to be at work during the sorting shift. And of course, the same goes for the distribution process. However, the sorting process is also dependent on the collection process in a way that the sorting process stagnates, if the collection process takes too much time. This simply means that the sorting centres have to receive the postal items in time. The sorting centres need to receive the postal items in time, because the distribution process is also dependent on the sorting process. The distribution of the postal items is time dependent as well.

4.1.5 Size

During the year 2007, the complete workforce of TNT consisted of 161.582 employees (114.459 fte's). Approximately the half of the employees of TNT work for the Mail division. To be precise, 84.929 employees (42.777 fte's) worked for TNT Mail at the end of 2007. Within the Mail division, TNT Mail Netherlands can be regarded as the largest business line with 54.186 employees (26.587 fte's) at the beginning of 2008. And the BU Production is also the largest business unit within TNT Mail Netherlands with 48.731 employees (21.976 fte's) employed.

Within the BU Operations the employees who must report to the teamcoaches (mailmen and part-time mail deliverers) are part of the largest group of employees within the business unit. The number of mailmen who are employed at the beginning of 2008 is 21.834 (15.037 fte's) and 9.632 (2.166 fte's) part-time mail deliverers are responsible for the delivery of postal items.

A summary of the number employees and the associated fte's for the mailmen and part-time mail deliverers up till TNT as a whole can be found in table 7.

	Headcount	FTEs
TNT	161.582	114.549
TNT Mail	84.929	42.777
TNT Mail Netherlands	54.186	26.587
BU Production	48.731	21.976
Mailmen	21.834	15.037
Part-time mail deliverers	9.632	2.166

Table 7: Headcount of employees and fte's

4.1.6 HR system

The HR philosophy of TNT can be found in the mission statement, which describes that TNT aims to lead the industry by 'instilling pride in its people' (TNT Annual Report, 2007). Next to that, TNT acknowledges that the employees of TNT are the key to the success of TNT. The employees of TNT need to be enthusiastic, passionate and motivated to go 'the extra mile' that determines how well TNT serves its customers and therefore, determines the business success of TNT. TNT tries to achieve this by instilling pride in its people. This means that (1) every employee should perceive him or her self as a valued individual and (2) TNT offers personal development opportunities that should lead to an increase of the capabilities, skills and competencies of the employees, in order to ensure both career development and personal growth. In the end, this should result in the fact that the employees of TNT go that 'extra mile'. The corporate HR philosophy that has been described above, is based upon the management system 'Investors in People' (Iip), which stands for the development of employees and the contribution of people to the business of an organisation.

The BU Operations also developed its own HR philosophy, which is based upon the corporate HR philosophy. The HR philosophy of the BU Operations is formulated as 'continually having a well-qualified enrolment of employees, on the right time'. This means that the employees of the BU Operations contribute to the strategic goals of TNT Mail Netherlands by being well-qualified, flexible, inquisitive and adaptable to changes. Therefore, the general HR objectives within the BU Operations are (1) a well-qualified employment of employees on an adequate notice, (2) an efficient arrangement of the operations organisation by optimally applying and rewarding talents, and (3) the development of employees and FLMs. In practice, this comes down to two main HR objectives. First, the BU Operations needs to operate as efficiently as possible, which means that the personnel costs should be as low as possible, while the operation targets are met. And second, the employees who work within the BU Operations should secure customer value and because of that, they need to be well-qualified, flexible, inquisitive and adaptable. These main HR objectives are demonstrated in the so called strategic 'spearheads' of the BU Operations during 2008. The first HR-related spearhead deals with the enrolment of employees. This enrolment of employees enables the BU Operations to cope with the outflow of employees and the fulfilment of vacancies, in a qualitative and quantitative way on all organisational levels. The second HR-related spearhead is to make the first and second line managers fit for their jobs. And finally, the last spearhead deals with the motivation of employees. TNT Mail Netherlands BU Operations wants its employees to stay motivated during a period in which this motivation is under pressure, because TNT is reorganising and trying to lower its operating costs.

The main objectives that were discussed above, are more general objectives. However, these general objectives and HR-related spearheads have resulted into several concrete HR-related objectives for 2008, which are better quantifiable. These objectives are presented in table 8

Goals	Measurement
Absence through illness during 2008	4,9%
Work related accidents	< 789
Score Investors in People management system	Sufficient
Response to Employee Motivation Investigation in 2008	> 80%
Assessment of the motivation of employees	> 52%
Inflow of part-time mail deliverers	402 FTEs (3450 employees)
Voluntary outflow of employees	402 FTEs
Reduction of first and second line managers who still need to develop themselves, or cannot develop themselves	50%

Table 8: HR-related goals for 2008

In order to achieve these goals, several plans and programs have been developed. First of all, TNT wants to offer its employees personalised training programmes and trainings possibilities. Next to that, the employees who work for TNT need to be carefully evaluated and assessed. This means that weekly and quarterly work meetings need to be arranged. Next to that, every employee of TNT should engage in a job evaluation conversation with his supervisor at least once a year. However, the Investors in People program is not the only basis for the goals of the BU Operations and therefore, the BU Operations developed more plans and programs to achieve those goals.

Two programs have been started to improve the inflow of part-time mail deliverers. One program maps out the inflow of the part-time mail deliverers and second, a central recruitment office is set up in order to actually recruit the needed part-time mail deliverers. Within the BU Operations, special attention is given to the inflow of employees, because the mailmen with a fulltime contract need to flow out. According to TNT, the wages of these fulltime mailmen are too high and these employees are not flexible enough. Therefore, TNT has set up a Mobility program in order to stimulate the fulltime mailmen to voluntarily resign. Within this program, career opportunities are discussed and trainings are offered to the fulltime mailmen, in order to execute other occupations outside TNT.

Also two programs have been set up with respect to the reduction of absence through illness. First, a method will be developed that gives insight into the use and utilisation of absence reduction instruments. And second, the (line) management will be offered a standardised online information package about absence (through illness). The line managers also need to conduct an absence through illness conversation with an employee, if that employee has been absent through illness for the third time in a year.

And finally a supervision or coaching track will be developed in order to develop and train the first and second line managers. The first and second line managers have a yearly 'personal development conversation'. Next to that, the teamcoaches are offered a senior vocational education in logistics supervision. If this is not possible, then teamcoaches can follow a range of other training courses.

The HR practices are based upon the HR policy, which has been described above. It is not possible to describe all the HR practices that are executed. Only the HR practices that are executed by the teamcoaches will be discussed. Of course, the other HR agents, like personnel assistants, HR consultants and HR managers also execute HR practices. However, this will be discussed later on, when the HR roles are addressed.

The teamcoaches are primarily responsible for the following groups of HR activities: selection of employees, evaluation and assessment of employees, development of employees, handling absenteeism (through illness), handling inconvenient employees, (voluntary) outflow of employees, explaining collective labour agreements, personnel planning and other administrative HR practices, like personnel mutations and the registration of working hours. It has to be mentioned that the teamcoaches are not responsible for e.g. the whole selection process or the development process of employees. Most of the time they are partially responsible for these processes, because they share

their HR responsibilities with an HR specialist. Although the teamcoaches have shared HR responsibilities, the number of these HR responsibilities is quite extended. Because of that, all HR practices for which the teamcoaches are responsible are listed in appendix 2.

Finally, it needs to be discussed how the HR roles are distributed among the teamcoaches and the HR specialists. And because of that, it has to be made clear first which HR specialists engage in HRM. The group of HR specialists at TNT Mail can be made up out of HR managers, senior HR advisors, HR consultants, personnel assistants, HR SSC and TNT Mobility. These HR specialists can either be categorised as Advisors, Change Agents, Service Provider and Regulators. However, these HR roles are ideal types, which means that none of the HR specialists adopts one single role for the full hundred percent.

First, the Advisors and Change Agents roles will be discussed. Before making a distinction between these two HR roles, a remark needs to be made first. As has been discussed before, the HR department of the BU Operation is split up into one central HR department and six decentralised HR area departments. Because of that, two senior HR advisor types can be distinguished. The first type of senior HR advisors are employed at the central HR department and because of that, they will be called 'senior HR advisors central'. The other type of senior HR advisor is employed at one of the six decentralised HR departments. Because of that, they will be called 'senior HR advisors area'. This distinction needs to be made in order to allocate the Advisor and Change Agent roles. Both senior HR advisor types are strategically oriented. However, the senior HR advisors central can be regarded as Advisors, because they advise the top management of the BU Operations about several HR-related issues and next to that, the senior HR advisors central also partially develop the HR policies of the BU Operations. Because of that, the senior HR advisor central can be regarded as Advisors. However, the HR managers who are responsible for the HR departments in the areas are also responsible for policy making. Therefore, they can partially be regarded as Advisors. The senior HR advisors area, however, are more interventionary orientated, because they are responsible for implementing and monitoring change. And next to that, they develop the line management (spearhead: line management fir for the job) in order to enable the line management to actually implement the changes. This last responsibility can be considered as an Advisor responsibility. Because of that, the senior HR advisor area can mainly be considered as Change Agents and partially as Advisors. Next, the Service Provide and the Regulator roles will be discussed.

The Service Provider and the Regulator roles are distributed among the teamcoaches, HR consultants, personnel assistants, the HR SSC and TNT Mobility. The teamcoaches mainly adopt the Regulator role, since their HR activities are interventionary and tactical orientated. This is demonstrated by the organisational assumption that all significant operational HR practices that are directly interventionary should be executed by the teamcoaches. And because of that, the teamcoaches are the ones who mainly maintain the psychological contract between the employees and the organisation, because a lot of the interventionary HR practices are executed by the teamcoaches (see: appendix 2). Therefore, within the BU Operations, the teamcoaches are considered as being 'people managers' and because of that, the Regulator role can be allocated to the teamcoaches. Next to that, TNT Mobility can be regarded as a Regulator. TNT Mobility is responsible for the Mobility program. TNT Mobility discusses career opportunities with fulltime mailmen and TNT Mobility offers training possibilities which mailmen need to voluntary resign. These activities can be regarded as tactical, interventionary HR activities. Finally, the Regulator role can also partially be allocated to the HR consultants, who advice the teamcoaches. The reason why the Regulator role has been partially allocated to the HR consultants, is because of the fact that both the teamcoaches and the HR consultants are jointly responsible for the same HR issues. This means that the HR consultants are advising and supporting the teamcoaches most of the time. Besides that, the HR consultants also support the teamcoaches when it comes to their development. However, in several occasions the HR consultants are also actually executing interventionary HR practices. For instance, an HR consultant sometimes recruits new employees and after that, the teamcoach conducts e.g. the

job interviews. Because of that, it can be concluded that the HR consultants adopt a Service Provider role and partially a Regulator role, because of the fact that they advise and support the teamcoaches and the fact that they execute several interventionary HR practices. Finally, the personnel assistants and HR SSC can be considered as Service Providers, because they provide non-interventionary service to the teamcoaches. These services are most of the time administrative services.

The allocation of the HR roles can be summarised as follows. The Advisor role is mainly allocated to the senior HR advisors central and the HR managers. The Change Agent role is mainly allocated to the senior HR advisors area. The Regulator role is mainly allocated to the teamcoaches, TNT Mobility and partially to the HR consultants. Next to that, the HR consultants can be regarded as Service Providers, as well as the personnel assistants and the HR SSC. The figure below summarises the allocation of the HR roles.

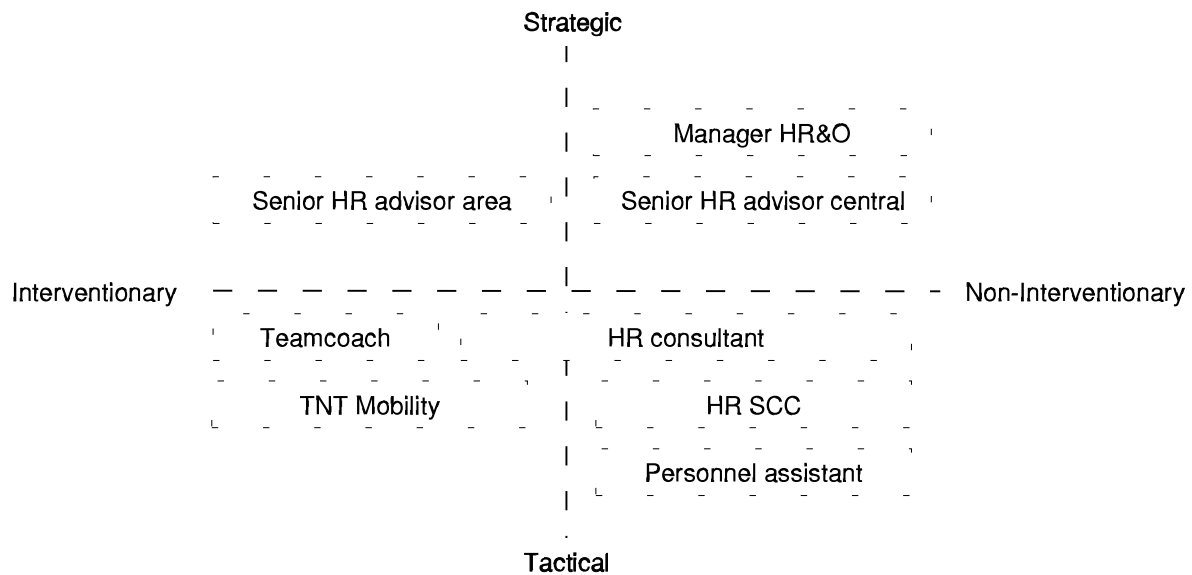


Figure 7: Allocation of the HR roles

4.2 Characteristics of the teamcoaches (descriptive results)

Before the results regarding the interfering factors will be presented, several general descriptive results will be presented. These general descriptive results deal with the characteristics of the teamcoaches.

The average age of the teamcoaches is 47 years. In total, 80% of the teamcoaches is responsible for the distribution process, 9% is responsible for the collection process and 11% is responsible for both processes. Almost all teamcoaches (91%) are employed at TNT for more than 10 years. Figure 8 shows that almost a half of the teamcoaches (47%) is executing a managerial function for more than 10 years. Finally, figure 9 shows that most of the teamcoaches have finished a secondary education (40%) or a senior vocational education (46%).

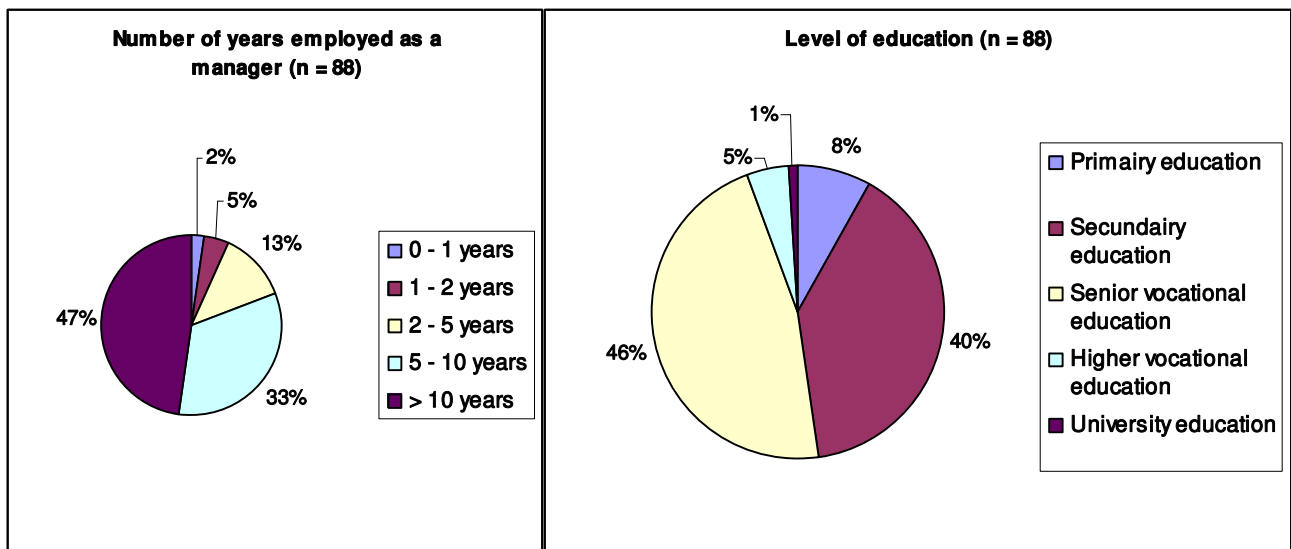


Figure 8: Number of years employed as a line manager

Figure 9: Level of education

Although most of the teamcoaches indicate to bear HR responsibilities, several teamcoaches indicated that they were not responsible for all the HR issues that are mentioned in table 9. Table 9 shows which percentage of the teamcoaches indicates to be responsible for the mentioned HR issues. Almost all teamcoaches indicated that they are responsible for HR-related administrations (99%). The teamcoaches indicate the same for the other HR responsibilities. However, the teamcoaches do not agree to the same extent regarding collective labour agreements; 17% of the teamcoaches have the opinion that they are not responsible for discussing and applying collective labour agreements.

HR responsibility	Percentage
Administrative duties	99%
Personnel planning	95%
Selection of employees	97%
Evaluation, training and assessment	94%
Collective labour agreements	83%
Guiding, advising and motivating	97%

Table 9: Identified HR responsibilities

4.3 The interfering factors

In this section, results regarding the interfering factors will be presented in both a quantitative and qualitative way. Paragraph 4.3.1 focuses on the quantitative results will be presented. Paragraph 4.3.2 focuses on the qualitative results. In paragraph 4.3.3 the hypotheses that were set up, will be tested. Finally, in paragraph 4.3.4, the means of different sub-populations will be compared, in order to search for differences between various populations as well.

4.3.1 Quantitative results

The quantitative data show that the teamcoaches perceive all five interfering factors as hindering. The means and standard deviations regarding these interfering factors can be found in table 10. As table 10 and figure 10 show, the teamcoaches perceive the interfering factors as hindering to some extent. However, the factors are not perceived as interfering as was expected in advance. The most interfering factor is capacity (mean = 0,50) and the least interfering factor is competencies (mean = 0,81). The standard deviations show that none of the means has an extreme outlier. This indicates that none of the scores regarding the constructs are deviating from the construct means.

Constructs	Mean (0-1)	s.d.
Motivation	0,66	0,09
Intrinsic motivation	0,65	0,17
Identified motivation	0,59	0,15
External motivation	0,64	0,19
Amotivation (R)	0,79	0,18
Value added	0,64	0,18
Capacity	0,50	0,19
Role overload (R)	0,50	0,19
Competencies	0,81	0,12
Self-efficacy	0,81	0,12
Trainings	0,75	0,22
Experience	0,87	0,14
Support	0,69	0,16
HR service quality	0,69	0,16
Policies & Procedures	0,69	0,13
Role conflict (R)	0,67	0,16
Role ambiguity (R)	0,72	0,14
User friendliness	0,68	0,18

Table 10: Means and standard deviations for the constructs

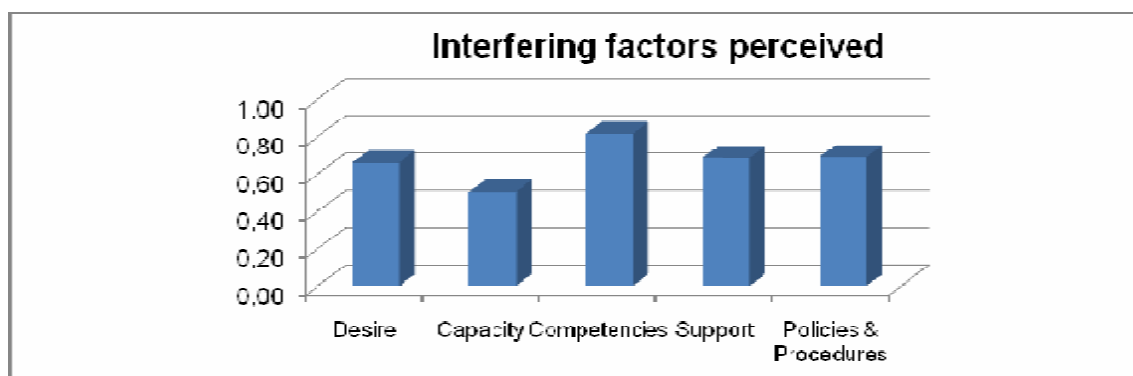


Figure 10: Interfering factors perceived by teamcoaches

In table 11 the correlations between the constructs are presented. Table 11 shows that external motivation is negatively correlating with all other constructs except the construct identified motivation. Besides that, the reversed construct Amotivation is negatively correlating with almost all constructs regarding competencies, support and policies & procedures. This might indicate that the reversed Amotivation construct is not interfering, if competencies, support and policies & procedures are interfering. The same goes for external motivation. However, the reversed construct Amotivation does not need to be reversed, because this construct is positively correlating with the construct intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation can be regarded the same as Amotivation (R).

Finally, several constructs are correlating. However, this might not have been expected in advance. First, role overload and role conflict seem to be correlating to some extent (0,67). This could indicate that a role overload is experienced by teamcoaches, because several responsibilities are conflicting (role conflict). A role conflict indicates that teamcoaches experience multiple conflicting responsibilities. In order to cope with multiple responsibilities, teamcoaches need to spend more time on executing tasks that are related to those responsibilities. Second, self-efficacy and role ambiguity seem to be correlating (0,53). This could indicate that a non-interfering self-efficacy results into a situation in which teamcoaches do not experience a role ambiguity. It might be argued that teamcoaches who indicate to be able to implement HRM are also more knowledgeable about their HR responsibilities. In the end, this results in the fact that teamcoaches do not experience role ambiguity. Finally, the user friendliness of HR forms seems to be correlating with role ambiguity (0,59). It might be the case that user friendly HR forms highlight the HR responsibilities of teamcoaches. In the end, this results in the fact that they do not experience a role ambiguity.

	Mean (0-1)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<i>Desire</i>														
1. Intrinsic motivation	0,65	1,00												
2. Identified motivation	0,59	0,51	1,00											
3. External motivation	0,64	(0,15)	0,09	1,00										
4. Amotivation (R)	0,79	0,31	0,11	(0,44)	1,00									
5. Value added	0,64	0,40	0,34	(0,31)	0,33	1,00								
<i>Capacity</i>														
6. Role overload (R)	0,50	0,14	0,03	(0,26)	0,17	(0,04)	1,00							
<i>Competencies</i>														
7. Self-efficacy	0,81	0,46	0,23	(0,15)	0,24	0,24	0,39	1,00						
8. Training	0,75	0,22	0,21	(0,18)	(0,13)	0,34	0,25	0,42	1,00					
9. Experience	0,87	0,21	(0,01)	(0,11)	(0,19)	0,27	0,33	0,67	0,44	1,00				
<i>Support</i>														
10. HR service quality	0,69	0,34	0,24	(0,26)	(0,33)	0,27	0,35	0,40	0,37	0,31	1,00			
<i>Policies & Procedures</i>														
11. Role conflict (R)	0,67	0,15	(0,06)	(0,44)	(0,42)	0,06	0,67	0,30	0,29	0,31	0,53	1,00		
12. Role ambiguity (R)	0,72	0,28	0,15	(0,17)	(0,26)	0,22	0,43	0,53	0,35	0,48	0,50	0,41	1,00	
13. User friendliness	0,68	0,31	0,23	(0,29)	(0,31)	0,15	0,49	0,42	0,33	0,40	0,53	0,52	0,59	1,00

Table 11: Correlations between constructs

Next to these results, the quantitative results also show the average time needed to implement HRM and the average actual time spent on implementing HRM. Table 12 shows the actual pastime (actual time spent) to execute various HR responsibilities. The teamcoaches significantly spent most of their time on making an HR planning, people management (motivating employees, keeping a good atmosphere, accompanying employees, solving conflicts), and the evaluation and development of employees.

HR responsibility	Mean (0-1)	T value
Administrative HR tasks	0,54	38,54*
HR planning and mutations	0,59	36,08*
Recruitment and selection	0,55	25,76*
Evaluation and development	0,57	43,69*
CAO	0,45	18,93*
Mobility and outflow	0,41	19,26*
People management	0,61	36,33*

Table 12: Time spent on HR activities by the teamcoaches, using One-Sample T-Test

* $p = 0,00$

Table 13 shows whether the teamcoaches need more or less time (time needed) in order to execute various HR tasks sufficiently or better. The teamcoaches want to spend more time on people management, and the evaluation and development of employees. Next to that, the teamcoaches indicated to need more time for administrative HR tasks, HR planning, and mobility and outflow, however, to a smaller extent.

HR responsibility	Mean (1 = less time, 2= same time 3 = more time)	T value
Administrative HR tasks	2,06	45,66*
HR planning and mutations	2,02	41,05*
Recruitment and selection	1,96	29,80*
Evaluation and development	2,21	47,52*
CAO	1,78	31,11*
Mobility and outflow	2,06	27,93*
People management	2,18	52,52*

Table 13: Degree of time needed to implement HRM sufficiently, using One-Sample T-Test

* $p = 0,00$

The time needed and actual time spent on implementing HRM can be compared as well. This can be done by combining the table 12 and table 13. These results are presented in table 14. The table shows that the average time spent is less than the average time needed regarding all HR activities.

HR responsibility	Time needed (0-1)	Actual time (0-1)	Delta
Administrative HR tasks	0,69	0,54	(0,15)
HR planning and mutations	0,67	0,59	(0,08)
Recruitment and selection	0,65	0,55	(0,10)
Evaluation and development	0,74	0,57	(0,17)
CAO	0,59	0,45	(0,14)
Mobility and outflow	0,69	0,41	(0,28)
People management	0,73	0,61	(0,12)

Table 14: Comparison of time needed vs. time spent on implementing HRM

Finally, the quantitative results also show the degree of needed support and the support source. Table 15 shows that the teamcoaches require support regarding executing HR responsibilities (mean = 0,71). More concretely, the teamcoaches mainly want to be supported on collective labour agreements (mean = 0,81), specific personnel problems (mean = 0,75) and finding and using HR procedures (mean = 0,77).

Type of support	Mean (0-1)	s.d.
Support on executing HR responsibilities	0,71	0,20
Support on collective labour agreements	0,81	0,23
Support on finding and using HR procedures	0,77	0,21
Advise about how to deal with specific personnel problems	0,75	0,23
Personal accompaniment on the use of HR instruments	0,51	0,27
Personal accompaniment on executing HR responsibilities	0,62	0,23
Support on administrative processes	0,57	0,32
A faster service delivery by the HR department	0,76	0,23
More and better HR policies	0,72	0,23
More and better development programs	0,71	0,21

Table 15: Type of support needed

Table 16 presents the sources of support. These results show that teamcoaches mainly go to an HR consultant, their supervisor, the mailmen + (deputy of the teamcoach) and other teamcoaches in order to be supported.

Support source	Mean (0-1)	s.d.
Personnel assistants	0,73	0,22
HR consultants	0,81	0,22
Supervisor	0,79	0,24
HR SSC	0,66	0,23
Administrative assistants	0,67	0,24
Mailman +	0,79	0,19
Other teamcoaches	0,81	0,20
TNT Mobility	0,56	0,23
Health and welfare service	0,76	0,21

Table 16: Sources of support

Table 17 shows the correlations between the sources of support and the type of support. The columns of table 17 represent the types of support. The sequence of types of support is the same as the sequence in table 15. Therefore, T1 is 'support on executing HR responsibilities', T2 is 'support on collective labour agreements', etc.

The results in table 17 do not show strong correlations between the sources of support and type of support needed. This indicates that teamcoaches do not contact a specific support source in order to be supported on a specific HR issue.

The qualitative data will be presented next, in paragraph 4.3.2. I will elaborate on the qualitative data and the accompanying interview constructs.

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
Personnel assistants	(0,02)	(0,11)	(0,05)	0,01	0,14	(0,03)	(0,03)	(0,20)	(0,10)	(0,19)
HR consultants	(0,05)	0,12	(0,03)	0,00	(0,02)	(0,07)	(0,14)	(0,26)	(0,18)	(0,02)
Supervisor	(0,06)	0,09	0,18	0,06	(0,01)	0,00	(0,01)	(0,05)	(0,14)	(0,03)
HR SSC	0,11	0,14	0,20	(0,02)	(0,01)	0,00	(0,12)	(0,22)	(0,08)	0,16
Administrative assistants	(0,01)	(0,01)	0,09	0,06	0,04	(0,03)	0,02	(0,13)	0,03	0,07
Mailman +	(0,19)	(0,04)	0,00	0,01	0,00	(0,08)	(0,04)	(0,05)	(0,14)	(0,09)
Other teamcoaches	0,01	0,18	0,08	0,04	(0,12)	(0,05)	(0,06)	0,09	0,00	0,07
TNT Mobility	(0,03)	0,06	0,00	(0,02)	(0,11)	(0,21)	(0,18)	(0,17)	(0,17)	0,09
Health and welfare service	0,20	0,18	0,19	0,19	0,03	(0,06)	(0,08)	(0,14)	(0,09)	0,20

Table 17: Correlations between the sources of support and type of support needed

4.3.2 Qualitative results

Desire

The qualitative results show that teamcoaches are willing to implement HRM. Therefore, they do not perceive the factor desire as hindering. Their personal motivation is good and/or they perceive an institutional reinforcement. Short-termism tends to be present, however, this does not make the teamcoaches reluctant to implement HRM.

The qualitative results show that all teamcoaches are personally motivated to implement HRM. All teamcoaches indicated to enjoy performing almost all HR activities. Next to that, 93% of the interviewed teamcoaches indicated that their HR responsibilities contribute to the performance of their teams as well. They came up with the following reasons. First, teamcoaches enjoy having HR responsibilities, because they like to “get involved with employees”.

“I like to work with people and because of that, I like it to perform (HR) activities that are related to my employees”.

“These (HR) activities and the personal contact that comes along with it, are the reason why I wanted to be a teamcoach”.

It became clear that teamcoaches especially like to perform “people-oriented” HR activities, like e.g. solving conflicts, selecting new employees and conducting job evaluations interviews, absence through illness conversations or correction conversations. They like to (socially) accompany employees as well.

“I like to hold all kind of conversations with my employees (...) and in general, I like to accompany my employees”.

“I like to accompany my employees, just like the evaluation and development of my employees”.

Teamcoaches are less in favour of executing administrative HR activities. Besides administrative HR activities, several teamcoaches indicated to have problems with the voluntary outflow or mobility of employees and are hesitant to conduct absence through illness conversations now and then. This happens, because these activities endanger or do not contribute to the performance of their teams. However, teamcoaches are not unwilling to execute these activities. An unwilling does not show up, because teamcoaches are otherwise reprimanded for not execute these HR activities.

"I do not always like to work out administrations, however, they are simply a part of our job and we need to execute them. Otherwise my supervisor will reprimand me".

"It is difficult for me to stimulate my employees to flow out in a voluntary way" or "to search for others jobs outside the organisation, because this endangers my personnel planning. In the end, this endangers the service quality as well".

"Something I do not always like, is conducting absence through illness conversations (...), because I am forced to conduct one if an employee has been ill three times within a year. However, several of these conversations are unnecessary, because some employees are absent due to obvious reason. However, my supervisor tells me to execute these activities, otherwise I will get reprimanded".

Second, teamcoaches enjoy performing HR activities, because these activities make their jobs more diverse.

"I am confronted with seven HR subjects and it is fun to perform different activities. I would not like to execute only one activity, because that would make my job boring".

"The higher the diversity, the better".

And third, teamcoaches have the opinion that HR activities contribute to the performance of their team(s). They indicated that it is important to execute these HR tasks, because these tasks enable them to manage their team(s).

"If you perform these HR activities correctly, then you take the maximum out of your employees".

"These (HR) tasks offer the opportunity to manage my employees. In other words: without these tasks, you can not manage a team. This counts for the more people-oriented activities, the others can be delegated more easily".

According to the teamcoaches, the HR activities help them to select competent employees or to develop employees. Next to that, teamcoaches indicated that HR activities give a direction to the performance of their employees, because these activities enable them to clearly communicate with their employees.

"These tasks contribute to my personnel in a way that I can rely on educated and qualified personnel."

"These HR tasks enable me to communicate with my employees".

And therefore, in the end, as one teamcoach indicated:

"These HR activities enable me to run my own establishment".

All teamcoaches indicated to experience institutional reinforcement as well, mainly because their HR-related performance is appraised. According to the teamcoaches, their job description does not make them experience institutional reinforcement. However, the job description of the teamcoaches does state that the teamcoaches are responsible for implementing HRM. The job description does not contribute to institutional reinforcement, because most of the teamcoaches have never read or internalised their job description.

"I have no idea were I can find a list with my HR responsibilities. Could it be that it is included in my job description? I really don 't know".

"I never read any document in which is stated that I have these HR responsibilities. It is normal for me that I execute them".

The teamcoaches are mainly reinforced to execute HR activities, because they have made a settlement about HR-related goals with their supervisor. Besides that, some teamcoaches even have "signed to do so". In the end, all teamcoaches are appraised on the HR-related goals that have been set up.

"We know that we need to execute our HR tasks, because we have set up targets with our supervisor. We are also appraised on these targets".

"I know which HR activities I need to carry out, because this has been settled down in goals. These goals have been set up together with my supervisor".

This practically means that the teamcoaches are directly assessed on conducting all job evaluation conversations, absence through illness, their personnel planning (or actual budget), conducting work meetings and the motivation of their employees. Finally, the teamcoaches are also assessed on the quality that is delivered by their team(s).

With respect to authority, all teamcoaches indicated to have a satisfactory degree of authority. Although the supervisors of the teamcoaches "strictly demarcate the degree of authority", the teamcoaches still indicate that their supervisors grant them a sufficient amount of authority. The teamcoaches find this motivating and essential. Two teamcoaches indicated the following:

"It is not appealing when you can not decide for yourself or when my actions are made undone. If my supervisor constantly would do that, I would immediately quit. If I have the freedom to execute my HR tasks, then I also want the freedom to act".

"I need this amount of authority and freedom in order to implement the business policies in a proper way".

Most teamcoaches pointed out that they experienced managerial short-termism to some extent. This was not necessarily demonstrated in the business policy. However, the experienced short-termism was demonstrated by the list of priorities of the teamcoaches. Almost all interviewed teamcoaches (79%) indicated that the collection or distribution process is priority number one, leaving HR tasks behind as a second priority.

"My first priority is to get the mail delivered in a proper and efficient way".

"The mail needs to go out first".

In order to do so, the teamcoaches indicated that they need to rely on a proper operational personnel planning in advance as well. Therefore, making a personnel planning is the real top priority. The other (HR) activities are executed if the distribution or collection process does not stagnate. In the end, it can be said that the operational goals transcend the HR goals. As several teamcoaches indicated:

"The mail needs to be delivered, what ever it takes. After this is done, I will execute my HR tasks, like administrations and conversations with employees".

As the teamcoaches indicated, they perform their HR activities after the mail is delivered in a proper way. Therefore, several HR activities are postponed if teamcoaches experience operational pressures. However, it seems that delays are not dangerous; a postponement does not result into a situation in which HR tasks are not carried out. In the end, all teamcoaches who were interviewed indicated that they get to all their HR activities.

"Some of my HR activities can be easily postponed, because they can be executed on a later point in time. I have to say that I do not always get to these HR activities, however, I am always able to execute them later".

Thus, to conclude, the teamcoaches are willing to implement HRM. They are both personally motivated and/or motivated through institutional reinforcement to implement HRM. Short-termism tends to be present, however, this does not make teamcoaches unwilling to implement HRM.

Capacity

During the interviews, it became clear that capacity is perceived as hindering to some extent. First of all, the teamcoaches highlighted a discrepancy between the time needed to implement HRM and actual time spent on implementing HRM. The teamcoaches actually spend less time on implementing HRM than was needed in advance. The teamcoaches need more time in order to execute people-oriented HR activities better. However, teamcoaches who indicated to be able to prioritise and make a good planning, experience their capacity as less hindering.

During the interviews, teamcoaches indicated that they need more time for people-related HR activities in order to perform these activities in a better way. This indicates a discrepancy between the time needed to implement HRM and the actual time spend.

"In the past we talked too much and worked too less, however, nowadays we work too much and talk too less".

In other words, the teamcoaches want more time to talk to their employees, in order to better (socially) accompany them, to "have a quick talk with employees" or to evaluate and develop them.

"I want more time for these conversations, because these are the moments in which you can communicate to your employees in order to achieve your goals and those of your team".

During the interviews it became clear as well, that teamcoaches do not have enough time to devote sufficient attention or time to all their employees. As a teamcoach indicated:

"I know that I need to spend more time and attention to several employees. They ask for more attention and time, however, I can not offer this to them".

Finally, a capacity hindrance is also demonstrated, because the interviewed teamcoaches indicated that their working weeks are either full (33%) or they work overtime (66%) in order to get their job done. The teamcoaches who indicate that they need to work over, add up between 5 up till 10 hours a week to their normal working weeks.

"This job can not be performed in a workweek of 37 hours".

"I can get to all my HR tasks, however, by working extra hours. Therefore, I work structurally over".

However, in the end, all teamcoaches indicated that they are "able to execute all HR activities". Therefore, none of the HR activities are left aside. However, the teamcoaches need extra time to implement several HR activities better.

When asking whether the teamcoaches would like to have a reduction of tasks in order to create more extra time, they said that it is not possible to let go of most of their HR tasks. Only administrative tasks, that are less people-oriented, can be delegated according to some teamcoaches.

"These (HR) tasks are simply the tasks of a teamcoach. For instance, I need to select new employees and I need to do the job evaluations myself".

"I could get rid of my administrations. However, I want to keep those HR tasks that enable me to stay in contact with my employees".

It became clear, however, that a group of teamcoaches (37%) did not perceive a capacity hindrance. These teamcoaches explained that they were able to make a planning and set priorities. This planning made them able to cope with possible operational pressures. Most of these teamcoaches indicated:

"I get to all my HR tasks. It is all about (making a good) planning".

"Sometimes you need to prioritise, in order to get to your tasks".

"You need to create a buffer in order to cope with problems that come forth out of the distribution process, in order to get to your HR tasks".

However, other teamcoaches, who indicated to experience a capacity hindrance indicated:

"I give a high priority to all my tasks".

"I know that I need to structure my work more. Sometimes I need to make changes, however, I face difficulties with doing so. I take up everything that comes to me and that takes more time".

To conclude, the teamcoaches experience a capacity hindrance to some extent. The factor capacity is especially interfering when it comes to executing people-oriented HR activities. The actual time spent is less than the time needed to execute these HR activities. Because of that, the teamcoaches want more time in order to execute these activities better. However, a group of teamcoaches is able to avoid these capacity hindrances, because they are able to prioritise and make a planning.

Competencies

The factor competencies is least interfering, according to the teamcoaches. The teamcoaches who were interviewed, indicated that most training courses are valuable or informative and they followed enough training courses as well. Next to that, all teamcoaches find it valuable to gain experience in HRM and they regard their HR-related experience as sufficient. Conservatism seems to be present to some extent.

With respect to trainings, the teamcoaches indicated that they find it valuable to attend training courses.

"I find it important to attend trainings".

"I find it necessary to follow trainings if you start as a teamcoach, because these trainings offer you some elementary HR knowledge. The trainings are not (...) rubbish".

"If a new (HR-related) program is installed, then it is useful to follow a training".

"A lot of the HR-related trainings were useful".

The quality of the training courses is varying. "It does depend on the person who is training us", according to several teamcoaches (33%). However, most of the time, the teamcoaches are quite satisfied with the training courses they attended (66%), because the trainings are practical, save time and/or because teamcoaches can share experiences with each other. However, there are still "trainings that are too theoretical" or "some trainings do not make (...) more competent".

With respect to the number of trainings, the teamcoaches indicated to have followed "all kinds of trainings" that are related to HRM. Some teamcoaches attended that many training courses, that they "could not tell how many trainings" they attended. Next to HR-related trainings, a lot of teamcoaches also followed a basic line education for teamcoaches. Some HR-related trainings are offered to teamcoaches who follow this education. The teamcoaches also indicated if a new procedure or

program is implemented, that a training needs to be attended because of that. For instance, recently a new web-based HR administration tool needed to be applied by the teamcoaches. Because of that, the teamcoaches needed to attend a training course in order to learn the basics of this administration tool.

However, not all starting teamcoaches attend a basic line education or any other elementary HR-related training courses when they start working as a teamcoach. A group of teamcoaches (27%) indicated this during the interviews.

"Because I started working as a teamcoach, I was allowed to follow the education in logistics supervision (basic line education). However, later on, it was not possible to subscribe, because I had too many exceptions. However, these exceptions are all not HR-related (...) No other training courses were offered, after I could not attend this education."

"It is doubtful whether starting teamcoaches are allowed to follow the basic line education. Several starting teamcoaches at my establishment are employed at TNT for 1,5 or 2 years now and none of them has followed a single training. I think there is no budget for these starting teamcoaches to follow trainings".

With respect to experience in implementing HRM, all interviewed teamcoaches find their experience in implementing HRM rather valuable. Besides that, the experience they gained, made them more competent to execute their HR tasks.

"I needed the experience in order to gain HR-related knowledge. You learn quickly by gaining experience".

"I am able to explain things better to my employees during conversations, because I gained the needed experience in the past".

"In the past I was struggling with bad-news conversations or correction conversations. However, nowadays I do not get warmed up by such a situation, due to the experiences I have gained".

Almost all teamcoaches indicated that they worked long enough in order to gain sufficient experience in HRM.

"I gained a lot of experience regarding recruitment and selection, work meetings and assessment interviews. It would be rather awkward if this would not be the case after 15 years".

"The experience I gained, prepared me for the future".

"I have been working for 30 years now and I think I have gained enough knowledge and abilities through experience".

However, a starting teamcoach indicated that he did not gain enough experience.

"I gained some experience, but I doubt whether it is sufficient. I also do not know whether it will become sufficient at some point in time".

With respect to training courses and experience, it became clear during the interviews that teamcoaches value their experience to a larger extent than the trainings they attended. The teamcoaches have the opinion that most of their HR-related competencies are gained through experience.

"HRM is just like driving a car; you attend driving courses, you get your driving licence. However, you really learn how to drive in practice".

"We all followed courses, but you have to execute the HR tasks in order to gain experience and to learn".

With respect to conservatism, most of the interviewed teamcoaches (67%) find it important to be able to handle employees in a sensitive and understandable way. Next to that, the teamcoaches find it important to be competent in order to handle HR-related administration applications. However, being sensitive and understandable can not be considered as indicators of an up-to-date level of HR expertise. Most of the teamcoaches also indicate that their knowledge concerning collective labour agreements is not always up-to-date as well.

Next to that, most teamcoaches indicated that they implement HRM "based upon common-sense. However, not only based upon common-sense". The teamcoaches assume that it is "necessary to following elementary trainings in advance". According to the teamcoaches, they combine their HR-related knowledge they gained during the training with common-sense. It seems, however, that a substantial group of teamcoaches (73%) only attended elementary training courses and does not (want to) engage in follow-up trainings. If the teamcoaches only stick to the trainings they received when they started as a teamcoach, then it might be assumed that their HR-related knowledge does not stay up-to-date. Therefore, it is doubtful whether the teamcoaches actually implement HRM based upon up-to-date HR-related knowledge.

"I do not want to follow HR-related trainings, because I believe these trainings do not add new perspectives".

"I do want to follow trainings anymore. I learned enough and I can handle all my HR tasks based upon my experience".

Thus, to conclude, the HR-related competencies of the teamcoaches are only interfering to some extent. The quality and number of trainings is sufficient and valued by most teamcoaches. However, not all starting teamcoaches attend elementary HR-related training courses when they start working as a teamcoach. Regarding experience, almost all teamcoaches indicated to be sufficiently experienced in implementing HRM. However, starting teamcoaches indicated to be insufficiently experienced to implement HRM. Finally, teamcoaches implement HRM in a conservative way to some extent.

Support

In general, the teamcoaches do regard the factor support as hindering to some extent. The actual support lives up to the need and request of the teamcoaches in both a quantitative and qualitative way. However, some teamcoaches experience difficulties with contacting the right person who is able to support them regarding a specific HR topic. However, in the end, the right person is always found. Next to that, a consensual relationship between HR and the line is present as well.

In general, the teamcoaches want to be supported on implementing HRM. In a more concrete way, the teamcoaches want to be supported regarding collective labour agreements and persistent or rare personnel problems.

"I have questions about certain rules and the possibilities regarding those rules".

"I will pass on a question regarding a collective labour agreement to someone else, if I can not answer that question".

"I call for advice regarding absence through illness."

"I ask for support, if I need to hold a difficult conversation regarding absence through illness or if I formally need to reprimand an employee".

"I once asked for support regarding a dismissal procedures of an employee".

In order to receive the needed support, the teamcoaches primarily go to an HR consultant, their supervisor, the mailmen + (deputy of the teamcoach) and other teamcoaches. The teamcoaches

indicate that their direct colleagues (supervisor, other teamcoaches and mailmen +) "understand their specific problems and assess their situations better". Next to that, the teamcoaches indicated that they like to go to an HR consultant, because "he or she speaks the language of the teamcoaches".

In general, the teamcoaches do not request for support in large quantities.

"I do not have that many question regarding HR".

"On an average, I request for support only two times a month".

"On an average, I request for support once a week".

"I limitedly ask for support".

In most occasions, the teamcoaches are supported in a way that they receive advisory services regarding HR-related subjects that are discussed above. In such situations e.g. an HR consultant gives advice on how to approach general HR issues or how the teamcoach can handle by taking into account the formal rules of the organisation.

"Last time I rang an HR consultant to ask how I could to plan my job evaluation conversations in an optimal way".

"Sometimes I ask for an advice how I e.g. need to handle a person who requests for an unpaid sabbatical".

However, sometimes a teamcoach and e.g. an HR consultant get involved into a partnership. Most of the time this type of support is offered, if the teamcoach is confronted with a specific and persistent personnel problem. The partnership is characterised by the fact that the teamcoach and e.g. an HR consultant discuss how the teamcoach should approach a specific personnel problem. Sometimes the HR consultant (or the supervisor of the teamcoach) also joins a conversation between the teamcoach and an employee, because the employee needs feel some kind of compulsion "if these persons join the conversation" or "the HR specialist can answer difficult questions".

"Sometimes I like it when an HR consultants joins me during a conversation in order to put some pressure on an unwilling employee".

"Last week I had a problem with an employee and I had to hold some kind of special conversation with him. My HR consultant joined that conversation".

"I have a problem with an employee who is absent for more than 25 weeks. I discussed with my HR consultant how I should approach this problem".

Most of the teamcoaches who were interviewed (80%), are satisfied with the support they receive. And in the end, the actual support practically matches the need of the teamcoach in both a quantitative and qualitative way. Therefore, the actual support can be regarded as sufficient and useful. As some teamcoaches indicated:

"An HR consultant is worth his weight in gold".

"The HR specialists always try to help you as good as possible".

"It hardly happens that the support is not sufficient of useful. However, if this is the fact, I will call the person back and I will ask for a better answer".

Not only the support that is offered is sufficient, the relationship between HR and the teamcoaches is also consensual. The HR specialists are willing to support the line and the teamcoaches accept the support they receive. In the end, all teamcoaches who were interviewed identified that the relationship between him/her and their 'supporters' is good, or at least they had a normal businesslike relationship. It even seems that support results into a consensual relationship.

"My supporters are always willing to help me".

"My supporters are willing to help. Luckily they are".

"I accept the support I receive. If the support is not sufficient, then I will notify the HR consultant".

"I accept the support I receive, if I am supported sufficiently. This is almost always the case".

"The relationship between me and my supporters is good".

"I have a good relationship with my HR consultant".

The situation that is presented above does not seem to be interfering, however, a substantial group of teamcoaches (33%) identified a bottleneck regarding the factor support. They faced difficulties with finding the right person who can offer them the needed support. In other words, they do not know which person to contact that can help them regarding a specific HR topic. Other teamcoaches indicated that the person they need, is not accessible when they request for support. The reason for this seems to be that these persons went home if the teamcoaches need their support.

"It would be useful if we had a list with persons who we can contact if we need to be supported on a specific topic. However, this organisation is too large and therefore, you do not know which person to contact if you have a question".

"If I call and I get into contact with the right person, then I will receive the needed support. However, it takes a lot of time now and then to find that right person".

"For every specific question, I need to go to another person. Sometimes, I need to find ten different persons and it is too much for one teamcoach to find all these ten different persons".

"If people indicate to be at their office until 5 o'clock, then they should not stop working at half past 4".

"On Fridays most of the HR consultants are at home when we (as teamcoaches collection) are working".

To conclude, in almost every occasion, the actual support lives up to the support that is needed in a quantitative and qualitative way. The teamcoaches are mainly supported on collective labour agreements and specific or rare personnel problems. Next to that, the relationship between HR and the line is consensual as well. However, some teamcoaches experience difficulties with contacting the right person who is able to support them regarding a specific HR topic. However, in the end, the right person is always found.

Policies and procedures

In general, the teamcoaches perceive the factor policies and procedures as an interfering factor to some extent. Almost all interviewed teamcoaches have a clear view on what their HR responsibilities are. And most of the teamcoaches have the opinion that the HR procedures are clearly described as well. However, a consistent implementation of HRM does not seem to be present and the policies and procedures are not always sufficiently communicated to the teamcoaches.

During the interviews, it became clear that the teamcoaches perceive a role uncertainty to a small extent. On an average, 82% of the interviewed teamcoaches indicated that they know for which HR issues they are responsible, mainly because they learned this during training courses or through experience.

"I know for which HR issues I am responsible, because I learned this along the way or in trainings".

"I know that I need to execute these HR activities due to experience".

"Experience shaped my knowledge about my HR responsibilities. This develops through the years".

Next to that, a role uncertainty is also partially avoided, because HR-related goals have been set up. These goals provide insights into the HR responsibilities of the teamcoaches.

"We know that we need to execute our HR tasks, because we have set up targets with our supervisor".

"I know which HR activities I need to carry out, because this has been settled down in goals. These goals have been set up together with my supervisor".

However, still 18% of the teamcoaches indicated that they perceive a role uncertainty. These role uncertainties are mainly experienced when it comes to rare HR issues.

"I am not always well informed about my HR responsibilities".

"I always thought that my supervisor was responsible for a particular HR issue. However, I found out recently that I am responsible for that as well".

"I do not know exactly for which (HR) issues I am responsible when I am confronted with particular or rare HR issues".

During the interviews, it became clear that 12,5% of the teamcoaches do not use any HR guidelines or procedures or they did not know whether HR guidelines or procedures have been set up.

"I know there are HR procedures, however I do not use them. I think I have enough experience".

"Perhaps there are HR guidelines, however, we have never used them before".

"HR procedures might have been set up. However, I am not sure".

In general, the interviewed teamcoaches who said they use HR procedures (87,5%), indicated that these procedures are clearly described in a concrete and practical way. However, a limited group of teamcoaches (10%) who use HR guidelines also made some critical remarks.

"The HR procedures are clearly described (...) and they are easy to use".

"Sometimes the HR procedures are broadly outlined; however, I prefer them to be described in a narrower and concrete way".

"It is always good to read the HR guidelines, however, these guidelines do not always match the reality. I wish the HR guidelines would be described in a more understandable way".

It became clear during the interviews that the teamcoaches perceived problems regarding the communication of the HR policies and procedures. In total, 60% of the interviewed teamcoaches indicated that either a list of HR responsibilities was communicated to them or they knew that HR

procedures have been set up and know where to find them. However, 40% teamcoaches did not know they can find a list of HR responsibilities on e.g. the intranet of TNT. As several teamcoach indicated: "there might have been set up a list of HR responsibilities, however, I have never seen one". However, other teamcoaches indicated that they "can find the HR responsibilities and procedures on the intranet". However, a substantial group of teamcoaches (73%) still experience difficulties with the accessibility of the HR procedures (on the intranet), although they are aware of the existence of the HR procedures.

"The intranet is too broad, I can surf on the intranet for weeks".

"For instance, the list of HR procedures regarding the working conditions is so voluminous and because of that, it takes me quite a while to find the right one. It is all about the number of HR procedures".

Finally, only 14% of the teamcoaches who were interviewed indicated that the teamcoaches performed their HR activities in a consistent way.

"If you take ten teamcoaches, you will see ten different ways of working. Every person is different and has other abilities. Therefore, every teamcoach approaches his HR activities in another way".

"We need a long way to go in order to achieve a consistent way of working here at TNT".

Although the teamcoaches indicated that HRM is not implemented consistently, they think that HRM will be implemented more consistently, if they can rely on standardised HR procedures.

"A lot of teamcoaches carry out their HR activities in a different way, because specific guidelines are missing. However, more unequivocality is established if we can rely on HR guidelines".

"The HR forms make sure you pay attention to a standardised set of points during e.g. an absence through illness conversation".

In general, the teamcoaches perceive the factor policies and procedures as an interfering factor to some extent. Only a small part of the teamcoaches experiences a role uncertainty if they are confronted with rare HR issues. The HR procedures are clearly described. However, the communication of the policies and procedures seems to be lacking, because a substantial group of teamcoaches is not aware of the existence of e.g. HR procedures. Next to that, the HR policies and procedures are difficult to find. Finally, a consistent implementation of HR does not seem to be present as well.

4.3.3 Testing possible relationships between the interfering factors

In the section below, the possible interrelationships between the interfering factors will be tested. This will be done, by testing the hypotheses that were set up in the theoretical framework. The hypotheses will be primarily tested by conducting a regression analysis. However, not all hypotheses can be tested this way, because a part of the hypotheses contain constructs that were only studied in a qualitative way. Therefore, the mentioned hypotheses can not be tested based upon quantitative data, which means that a regression analysis can not be conducted. If this is the case, I will attempt to test the hypotheses based on the qualitative results.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated: *An absence of institutional reinforcement or the existence of short-termism will make FLMs unwilling to spend their spare time on implementing HRM.*

I can not test hypothesis 1 based upon quantitative data. This is not possible because the constructs institutional reinforcement and short-termism are not studied in a quantitative way. However, the

qualitative results show that teamcoaches do not perceive an absence of institutional reinforcement. Institutional reinforcement is present, because the HR-related performance of teamcoaches is appraised. Opposed to that, teamcoaches do experience short-termism to some extent, because business goals tend to prevail over the HR goals.

"The mail needs to be delivered, what ever it takes".

The teamcoaches indicated to experience a role overload (mean = 0,50) and during the interviews, they indicated that they have no spare time left during their working weeks. The working week of the teamcoaches is either full or they work over to get their jobs done. It seems, however, that 87% of the interviewed teamcoaches manage to execute all their HR activities, even though they experience a capacity hindrance. As several teamcoaches indicated:

"I get to all (...) HR tasks, however, not always on the requested time and therefore, I need to postpone several HR tasks now and then".

It can be said that the teamcoaches are willing to devote their spare time on implementing HRM in order to execute all their HR activities. One teamcoach even explicitly told he wants "to work over in order to execute all (...) HR activities". Or as an other teamcoach indicated: "I like this work, so I do not mind to work 45 hours a week". Therefore, it seems that the existence of short-termism does not make FLMs unwilling to spend their spare time on implementing HRM. However, the presence of institutional reinforcement makes FLMs willing to spend their spare time on implementing HRM. A teamcoach explicitly told: "I would not spend my time on activities on which I am not appraised. This saves me a lot of time". Therefore, hypothesis 1 will be partially supported.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis stated: *Unwilling FLMs who do not want to implement HRM, are reluctant to acquire HR-related competencies.*

I took the concept competencies in order to determine the willingness of FLMs to acquire HR-related skills. I acknowledge that the competencies concept is not the same as 'willingness to acquire HR-related skills'. However, it could be argued that the HR-related competencies could be lacking if the teamcoaches are not willing to acquire those HR-related competencies. Therefore, by applying this concept, it is possible to test the possible relationship between the willingness of FLMs to implement HRM and their willingness to acquire HR related skills, based upon quantitative data. A regression analysis (table 18) showed a significant relationship between the willingness of FLMs to implement HRM and their HR-related competencies ($p < 0,01$). Two teamcoaches indicated:

"My motivation to execute these (HR) tasks influences my motivation to gain more competencies regarding HRM as well. I like it to execute these (HR) tasks and therefore, I find it important that these tasks are executed well".

"My motivation to execute HR tasks influences my motivation to acquire HR-related knowledge. I like it to perform these activities and therefore, I like to follow trainings as well".

Based upon the quantitative and qualitative findings, I will support hypothesis 2.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,656	,509		5,222	,000
	Average Desire	,428	,152	,323	2,811	,006

Table 18: regression analysis desire → competencies

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated: *A lack of spare time makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM.*

In order to test this hypothesis, I conducted a regression analysis (table 19) between the concepts capacity and desire. According to the quantitative data, no significant relation can be found between these factors ($p > 0,1$). This means that a lack of capacity does not make FLMs unwilling to implement HRM. This is also demonstrated by the interviews with the teamcoaches. As a teamcoach indicated: “the time which I have does not influence my motivation. I can be aggravating now and then. However, my motivation and the time I have, have nothing to do with each other”. Next to that, almost all teamcoaches indicated during the interviews, that they are willing to implement HRM. Next to that, the teamcoaches also indicated that their workweek is full or that they even work overtime. However, no teamcoach indicated that this capacity hindrance affected their motivation to implement HRM. Therefore, hypothesis 3 will be rejected.

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3,335	,147		22,695	,000
	Average Capacity	-,012	,054	-,024	-,218	,828

Table 19: Regression analysis capacity → desire

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 was formulated as: *A lack of spare time results in the fact that the HR-related competencies (gained through experience) of FLMs do not increase.*

This hypothesis was tested by conducting a regression analysis (table 20) between the factors capacity of the teamcoaches and whether they have sufficient experience in order to implement HRM in a proper way. The regression analysis shows a significant relationship between the capacity and the HR-related experiences of FLMs ($p < 0,01$). It has to be said that none of the teamcoaches indicated that he or she did not gain sufficient experience throughout the years, due to a lack of spare time. However, hypothesis 4 can be supported based upon the quantitative data.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3,478	,254		13,683	,000
Average Capacity	,321	,094	,360	3,431	,001

Table 20: Regression analysis capacity → experience sufficiency

Hypothesis 5

Hypothesis 5 stated: *A lack of spare time makes FLMs unable to attend trainings and therefore, their HR-related competencies do not increase.*

This hypothesis was tested by conducting a regression analysis (table 21) between the factor capacity and the degree of attended trainings. Next to that, a second regression analysis (table 22) between the degree of offered trainings and the HR-related competencies of teamcoaches. The first regression analysis showed that the relationship between the factor capacity and the degree of attended trainings is significant ($p < 0,01$). The second regression analysis showed that the relationship between the degree of offered trainings and the HR-related competencies is significant as well ($p < 0,01$). Therefore, it seems that teamcoaches who experience a lack of spare time also are unable to attend trainings because of that. In the end, this results in the fact that their HR-related competencies do not increase. However, the interviews showed that teamcoaches make some spare time for themselves in order to attend these trainings. Therefore, the teamcoaches do not have a lack of spare time when it comes to attending trainings. Several teamcoach explicitly stated: "I make some free time for my trainings". One of these teamcoaches also added: "I try to shove several activities or I execute them more early" in order to be able to attend the HR-related trainings. Because of that, I will not support hypothesis 5, because the factor capacity measures the capacity for implementing HRM and not the capacity to attend trainings. The teamcoaches indicated during the interviews that they are able to make some spare time in order to attend trainings.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2,388	,372		6,418	,000
Average Capacity	,430	,139	,320	3,097	,003

Table 21: Regression analysis capacity → degree of attended trainings

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2,899	,157		18,476	,000
Het cursusaanbod was voldoende	,330	,042	,679	7,894	,000

Table 22: Regression analysis degree of attended trainings → competencies

Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 was formulated as following: *An insufficiency in HR-related competencies makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM.*

In order to test the 6th hypothesis, a regression analysis (table 23) was conducted between the factors competencies and desire. The regression analysis showed that a relationship between competencies and desire is significant ($p < 0,01$). This means that an insufficiency in HR-related competencies makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM. During the interviews, a teamcoach indicated that he liked “to work out HR-related administrations on my computer, because I have the knowledge to do so”. Or as an other teamcoach indicated: “The more (HR-related) knowledge you gain, the more enjoying and practical it is to perform my HR activities”. Finally, a teamcoach indicated: “if your knowledge about HR is not sufficient, then it is not appealing to execute these HR tasks anymore”. Therefore, hypothesis 6 will be supported.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2,319	,356		6,515	,000
Average Competencies	,243	,086	,323	2,811	,006

Table 23: Regression analysis competencies → desire

Hypothesis 7

Hypothesis 7 stated: *An insufficiency in HR-related competencies results into a diminished capacity for FLMs in order to implement HRM.*

Hypothesis 7 was tested by conducting a regression analysis (table 24) between the factor competencies and the factor capacity. It seems that an insufficiency in HR-related competencies results into a diminished capacity for FLMs in order to implement HRM ($p < 0,01$). According to the interviewees this works in several ways. Several managers indicated that “a lack of knowledge results into the fact that I needed to search for information or I needed to call people in order to retrieve the information. Both take extra time”. Next to that a teamcoach indicated that: “It takes a lot of time to work out my administrations, because I am not competent to work with the administration applications”. However, non HR-related competencies also seem to influence the capacity of teamcoaches. Several teamcoaches indicated that a time management training significantly contributed to their time capacity. Therefore, based upon these result, hypothesis 7 will be supported.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-,310	,704		-,441	,661
Average Competencies	,706	,171	,435	4,123	,000

Table 24: Regression analysis competencies → capacity

Hypothesis 8

Hypothesis 8 was formulated as: *An insufficiency or inadequacy of support offered by HR specialists makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM.*

I conducted a regression analysis (table 25) between the factors support and desire, in order to test hypothesis 8. The regression analysis showed a significant relationship between these two factors ($p \leq 0,01$). This indicates that an insufficient or inadequate support offered by HR specialists makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM. Some interviewees supported this relationship, others only indicate that "it is useful to be supported by HR, however it does not add something extra to my motivation". The teamcoaches who indicated that the offered support influenced their motivation indicated that "the support makes me more motivated in order to implement HRM". It made him feel that he was "one of the HR actors as well". Finally, a teamcoach indicated the following: "I am motivated to go the full 200%, because I am supported by HR". Although several teamcoaches said that the HR support only satisfies their basic needs, others find it really motivating that they are sufficiently and adequately supported by HR. Therefore, I support hypothesis 8.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2,669	,222		12,030	,000
Average Support	,186	,063	,317	2,956	,004

Table 25: Regression analysis support → desire

Hypothesis 9

Hypothesis 9 stated: *A conflicting situation between HR specialists and FLMs makes FLMs unwilling to implement HRM.*

I only could test this hypothesis based up qualitative data, because the construct 'consensus between HR and the line' was not taken into account in the questionnaire. The teamcoaches who were interviewed, indicated that they were willing and motivated to implement HRM. Next to that, all interviewees indicated that their relationship with the HR specialists (in particular the HR consultants) is consensual. Thus, based upon these facts, it can be said that a consensual relationship between HR specialists and FLMs makes FLMs willing to implement HRM. However, none of the teamcoaches indicated that their motivation was influenced by the relationship with the HR specialists. As a teamcoach indicated: "I like it that the HR specialists are willing to support me, however, it does not influence my motivation to implement HRM". Therefore, I can neither support nor reject hypothesis 9. It is necessary to gather more quantitative data to test this hypothesis.

Hypothesis 10

Hypothesis 10 stated: *If the policies and procedures do not define for which HR issues the FLMs are responsible, then the FLMs become unwilling to implement HRM (under the premise that the policies and procedures have been clearly communicated).*

I tested hypothesis 10 by conducting a regression analysis (table 26) between the construct role ambiguity and desire to implement HRM. I took the role ambiguity construct as the independent variable, because a possible role ambiguity indicates that the teamcoaches insufficiently know for which HR issues they are responsible. This lack of knowledge stems from the fact that the policies and procedures do not define for which HR issues the teamcoaches are responsible. By adopting the role

ambiguity construct, it was possible to conduct a regression analysis based upon quantitative data. The regression analysis showed that the relationship between role ambiguity and desire is significant ($p < 0,05$). In other words, if the policies and procedures do not define for which HR issues the FLMS are responsible, then the FLMS become unwilling to implement HRM. A teamcoach also clearly demonstrated that his motivation would drop if he did not know for which HR issues he is responsible: "I like to know which responsibilities I have and this really influences my motivation. It is not motivating if you do not know for which issues you are responsible and your supervisor reprimands you because you do not carry these responsibilities. My motivation would drop, if this happened too often". Therefore, I support hypothesis 10.

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2,658	,276		9,631	,000
Average role ambiguity (P)	,176	,074	,260	2,362	,021

Table 26: Regression role ambiguity (p) → desire

Hypothesis 11

Hypothesis 11 was formulated as: *If FLMS cannot rely on user-friendly guidelines, then their capacity decreases.*

The final hypothesis was tested by conducting a regression analysis (table 27) between the user friendliness of HR forms and capacity to implement HRM. The regression analysis shows that this relationship is significant ($p = 0,000$). Thus, if FLMS cannot rely on user-friendly guidelines, then their capacity decreases. A teamcoach told that: "it takes me more time to execute my HR tasks if I cannot rely on these procedures, because I need to phone other people in order to retrieve the needed information or I need to make up a procedure for myself". Another teamcoach indicated the following: "I need to ask other people how I need to execute a particular HR tasks if I cannot rely on HR procedures. Of course, this takes extra time". Therefore, hypothesis 11 will be supported as well.

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		St. Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	,778	,354		2,196	,031
Average user friendliness	,516	,101	,485	5,108	,000

Table 27: Regression user friendliness → capacity

Summary of hypotheses

The table below shows a summary of the hypotheses that were tested. All hypotheses were supported, except hypotheses 3 and 9. Hypothesis 9 was neither supported nor rejected.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Supported / Rejected
1	Desire → Capacity	Partially supported
2	Desire → Competencies	Supported
3	Capacity → Desire	Rejected
4	Capacity → Competencies	Supported
5	Capacity → Trainings → Competencies	Rejected
6	Competencies → Desire	Supported
7	Competencies → Capacity	Supported
8	Support → Desire	Supported
9	Consensus → Desire	Neither supported nor rejected
10	Role ambiguity → Desire	Supported
11	HR guidelines → Capacity	Supported

Table 28: Summary of tested hypotheses

4.3.4 Comparing means of different sub-populations

In the section below, the means of the interfering factors of different sub-populations will be presented. I compared the means of the interfering factors of the following sub-populations: (1) teamcoaches in the five different areas, (2) teamcoaches at collection and/or distribution, (3) number of years of experience as a line manager, (4) number of years employed at TNT and (5) educational level.

Table 29 shows the means of teamcoaches who are employed in the five areas. It has to be said that none of these five groups significantly differs from each other. Therefore, none the teamcoaches in the five areas experience an interfering factor as hindering to a larger extent.

Concept	Centre (n=16)	North East (n=16)	North West (n=21)	South East (n=23)	South West (n=12)	F value
Desire	0,65	0,67	0,65	0,70	0,66	0,600*
Capacity	0,44	0,49	0,54	0,53	0,50	0,687*
Competencies	0,78	0,82	0,83	0,83	0,82	0,498*
Support	0,60	0,67	0,72	0,73	0,69	1,948*
P&P	0,65	0,69	0,72	0,70	0,68	0,588*

Table 29: Comparing means of teamcoaches in the five areas, using One-Way ANOVA

* p > 0,1

The means of the teamcoaches who are responsible for either the distribution process, collection process or both processes are shown in table 30. However, no significant differences show up regarding the identified interfering factors. The qualitative data, however, show that the factor capacity is experienced as hindering to the largest extent by teamcoaches who are responsible for both the collection and distribution process.

"We need to work over. However, it depends on the establishment in which you work. If we were only responsible for the distribution and not the collection of the mail (...), then it would be a completely different situation".

"I can not devote enough time to the employees who are responsible for collection. They start working when my shift is over. However, I stay longer than needed, because these employees also need my attention".

Next to that, teamcoaches who are responsible for collection experience the factor support as hindering to some extent, because they can not rely on an HR specialist after 5 o'clock p.m. This interference seems to be area-related.

"Collection is a process that takes place during the evenings. However, during the evening no person is accessible in order to get supported. These people work from 9 till 5 and after that, they go home" (Teamcoach area South East).

"I retrieve sufficient support as a teamcoach collection. We can rely on an HR consultant who works during our (evening) shifts" (Teamcoach area North West).

Concept	Distribution (n=70)	Collection (n=8)	Distribution & Collection (n=10)	F value
Desire	0,66	0,68	0,69	0,515
Capacity	0,51	0,53	0,41	1,122
Competencies	0,82	0,76	0,78	1,323
Support	0,68	0,76	0,63	1,014
P&P	0,69	0,75	0,59	1,009*

Table 30: Comparing means of teamcoaches in the collection and distribution process, using One-Way ANOVA

* $p < 0,1$

The means of the interfering factors were also compared for the years of experience as a line manager. This comparison can be found in table 31. The first interfering factor that significantly differs when it comes to years of experience is competencies. The longer a teamcoach is working as a line manager, the less he experiences his HR-related competencies as a hindering factor. The years of experience does not significantly differ for the other five interfering factors. During the interviews it became clear as well that the experienced teamcoaches were more competent than their colleagues who just started.

"I did not gain enough experience in HRM (...) because a half year is too short. I also do not have enough knowledge and expertise in order to have a good contact with my employees. I learn every day".

"The 40 years of experience prepared me well in order to cope with my HR responsibilities".

Next to that, a perceived capacity hindrance also differs for teamcoaches with various years of experience as a line manager. The qualitative data did not show this finding.

Concept	0-2 years (n=6)	2-5 years (n=11)	5-10 years (n=29)	> 10 years (n=42)	F value
Desire	0,63	0,71	0,66	0,66	1,038
Capacity	0,48	0,45	0,45	0,56	2,201**
Competencies	0,66	0,79	0,79	0,85	3,312*
Support	0,65	0,70	0,66	0,70	0,443
P&P	0,65	0,69	0,67	0,71	0,541

Table 31: Comparing means of teamcoaches regarding their years of experience as a LM, using One-Way ANOVA

* $p < 0,05$

** $p < 0,1$

Table 32 shows the means of teamcoaches regarding their years of employment at TNT. The only substantial groups of teamcoaches were those with more or less than 10 years of employment at TNT. The results show that none of the teamcoaches significantly differ from each other regarding the interfering factors. However, it seems that the teamcoaches who do not work that long at TNT experience capacity more as a hindering factor than teamcoaches who work at TNT for a longer period of time. The same goes for support and P&P. As a teamcoach indicated who is employed at TNT for 2 years:

"Some tasks get by the board (...) and always I work more than was intended in advance".

"Sometimes I am supported well and sometimes I am not. You do not always get the answer you would like to hear. If this happens, I will find a person who can offer me the needed support".

"I do not know where to find the HR procedures. And it is also not exactly clear for which HR issues I am responsible".

Concept	0-10 years (n=31)	> 10 years (n=42)	F value
Desire	0,68	0,66	0,505*
Capacity	0,46	0,51	0,498*
Competencies	0,79	0,82	0,206*
Support	0,64	0,69	0,690*
P&P	0,65	0,69	0,691*

Table 32: Comparing means of teamcoaches regarding years of employed at TNT, using One-Way ANOVA

* $p > 0,1$

In table 33, the means are compared of the different levels of education. The results show that the education of teamcoaches significantly influences their willingness to implement. Teamcoaches who finalised a primary education experience desire to be interfering to a larger extent opposed to teamcoaches who finalised a higher vocational or university education. None of this relationship or other possible relationships were put forward in the qualitative results.

Concept	Primary education (n=7)	Secondary education (n=35)	Senior vocational education (n=41)	Higher vocational or university education (n=5)	F value
Desire	0,57	0,68	0,66	0,70	3,164*
Capacity	0,61	0,48	0,52	0,40	1,533
Competencies	0,82	0,82	0,81	0,86	0,152
Support	0,75	0,66	0,69	0,68	0,593
P&P	0,72	0,67	0,70	0,69	0,520

Table 33: Comparing means of teamcoaches regarding level of education, using One-Way ANOVA

* $p < 0,05$

Finally, the means of the construct role ambiguity is compared to the years of experience as a line manager in table 34. These means are present, because several teamcoaches indicated during the interviews that they do not experience a role ambiguity due to the fact that they have enough experience with implementing HRM. However, a regression analysis showed that the relationship between the years of experience as a line manager and a perceived role ambiguity is not significant ($p > 0,16$). However, the figures in table 34 show to some extent that experienced teamcoaches do not experience a role ambiguity to the same extend as starting teamcoaches.

Years experience as a LM	Role ambiguity (mean 0-1)
0 - 2 years (n=6)	0,67
2 - 5 years (n=11)	0,75
5 - 10 years (n=29)	0,72
> 10 years (n=42)	0,74

Thus, to conclude, the years of experience as a line manager have a significant influence on the factors capacity and competencies, the responsibility for collection or distribution has a significant influence on the factor policies and procedures and the level of education has a significant influence on the factor desire. Besides that, qualitative data show that teamcoaches who are responsible for both collection and distribution experience a capacity hindrance to the largest extent. Finally, the qualitative data show that teamcoaches collection face hindrances regarding support.

4.4 Relations between organisational context, HR system and interfering factors

In the sections above, the results regarding internal organisation context, the HR system and the interfering factors have been presented. In section below, the influence of the organisational context on the HR system will be presented. Next to that, the influence of the internal organisational context and HR system on the interfering factors will be presented.

4.4.1 Influence of the organisational context on the HR system

Business strategy

First of all, the HR system is influenced by the low-price business strategy of TNT Mail Netherlands to a large extent. The following HR goals are complementary to the low-price strategy of TNT Mail Netherlands: voluntary outflow of employees, lowering absence through illness, an efficient arrangement of the operations organisation and the development of first line managers.

A low-price business strategy is successful to a large extent if acceptable profit margins are attained. Therefore, labour costs need to be relatively low. In order to lower the labour costs, one of the HR-related goals is to increase the voluntary outflow of employees. The voluntary outflow of employees should result in the fact that fulltime mailmen, who work at relative high wages, flow out. Next to that, part-time mail deliverers, that need to flow in, work at relative low wages.

"Experienced employees are rather 'expensive'. The company (TNT) saves a lot of money if these employees flow out".

"TNT needs to scale down in order to remain competitive".

Secondly, lowering absent through illness is complementary to the low-price business strategy as well, because a decrease of employee absence results into a decrease of redundant labour costs that do not 'pay off'.

"If the absence of my employees is too high, then I will exceed my personal A20 (personnel) budget".

Thirdly, an efficient arrangement of the operations organisation also contributes to the low-price business strategy. For instance, the teamcoaches are appraised on making an efficient personnel planning. By doing so, the teamcoaches should get the right person, on the right spot, on the right moment in order to avoid redundant labour costs.

"I try to place the right person on the right spot. I am not going to roster an 'expensive' fulltime mailman during a Saturdays' shift if I can rely on a 'cheap' Saturday deliverer as well".

Fourth, TNT also wants the BU Operations to be the benchmark of the postal market regarding service quality. Therefore, one of the HR-related objectives is to develop employees and line managers. In the end, the development of employees and line managers should result in the fact that they perform better, which results into a service quality increase.

Culture

The organisational culture also influences the HR system. One of the HR managers indicated that the HR system is aligned with the organisational culture, because one of the HR objectives states that the BU Operations needs to rely on adaptable employees. The organisational culture of the BU Operations is shifting towards a mission culture. In order to enable this, the employees within the business unit should be willing and able to change.

Next to that, the organisational culture is characterised by an external or customer focus. In order to bring about this customer focus, the employees and line managers should be able to deliver customer service quality. To enable this, the HR system is aligned with the organisational culture, in a way that employees and line management should be developed and trained.

Organisational structure

The organisational structure of TNT influences the HR system of the BU Operations to some extent. More concretely, the allocation of the HR roles is influenced by the organisational structure. An HR manager indicated that the HR department is split up into a central HR department and six decentralised HR departments. He indicated that this distinction influences the allocation of the strategic HR roles among HR specialists. First, the central HR department serves as a staff function of the top management of the business unit. Because of that, the HR specialists in the centralised HR department are mainly Advisors. The decentralised HR departments are a staff function of the middle and first line management and are responsible for pushing forward developed HR policies and practices towards the line. Because of that, the strategic oriented HR specialists in the six decentralised HR departments can be regarded as Change Agents.

However, the organisational structure also influences the allocation of the tactical HR roles. The decentralised HR departments are responsible for implementing HRM, together with the operational line management. Because of that, the decentralised HR department needs to support the line management in implementing HRM. In the end, this results in the fact that tactical oriented HR specialists in the HR department need to adopt the Service Provider role, in order to ensure that the line management is supported.

Technology

No obvious influences of the factor technology on the HR system could be found. The only way in which the HR system could be influenced by the technology, lies in the fact that the teamcoaches need to be trained in order to manage the distribution or collection of the mail in a decent way. Although the distribution or collection processes are rather routine processes, the teamcoaches still need to be competent to manage these processes. In order to enable this, the HR policy is added to the HR system that takes into account that teamcoaches need to follow a senior vocational education in logistics supervision. However, none of the interviewees indicated this relationship.

Size

Finally, the size of the TNT and BU Operations could influence the HR system to some extent. TNT can be considered as a large organisation and because of that, it is a highly visible organisation. Next to that, large numbers of mailmen and part-time mail deliverers are delivering mail and therefore, they contribute to the corporate image of TNT. Because of that, TNT needs to develop a solid HR system in

order to manage the workforce in a way that is congruent with the corporate image of TNT. It has to be said, however, that the factor size does not directly influence the content of the HR system; only the fact that the HR system needs to be solid. It has to be said, however, no obvious relationship were mentioned during the interviews.

4.4.2 Influence of the organisational context and the HR system on the interfering factors

As the results show, the interfering factors are interfering to some extent. These interfering factors are directly influenced by both the HR system and the internal organisational context of the BU Operations. In the section below, the influence of the HR system and the organisational context on the interfering factors will be presented.

Desire

The interfering factor desire is influenced by the organisational context and HR system to some extent. As the results showed, a substantial part of the teamcoaches is hesitant to stimulate the outflow of fulltime mailmen. The business strategy and organisational culture motivate the teamcoaches to secure customer service quality. However, the outflow of (experienced) mailmen and inflow of part-time mail deliverers partially undermine service quality. The fulltime mailmen, who can be considered as experienced employees, deliver a better service quality than part-time mail deliverers. In the end, this results in a service quality that is not as optimal as before the outflow of the mailmen.

"I have the opinion that a fulltime mailman offers a better service quality than a temporary worker".

"The experienced mailmen are focused on quality".

"The outflow of experienced mailmen is (...) contradictory to my goals. The experienced mailmen are the ones who offer the best (service) quality".

Next to that, the teamcoaches are also less willing to stimulate the outflow of fulltime mailmen, because a numeric outflow of employees stresses their operational personnel planning. A situation in which too many employees flow out (and an insufficient number of employees flow in) could also undermine the service quality.

"It is difficult for me to stimulate employees to search for others jobs outside the organisation, because this endangers the personnel planning".

"The outflow of employees is a difficult issue, because I am already confronted with a shortage of personnel. If too many employees flow out (...), then I am not able to get the mail delivered in a proper way".

Therefore, the willingness of teamcoaches to execute particular HR activities is influenced by the degree to which an HR activity is complementary to the business strategy or organisational culture. Because of that, the business strategy, organisational culture and the HR system also positively influence the willingness of teamcoaches to implement HRM. First of all, quality and efficiency goals have been set up based upon the business strategy. Most teamcoaches are aware that their HR activities contribute to those goals. Next to that, the teamcoaches also need to attain several HR-related objectives, which motivate the teamcoaches (through institutional reinforcement) to implement HRM. Therefore, the business strategy and the HR system influence the willingness of teamcoaches to implement HRM.

"The HR tasks contribute to the fact that TNT offers a good service quality. For instance, the job evaluation conversations influence the performances of my team".

"The HR activities influence the (service) quality of my team. I need to train my employees in order to enable them to perform well".

"I need to conduct at least one job evaluation conversation with all my employees once a year. (...) I just need to perform these conversations".

Finally, the organisational culture and business strategy also influence the degree of perceived short-termism. The business strategy and organisational culture motivate the teamcoaches to deliver postal items in a decent way on every working day. Because of that, the teamcoaches need to solve operational problems that stand in the way of a decent delivery of postal items. Therefore, the business strategy motivates the teamcoaches to spend too much time on urgencies of the day to some extent. In the end, this results in the fact that teamcoaches partially leave their HR activities behind.

Thus, to conclude, the business strategy, organisational culture and the HR system have a positive and negative influence on the willingness of teamcoaches to implement HRM.

Capacity

The interfering factor capacity is influenced by the organisational context to some extent. First of all, the span of control (organisational structure) influences the capacity of the teamcoaches in a negative way.

"If I the number of employees would be smaller, then I would be able to devote more time to my employees to explain things".

"I supervise too many people (...) in order to devote a sufficient amount of time to all of them".

"Sometimes it is difficult to be responsible for this amount of employees".

"It is quite difficult to be responsible for 60 employees. I regret that some employees do not get the attention they deserve".

Next to that, a possible capacity interference is also influenced by the fact that teamcoaches are confronted with partial non-routine problems (technology). The teamcoaches devote quite some time in order to solve these problems. First, a substantial group of teamcoaches (75%) spend a lot of time on solving personnel planning problems, because making such a planning is partially non-routine. Besides that, developing a personnel planning is an HR activity and therefore, the factor capacity is also influenced by the HR system.

"It happened that I needed 25 or 30 hours in order to get my personnel planning right".

"It can take hours in order to find an employee who is able to come to work, if another employee has become ill".

"Making a personnel planning takes a lot of time (...), because I need to call employees in order to ask if they are willing or able to work during e.g. the afternoon. Otherwise, I need to look for other (more creative) solutions in order to get the job (distribution of the mail) done".

"We can not rely on standardised solutions in order to solve personnel planning problems. (...). Therefore, this takes a considerable amount of time".

Next to that, the operational process can stagnate as well. A group of teamcoaches (50%) indicated that it takes time to solve these problems. In the end, these operational pressures can result in a capacity hindrance.

"I can easily execute all my (HR) activities if the process and the atmosphere are stable. However, I can not get to all my tasks if the process is instable".

"It took me hours to solve an operational problem, because a mailbag was missing. TNT can tell us to execute these tasks in 37 hours a week, however, they did not take into account these unforeseen problems".

"I am distracted from my HR tasks, because my employees come with questions regarding the distribution of the mail".

To conclude, the organisational structure (span of control), technology (non-routine problems) and HR system influence the capacity of teamcoaches to implement HRM.

Competencies

The factor competencies is mainly influenced by the HR system of the BU Operations. One of the main points of the HR policy of the BU Operations is to develop and train the first and second line managers. The HR policy states that teamcoaches need to have a yearly personal development conversation and they need to be offered an education in logistics supervision or (HR-related) training courses.

"TNT devotes a sufficient amount of attention to the development of teamcoaches. (...) For instance, my personal development is taken into account in a yearly personal development conversation".

"My supervisor watches over my personal development, especially during the personal development conversation". Next to that, TNT offers a sufficient amount of possibilities (trainings) to develop myself".

"My personal development is discussed during the personal development conversation".

Next to that, the allocation of HR roles also has an influence on the delivery of HR-related trainings. The fact that HR consultants are responsible for supporting line management results in the fact that teamcoaches attend trainings. In practice, the HR consultants are the link between a teamcoach and e.g. a trainer. Several teamcoaches indicated:

"The HR consultant watches over my HR-related competencies and enables me to develop myself".

However, not all starting teamcoaches receive elementary HR-related training courses when they start working as a teamcoach. This interfering situation is partly influenced by the organisational structure of the BU Operations. The organisational structure is hierarchically organised to some extent. Because of that, at least two management layers are situated between the HR managers and senior HR advisors (who develop the HR policy) and the HR consultants (who are responsible for the development of the teamcoaches). It seems that the developed training courses are not delivered to the teamcoaches. This finding was partially demonstrated by a teamcoach:

"Some HR issues linger on between the central and decentralised HR department".

Thus, to conclude, the HR system and the organisational structure have an influence on the HR-related competencies of the teamcoaches.

Support

The factor support is mainly influenced by the HR system, organisational structure and size. Firstly, the Service Provider role has been allocated to the HR consultants. Because of that, the teamcoaches can rely on the HR consultants and other Service Providers, who are able to support them when it comes to implementing HRM. Secondly, the organisational structure enables the fact that the HR consultants are located near the teamcoaches, in a physical way. The HR consultants regularly visit the business establishments and the teamcoaches can always call HR consultants as well. Because of that, the HR consultants can be easily contacted and the teamcoaches can easily drop by.

"I am always sufficiently supported. (...) The HR consultant always comes to my establishment on Fridays".

"An HR consultants visits our establishment once a week and he is always able to support me".

"I can always call an HR consultant if I need to be supported".

"I discuss issues with an HR consultant when he joins the Management Team (MT) (of my business establishment)".

Next to that, the line management and the HR department of the BU Operations have a shared responsibility when it comes to the implementation of HRM. Therefore, if a teamcoach does not implement HRM well, then the HR department and the HR specialists are also responsible for the fact that HRM is not implemented well. Thus, in the end, it is also in the interest of e.g. an HR consultant that the teamcoaches implement HRM well and this should make the HR specialists motivated to support the teamcoaches.

"My HR consultant and I have the same HR responsibilities. He (the HR consultants) monitors whether I succeed (in implementing HRM). He is always ready to oblige if I am in trouble".

"The HR consultants have the same HR responsibilities as I do. Because of that, they are concerned and ask if they can help".

"The HR consultants are involved and therefore, help me when I need to solve problems, because we have a shared responsibility".

Third, the teamcoaches do not perceive a support hindrance, because there are a lot of possible supporters (size). The teamcoaches indicated that they can easily go to another supporter if the first supporter they contacted is not able to support them sufficiently. The reason why the teamcoaches can rely on so many potential supports, lies in the fact that TNT is a large organisation, with a business unit that consists of almost 50.000 employees. Next to that, the HR department is voluminous as well. Therefore, the teamcoaches can rely on an extensive pool of possible supporters.

"I can easily go to another person, if I am not supported well the first time".

"I am always sufficiently supported. I can easily go to someone else, if someone is not able to support me".

However, the size of the BU Operations can also negatively influence the factor support. Finding the right person who is able to support the teamcoaches, can be regarded as searching for a needle in a haystack in some occasions. The results showed that teamcoaches do not always know which person is an expert when it comes to particular HR topics or issues. Therefore, they first need to look for these experts, before they can be supported.

Sometimes, I need to find ten different persons and it is too much for one teamcoach to find all these ten different persons".

To conclude, the factor supported is influenced by the HR system, organisational structure and size.

Policies and procedures

The organisational context and HR system are of limited influence on the factor policies and procedures in the case of TNT. First of all, the role uncertainty is partially influenced by the HR system. HR-related targets have been set up, based upon HR policies. As the results show, the teamcoaches do not experience a role uncertainty, because HR-related targets have been set up.

Therefore, the HR system influences the factor policies and procedures. HR-related targets can be considered as an intermediating variable.

"I know which HR activities I need to carry out, because this has been settled down in goals. These goals have been set up together with my supervisor".

Secondly, a communication hindrance is indirectly influenced by the organisational structure and size of the BU Operations. The HR procedures are mainly communicated on the intranet of TNT Mail. However, the HR department is one of the many staff functions of the BU Operations. Because of that, a substantial amount of information is put on the intranet by all kinds of other departments. In the end, this results in an information overload which causes the communication problem regarding HR practices.

"The intranet is too broad. Too many people place information on the intranet".

Finally, the organisational structure of the BU Operations also has its influence on the 'consistent HR implementation' concept. The HR policies, which are developed by the central HR department, 'pass' a considerable amount of managerial layers, before the teamcoaches implement these HR policies. Because of that, every management layer adds another impulse to the implementation of HRM. Therefore, differences may occur regarding the way which VBG managers (supervisor of the teamcoaches) pass on the HR responsibilities of teamcoaches. For instance, teamcoaches are motivated by their supervisor to pay attention to other (HR) responsibilities or specific parts of HR policies are not communicated to them. In the end, this results in an inconsistent implementation of HRM.

"Some HR issues linger on between the central and decentralised HR department".

To conclude, the factor policies and procedures is influenced by the HR system, size and organisational structure to a small extent.

Summary of organisational influences on the interfering factors

Table 35 summarises the influence of the organisational context factors and the HR system on the interfering factors. The HR system and organisational structure have an influence on (almost) all interfering factors. The other organisational context factors have an influence on one or two interfering factors.

Interfering factor	Business strategy	Culture	Structure	Technology	Size	HR system
Desire	X	X				X
Capacity			X	X		X
Competencies			X			X
Support			X		X	X
Policies and procedures			X		X	X

Table 35: Influence of the organisational context and HR system on the interfering factors

5. Discussion

In the section below, the findings regarding the interfering factors will be discussed in paragraph 5.1 up till 5.5. I will discuss to what extent the interfering factors are hindering and why these factors are interfering or not. Besides that, the relationships between the interfering factors will be discussed as well. Finally, the complete research model will be discussed in paragraph 5.6.

5.1 Desire

In general, teamcoaches are not reluctant to implement HRM. Teamcoaches prefer to execute people-oriented activities, like e.g. solving conflicts, accompanying employees or conducting job evaluation conversations. Administrative HR activities can be considered as less favourite activities. Besides that, absence through illness conversations or HR activities regarding outflow can also be considered as less favourite, however, only on some occasions. These results mainly show that teamcoaches prefer to execute, as Lepak & Snell (1998) call it, relational HR activities. Operational HR activities, which are mainly HR-related administrations (Lepak & Snell, 1998), are the least favourite HR activities of teamcoaches.

The results showed that personal motivation is a good predictor of the willingness of FLMs to implement HRM. As was expected in advance, teamcoaches are personally motivated to implement HRM, because they either enjoy performing HR activities or because HR activities contribute to the performance of their teams. Teamcoaches are less willing to implement those HR activities (e.g. a part of the absence through illness conversations) that do not contribute to the performance of their team. Next to that, the results showed that the outflow of employees might endanger the performance of their teams (if the number of inflowing employees is insufficient). Because of that, teamcoaches are sometimes hesitant to execute this HR activity. Surprisingly however, personal motivation is positively influenced by the fact that HR activities add some sort of diversity to the work of the teamcoaches. The jobs of the teamcoaches would only be characterised by operational process control, if they are not responsible for implementing HRM. Such a situation might be experienced as tedious to a large extent. Therefore, teamcoaches might prefer to implement HRM in order to avoid tediousness. This result was not demonstrated by other devolution theorists (e.g. Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Hall & Torrington, 1998).

Institutional reinforcement is a good predictor of the willingness to implement HRM as well. In general, teamcoaches are encouraged to implement HRM, because their (HR-related) performances are appraised. These findings are in line with the findings of Harris (2001) and McGovern *et al.* (1997). Next to that, all teamcoaches indicated that they had a sufficient amount of authority to implement HRM. This also made them willing to implement HRM. It is interesting to find out that these results are congruent with the findings of Harris *et al.* (2002) and Lowe (1992). Teamcoaches indicated that they become unwilling if they have HR responsibilities without the accompanying authorities. Finally, job descriptions do not contribute to institutional reinforcement. The job description of teamcoach does take into account their HR responsibilities. However, the teamcoaches have never read or internalised their job description. Therefore, the communication of job descriptions is a necessary precondition in order to ensure institutional reinforcement.

Previous research indicated that short-termism results into unwillingness among FLMs to implement HRM, because 'hard' business goals prevail over 'soft' HR goals (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003). However, in the case of the teamcoaches, short-termism does not result into a situation in which business goals prevail over HR goals. Because of that, teamcoaches do not become unwilling to implement HRM if short-term pressures are present. However, short-termism resulted in a postponement of several HR activities. However, all HR activities are executed after they have been postponed. This is likely to occur,

because personal motivation and institutional reinforcement seem to be stronger or better predictors of the willingness of teamcoaches to implement HRM than short-termism. Most teamcoaches indicated that their HR activities contribute to the performance of their teams and that they are appraised on all their HR activities. Therefore, the HR tasks will always be executed after a postponement, because teamcoaches either want their teams to be operating well in the long-run or they do not want to be reprimanded for not executing HR tasks. This assumption is supported by the fact that short-termism did not make teamcoaches reluctant to devote their spare time on implementing HRM (hypothesis 1). However, it was shown that teamcoaches are motivated to spend their spare time on implementing HRM due to perceived institutional reinforcement (hypothesis 1). Therefore, teamcoaches do not adapt themselves to short-term pressures, because personal motivation and/or institutional reinforcement gain the day over short-termism.

Both personal motivation and institutional reinforcement have an influence on the willingness of FLMs to implement HRM. However, in the case of the teamcoaches, both determinants do not have the same degree of influence. In my opinion, personal motivation is the elementary basis of the willingness to implement HRM, with institutional reinforcement acting as a strong backup. In general, all teamcoaches are personally motivated to implement HRM. However, teamcoaches are sometimes hesitant to execute particular HR activities (e.g. absence conversations or administrations), because personal motivation is lacking. However, in the end, they indicated to execute these HR activities as well, in order to avoid a reprimand. Therefore, institutional reinforcement serves as a strong backup, if personal motivation is lacking. In other words, institutional reinforcement is complementary to personal motivation.

This insight also helps to explain the discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative results. The quantitative results show that teamcoaches are unwilling to implement HRM to some extent (mean = 0,66). The qualitative results, however, do not show an unwillingness. This can be explained, because the qualitative measurement of the factor desire is based upon the premise that personal motivation and institutional reinforcement determine the willingness of teamcoaches in a cumulative way. The quantitative measurement, however, is based upon an average of the qualitative measures. Therefore, the quantitative measurement did not take into account the fact that measures of the factor desire can be complementary as well. However, the qualitative results show that this is the case.

As McGovern *et al.* (1997) indicated: "the (...) motivation of managers may have been influenced by their organisational environment". The results show that this proposition is valid to some extent. The willingness of teamcoaches is influenced by the business strategy, organisational culture and the HR system. It seems that personal motivation is influenced by the fact whether an HR activity is complementary to the business strategy and the organisational culture. This can be explained by the fact that performance goals (e.g. service quality) are based upon the business strategy (and implicitly based upon the organisational culture). By taking this in mind, the results show that teamcoaches are personally motivated to execute HR tasks if an HR task contributes to the performances of their team (e.g. service quality). For instance, a teamcoach is personally motivated to conduct job interviews, in order to select those employees who deliver a sufficient or good service quality. Therefore, in the end, personal motivation is influenced by the degree whether an HR activity contributes to the business strategy (or organisational culture). In the end, this finding helps to explain why teamcoaches are partially reluctant to execute HR activities that are related to the outflow of employees. These HR activities are both complementary (labour cost reduction) and contradictory (decrease of service quality) to the business strategy of TNT Mail Netherlands.

Next to that, the HR system directly influences the degree of institutional reinforcement. For instance, the HR policy prescribes that all employees should have at least one job evaluation conversations with their teamcoach. Because of that, the teamcoaches are directly motivated (through institutional reinforcement) to conduct job evaluation conversations.

Finally, there are several other interfering factors that influence the willingness of FLMs to implement HRM. First of all, HR-related competencies influence the willingness of teamcoaches to implement HRM (hypothesis 6). I assume that someone likes to perform those activities which he or she is good at. However, an incompetency to implement HRM might result into failures regarding implementing HRM as well. If a teamcoach is confronted with HR-related failures over and over again, then it might be the case that the motivation to implement HRM drops. This was also demonstrated by Harris *et al.* (2003). Next to that, an inexperience in implementing HRM could result into anxiety that diminishes the courage to get involved into 'difficult' HR activities, like solving conflicts or absence through illness conversations. I have to say, however, that the results show the complete opposite of the findings of e.g. Harris *et al.* (2003). The teamcoaches indicate that their HR-related competencies are sufficient and therefore, are willing to implement HRM to a larger extent.

Second, HR-related support (hypothesis 8) influences the willingness to implement HRM as well. Renwick (2003) stated that FLMs do not accept devolution willing if they are insufficiently supported, however, this research shows the complete opposite. Teamcoaches indicated that they felt to be involved in HRM, because they were supported in a good way. This experienced involvement might motivate them to implement HRM, because the teamcoaches feel that they are a valued actor when it comes to implementing HRM. Besides that, the teamcoaches partially implement HRM on behalf of the HR department or they might feel this is the case. I have the opinion that teamcoaches become unwilling to implement HRM (on behalf of the HR department), if the HR department does not support them sufficiently. Besides that, it might be argued that teamcoaches do not feel alone in implementing HRM, if they are supported well. In the end, it could be the case that implementing HRM on one's own negatively influences the willingness to implement.

Finally, the motivation to implement HRM is also influenced by a perceived role uncertainty (hypothesis 10). A role uncertainty can result in the fact that teamcoaches do not execute HR activities for which they are responsible. However, if teamcoaches are reprimanded for not executing HR activities, then their willingness to implement HRM might drop. In other words, it is not motivating for teamcoaches to be reprimanded for not implementing HRM, because they did not know they are responsible to do so.

To conclude, teamcoaches are willing to implement HRM. They are willing to execute relational or people-oriented HR activities to the largest extent. The willingness to implement HRM is mainly influenced by the personal motivation of teamcoaches. Institutional reinforcement ensures the willingness of teamcoaches to implement HRM, if they are not personally motivated. Therefore, institutional reinforcement is complementary to personal motivation. Short-termism only resulted into a postponement of HR activities, not into an unwillingness to implement HRM.

The willingness of teamcoaches is mainly influenced by the business strategy, organisational culture and the HR system. Besides that, the factor desire is influenced by the interfering factors competencies, support and policies and procedures (role uncertainty).

5.2 Capacity

Teamcoaches perceive a capacity hindrance to some extent. During the interviews they indicated that they need more time than they actually spent on implementing HRM. Next to that, the quantitative results showed a discrepancy between the actual time spent and time needed. In the end, the teamcoaches indicated that they would like to spend more time on HR activities in order to execute them better. This finding is congruent with the findings of e.g. Brewster & Larsen (2000), Hall & Torrington (1998) and Renwick (2003). Interestingly, the actual time spent and extra time needed to implement HRM seem to be influenced by the personal motivation to execute HR activities. During the interviews, it became clear that teamcoaches are highly willing to execute relational HR activities, like the evaluation and development of employees or people management activities, like solving conflicts or (socially) accompanying people. Besides that, the teamcoaches indicated that their highest priority is to make a personnel planning in order to get the mail delivered. When the quantitative results are taken into account, it becomes clear that teamcoaches significantly spent most of their time on making

a personnel planning and executing people-oriented HR activities. Besides that, the teamcoaches want to spend even more time on executing these HR activities in order to perform them better. Therefore, I think that teamcoaches spent most of their time on these HR activities, because they enjoy getting involved with people and therefore, want to spend most of their time on their employees. It could also be possible that teamcoaches spent most of their time on these HR activities in order to ensure that these activities contribute to the performance of their teams to the largest possible extent.

The results show that a capacity hindrance does not come by itself. The organisational context and the other interfering factors have an influence on the factor capacity. These influences mainly result into an increasing work (over)load or a decrease of time that could otherwise be spend on implementing HRM.

First of all, the internal organisational context influences the interfering factor capacity to some extent. The results showed that the span of control negatively influences the capacity of teamcoaches, which is in line with previous research (McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Nehles *et al.*, 2008; Renwick, 2003). A high span of control results in the fact that teamcoaches cannot devote a sufficient amount of time to all employees. Therefore, the span of control mainly influences the time that is spend on people-oriented or relational HR activities. However, the span of control is only interfering to some extent. The average span of control is 59 employees. Besides that, a few exceptional span of controls of 70 up to 100 employees were measured. However, the results showed that the degree of part-time workers should be taken into account as well. By doing so, the operational span of control only consists of 40 employees. A daily span of control of 40 employees is not all that interfering. However, it could be argued that an average span of control of 59 employees results in a capacity hindrance, because the teamcoaches have to conduct e.g. a performance interview with all 59 employees. However, these conversations can be evenly distributed over a whole year. It has to be said that this situation can become more interfering in the future, because TNT is developing towards a part-time organisation. This will result into an increasing span of control, because one fulltime equivalent will be distributed among more part-time mail deliverers. This development already started to some extent and therefore, could also explain the exceptional span of controls that were measured. Therefore, it is essential that TNT revises the span of control of the teamcoaches on a regular basis, in order to monitor a possible span of control increase and to prevent exceptional span of controls.

Next to that, the organisational context factor technology also has an influence on the factor capacity. The degree of routines affects the factor capacity in two ways. First, making a personnel planning is partially non-routine, because every personnel planning is exceptional to some extent. Therefore, the development of a personnel planning cannot take place in a standardised way. In the end, this takes a considerable amount of time. Besides that, making a personnel planning takes even more time, because teamcoaches cannot rely on a sufficient amount of employees, due to the voluntary outflow. Secondly, problems can also negatively influence the capacity of teamcoaches, simply because these problems are not exceptional. This is demonstrated by the fact that teamcoaches are frequently confronted with operational pressures. However, the fact that these problems occur on a regular basis makes it that these problems heavily influence the capacity of the teamcoaches.

Finally, as was not expected in advance, being responsible for multiple processes also negatively influences the capacity to implement HRM. Teamcoaches who are responsible for both the collection and distribution experience a capacity hindrance to a larger extent than other teamcoaches. This can be explained, because the distribution and collection processes take place at two different points in time. The distribution takes place during the morning/afternoon and the collection takes place during the afternoon/evening. Therefore, the time span of these teamcoaches is larger, which means that the teamcoaches cannot perform their jobs within the hours of a normal working week. Besides that, these teamcoaches also have a higher span of control, because they are both responsible for collection and distribution employees. The span of control of these teamcoaches is 10 or 15 employees higher than the average span of control. This is quite contradictory, because supervising employees with different functions require a span of control decrease (Meier & Bothe, 2003). Next to that, the span of control

should decrease as well, if a (line) manager needs to supervise two processes that take place during different points of time or at different places (Gulick, 1937).

The other interfering factors also influence the capacity to implement HRM to some extent. Remarkably, none of the relationships that were found, were discussed by other devolution theorists (e.g. Brewster & Larsen, 2000; McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Renwick, 2003). First, the factor competencies influences the factor capacity (hypothesis 7). If FLMs are not competent to implement HRM, then they need to search for persons (support) or information that makes them competent to implement HRM. Of course, this takes extra time. Next to that, an increase of experience might result in the fact that HR activities (e.g. administrations) can be executed in a routine way. Because of that, an experienced FLM might need less time to implement HRM. In the case of the teamcoaches, this findings is only limitedly interfering in reality, because almost all teamcoaches indicated that their HR-related competencies are sufficient.

Second, a group of teamcoaches experienced difficulties with finding the right person who is able to support them. In most occasions, the teamcoaches do not instantly find the right person and therefore, they need to search for a while before they can be supported. A search process that takes too much time interferes with the capacity to implement HRM. However, this issue is only interfering to a limited extent, because the teamcoaches mainly go to their direct colleagues in order to be supported. Therefore, they do not need to search for a long time in order to find the right person who is able to support them.

Finally, the factor policies and procedures influences the factor capacity (hypothesis 11). If the teamcoaches cannot rely on user-friendly HR guidelines, then their capacity decreases. This can be explained, because FLMs need to develop HR guidelines themselves or need to contact an HR specialist, if an HR guideline or procedure is not user-friendly. However, this takes time, which results into an increased capacity hindrance.

Remarkably, the influences that are discussed above are mainly 'hard' influences on the capacity of FLMs to implement HRM (like increase of workload or decrease of spare time). These 'hard' aspects are addressed and approved by devolution literature (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Renwick, 2003). However, devolution literature did not explicitly take into account 'soft' aspects which also influence the factor capacity. This research found evidence for the influence of these soft aspects on the factor capacity. Generally spoken, soft aspects of capacity can be regarded as the ability to prioritise or to effectively organise jobs. A substantial group of teamcoaches said that they did not perceive a capacity hindrance, because they are able to prioritise and make a decent planning. According to e.g. Barling *et al.* (1996), Jex & Elacqua (1999) and Macan (1994), these teamcoaches have adopted so called time management behaviours (TMB: goal setting and prioritisation, use of time management tools and preference for organisation). Research on time management showed that engaging into TMB is positively related to control over time (Barling *et al.*, 1996; Jex & Elacqua, 1999; Lang, 1994; Macan, 1994). In the end, it could be argued that control over time influences the factor capacity as well. Besides that, the positive relationship between TMB and control over time is even stronger, if tasks are laid off (Covey *et al.*, 1994). Therefore, engaging in TMB supports the efforts of e.g. laying off (administrative) tasks of the teamcoaches (which is the main purpose of the rationalisation administration operations project).

The above mentioned determinants do not have the same degree of influence on the factor capacity. I think that operational pressures and personnel planning problems, in combination with the fact that a group of teamcoaches does not engage into TMB, are the main determinants for a perceived capacity hindrance. First of all, a large group of teamcoaches indicated that these problems take a lot of their time; 50% of the teamcoaches indicated that they perceive a capacity hindrance if operational pressures are present and 75% experience capacity hindrances due to problems regarding the personnel planning. Second, all teamcoaches are confronted with operational pressures and personnel planning problems on a regularly basis. In the end, solving operational or personnel

planning problems take extra time that otherwise could (or needed to) be spend on implementing HRM. Because of that, the teamcoaches need to be able to arrange their working hours effectively in order to get to both solving these problems and implementing HRM.

Although the teamcoaches indicated to experience a capacity hindrance to some extent, they do not want to let go most of their HR responsibilities. Based upon the findings of Brewster & Larsen (2000), it could be argued that the number of tasks need to be reduced in order to devolve HRM. However, teamcoaches are reluctant to let go of (almost all) their (HR) responsibilities, because they have the feeling that these activities contribute to the performance of their teams. Because of that, it seems that teamcoaches have no other option than to accept a capacity hindrance. Otherwise they are less capable to manage their teams. I think this situation also shows why a lack of spare time does not make teamcoaches unwilling to implement (hypothesis 3). Although most HR activities cannot be taken away from the teamcoaches, a small package of activities that are not people-oriented, like administrations, can be delegated to other persons. When taking into account the allocation of the HR roles, it is rather illogical that teamcoaches (as Regulators) are executing HR-related administrations. According to Caldwell (2003) the Regulator can be regarded as the person who 'helps to maintain the psychological contract between employees and the firm' (p. 997). Service Providers, however, need to deliver administrative services to the line (Caldwell, 2003). Therefore, teamcoaches are executing HR administrations that are embodied in other HR roles. Because of that, teamcoaches are distracted from their primary function: maintaining psychological contracts. In the end, these results show that the HR system also influences the capacity of FLMs to implement HRM. Although this situation is interfering to some extent, TNT has set up the rationalisation administration operations project, in order to reduce the administrative burden of teamcoaches and to reduce the capacity hindrance.

To conclude, teamcoaches experience a capacity hindrance to some extent. Interestingly, teamcoaches want more time in order to execute people-oriented or relational HR activities better. Remarkably, a capacity hindrance is not only influenced by 'hard' aspects like work overload or degree of spare time, but also by 'soft' aspects like time management behaviours. In the case of the teamcoaches, a capacity hindrance is mainly experienced due to operational pressures and personnel planning problems (that take too much time), in combination with the fact that a part of the teamcoaches does not engage into TMB. Remarkably, however, teamcoaches do not want to let go of their (HR) responsibilities in order to decrease the perceived capacity hindrance. In the end, the factor capacity is influenced by the HR system, organisational structure (span of control) and technology (degree of routines). Finally, the factor competencies, support and policies and procedures are of influence on the capacity to implement HRM.

5.3 Competencies

In general, the factor competencies is interfering to a small extent, because the teamcoaches indicated that they are competent to implement HRM. These results are contradictory to the findings of e.g. Cunningham & Hyman (1999), Hall & Torrington (1998), Harris *et al.* (2002) and Hope Haily *et al.* (2005), who stated that FLMs lack HR-related competencies. As a congruence with previous research (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Harris *et al.*, 2002), teamcoaches are not always sufficiently competent when it comes to legal requirements or collective labour agreements. This can be explained by the fact that these issues require specialists' knowledge. Besides that, the amount of collective labour agreements is quite large. Therefore, it takes a lot of time to internalise the content of these agreements. However, keeping up with the content of these agreements is quite difficult, because collective labour agreements are subject to change all the time.

It seems that trainings are good determinants for the HR-related competencies of FLMs, because teamcoaches explicitly stated that HR-related training courses made them more competent. This finding is not in line with the findings of e.g. Cunningham & Hyman (1999) and Harris *et al.* (2002) who argued that most trainings are insufficient in terms of quality and therefore, do not address any

expertise skills. Besides that, the findings showed that most teamcoaches attended a sufficient amount of training courses. Therefore, these findings take the edge of the findings of e.g. Brewster & Larsen (2003) and Harris *et al.* (2002), who stated that FLMS do not attend a sufficient amount of HR-related trainings.

Next to trainings, experience is a good determinant of HR-related competencies as well. This is in line with the findings of Cunningham & Hyman (1999) who found out that 'people management skills are best picked up through experience' (p. 19). Cunningham & Hyman (1999) argued, however, that FLMS do not have a sufficient amount of experience in implementing HRM. As against their findings, the teamcoaches at TNT explicitly stated that their degree of experience is sufficiently. Remarkably, however, was to find out that Cunningham & Hyman (1999) were right by saying that FLMS mainly picked up their HR-related competencies through experience. The teamcoaches value their HR-related experience more than the trainings they attended. However, Cunningham & Hyman (1999) were not right by saying that 'formal training in people management (HRM) may be perceived as unnecessary by line managers'. The teamcoaches at TNT indicated that it is necessary to attend trainings. However, these trainings only need to lay the basis for their HR-related competencies. I think that they value experience to a larger extent, because it takes years and a lot of energy to master the implementation of HRM. Because of that, a training course or workshop cannot match the same amount of attention that is devoted to implementing HRM in practice.

When it comes to conservatism, Brewster and Larsen (2000) were not exactly right in advance. The results showed that experienced teamcoaches do not want to attend training courses anymore, because they have the opinion that their HR-related experience is sufficient. In the end, HR-related competencies do not remain up-to-date if FLMS do not attend trainings. However, it seemed that teamcoaches are in favour of trainings when a new procedure or program is implemented. In the end, the HR-related competencies of the teamcoaches stay up-to-date to some extent, because these trainings are attended. Next to that, HR-related competencies are not necessarily developed through training courses. As Gennard & Kelly (1997) demonstrated, specialist support also offers new HR-related insights to line managers. In the case of the teamcoaches, a sufficient amount of support is offered to them, which prevents conservatism to be present. Therefore, conservatism seemed to be present in advance, however, the hindrance of conservatism is almost completely diminished. More generally, conservatism should be measured by the extent of recently attended trainings and the degree of offered support in both a quantitative and qualitative way. In the end, this will probably increase the reliability of the measurement of conservatism.

What is not explicitly describe in devolution literature, is that starting teamcoaches indicated that their HR-related competencies are hindering to some extent. Next to that, it seemed that the longer a teamcoach is working as a line manager, the less the HR-related competencies are hindering. The results show that starting teamcoaches are experienced to a limited extent when it comes to implementing HRM. This is not remarkable, because the years of experience as a line manager of starting teamcoaches is limited as well. Next to that, a substantial amount of (starting) teamcoaches indicated that not all starting teamcoaches attend elementary HR-related training courses. Remarkably, however, the HR policy of the BU Operations does state that starting teamcoaches need to be offered training courses when they start working as a teamcoach. Therefore, the real problem seems to be that consistency is lacking when it comes to the education that is offered to starting teamcoaches. In other words, (this part of) the HR policy is not implemented as was intended in advance.

The results show that the HR-related competencies of teamcoaches are influenced by the internal organisational context to some extent. First of all, the HR system influences the HR-related competencies of teamcoaches in two ways. The first way deals with the fact that the HR system needs to contain an HR policy statement that takes into account the development of FLMS. Within the BU Operations, this seems to be the case. Because of that, the development of teamcoaches needs to be discussed during an annual personal development conversation and teamcoaches need to be offered

training courses. The second way deals with the fact that HR consultants (Service Providers) should watch over the development of teamcoaches. This was also demonstrated by e.g. Gennard & Kelly (1997), Hall & Torrington (1998) and Cunningham & Hyman (1999), who argued that the HR department is responsible for the development of FLMs. In the case of TNT, the Service Provider is the one who takes care for the development of FLMs. Besides that, Caldwell (2003) argues that Advisors should accommodate devolution. Therefore, Advisors should also be responsible for the development of FLMs in order to enable them to carry out devolved HR activities in an effective way. This seems to be the case to some extent at TNT. The senior HR advisors central and HR managers (Advisors) develop training programs for the line. The senior HR advisors area who are mainly Change Agents, are responsible for the fact that line managers are actually developed. However, this should be the responsibility of the Advisors (Caldwell, 1997). Therefore, I would argue that the Advisors (senior advisors central and HR managers) adopt a more interventionist role. In order to enable this, they should be responsible for the fact that HR consultants are directly motivated to offer these training programs to the line. By doing so, the Advisors are accommodating devolution in a better way. In the end, the HR consultants should only be the service-hatch of this accommodation.

Besides the HR system, the organisational structure also influences the factor competencies. Although the HR department has the responsibility to develop FLMs, it seems that training courses or development programs do not 'reach' (starting) FLMs. In other words, the HR policy is not implemented as was intended in advance. The same was found by Bond & Wise (2003), who indicated that training programmes 'had not reached all of its target audience' (p. 67). As the results show, this situation is possibly determined or influenced by the organisational structure. The BU Operations is hierarchical organised to some extent. This results in the fact that at least two management layers are situated between the HR managers and senior HR advisors who develop the HR policy and the HR consultants who are responsible for the fact that the starting teamcoaches are adequately trained. Because of that, the actual implementation of the HR policy might differ from the intended HR policy, because every management layer adds another impulse to the actual implementation. Again, I would argue that the HR managers directly supervise the HR consultants whether they 'serve' as the service-hatch of the accommodation that is provided by the Advisors.

Although the internal organisational context influences the HR-related competencies of the teamcoaches, the characteristics of the teamcoaches also have a great influence. I argue that these characteristics are influential to a larger extent. The most influential characteristic is 'years of experience as a line manager', because teamcoaches indicated that their HR-related competencies are mainly influenced by HR-related experiences. This characteristic helps to explain why the HR-related competencies of teamcoaches are sufficient on an average. Approximately 33% of the teamcoaches work as a line manager between five and ten years. Even importantly, 47% of the teamcoaches have an experience as a line manager of more than ten years. These results show that the population of teamcoaches is rather experienced. Because of that, the HR-related competencies are not interfering on an average. Next to that, this characteristic helps to explain why conservatism seemed to be presented. Almost a half of all teamcoaches (47%) is employed as a line manager for more than 10 years. This means they followed their basic line education more than 10 years ago. Next to that, these teamcoaches indicated to have gained enough experience during those years and therefore, they indicated that their HR-related competencies are sufficient. Therefore, most of them (73%) they find it unnecessary to follow training courses anymore.

Finally, the experience of teamcoaches also helps to explain the discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative results. The quantitative results show that the competencies of teamcoaches are not interfering. However, the qualitative results show that starting teamcoaches perceive a competency hindrance. The questionnaire (quantitative results) was administrated by experienced teamcoaches to a large extent. Therefore, the quantitative results are mainly based upon the insights of experienced teamcoaches. However, during the interviews (qualitative results) more starting teamcoaches were interviewed. Next to that, experienced teamcoaches who work with starting teamcoaches were also

able to give their opinion about the development of starting teamcoaches. This was not explicitly taken into account in the questionnaire.

Finally, it seems that other interfering factors are related to the HR-related competencies of the teamcoaches to some extent. First, the teamcoaches who are willing to implement HRM are also willing to acquire HR-related competencies (hypothesis 2). McGovern *et al.* (1997) and Hall & Torrington (1998) state that the motivation of line managers to attend HR-related trainings is lacking if their willingness to implement HRM is lacking as well. The findings of this research are the same, however, in an opposing direction. These findings can be explained by the fact that teamcoaches indicated that HR activities contribute to the performance of their teams. If the teamcoaches are not competent to execute the HR activities in a appropriate way, than these HR activities might not contribute to the performance of the team. Second, teamcoaches who experience a lack of spare time also experience the fact that their HR-related competencies (gained through experience) are hindering or at least do not increase (hypothesis 4). As has been discussed before, teamcoaches heavily rely on their HR-related experience in order to gain HR-related competencies. However, a lack of spare time can result into the fact that teamcoaches need to execute their HR activities in an agitated way. Such a situation makes it that teamcoaches do not sufficiently gain experience in terms of quality. Finally, it seems that teamcoaches who experience a capacity hindrance are able to attend trainings and therefore, their HR-related competencies increase (hypothesis 5). This is not congruent with the findings of Hall & Torrington (1998), who argued that a capacity hindrance prevents FLMs from attending HR-related trainings. However, teamcoaches create some spare time in order to attend HR-related training courses and therefore, their HR-related competencies increase. I think that the teamcoaches are willing to create some spare time, because they find it important to attend trainings, due to the fact that they want to implement HRM properly. Therefore, I think that the willingness to implement HRM has a larger influence on the HR-related competencies than a possible capacity hindrance. Besides that, the factor capacity measures a time hindrance regarding the implementation of HRM, not regarding attending training courses.

To conclude, the HR-related competencies of the teamcoaches are limitedly interfering. In general, the teamcoaches have attended training courses that were sufficient in terms of quantity and quality. These training courses mainly lay the basis for their HR-related competencies. Besides that, the experience they have gained is sufficient as well and is valued to a larger extent than training courses. Conservatism did not seem to be interfering. The only group of teamcoaches who experienced a competency hindrance are starting teamcoaches. They are insufficiently experienced and a part of them does not attend training courses. The HR-related competencies of FLMs are mainly influenced by the HR system and organisational structure. Finally, the capacity of teamcoaches (partially) influences the factor competencies, as well as the factor desire.

5.4 Support

Before I will discuss the possible hindrance of the support factor, I want to discuss some other eye-catching findings first. It was remarkable to notice that teamcoaches go to their direct colleagues (supervisor, other teamcoaches, the mailmen + and the HR consultant) in order to be supported. The teamcoaches go to these supporters, because these supporters are familiar with teamcoach-specific problems and these supporters can support the teamcoaches in an understandable way. Problem is, however, that some of these supporters do not possess HR expertise that HR specialists have internalised. Therefore, teamcoaches ask for HR-related support that is offered by non-HR specialists. Finally, the teamcoaches might go to their direct colleagues, because it takes them more time to go to HR specialists in the organisation who are able to support them.

It is also remarkable that teamcoaches ask for support when they are confronted with unfamiliar or specific personnel problems and collective labour agreements. These findings are partially in line with the findings of Bond & Wise (2003), who found out that FLMs ask for support when they are

confronted with non-routine HR issues. I think teamcoaches ask for support on these issues, because their experience regarding these issues is lacking. As teamcoaches indicated, they implement HRM mainly based upon the experience they have gained. However, a teamcoach can not gain that much experience regarding specific personnel problems, because these problems are quite rare. Next to that, the collective labour agreement of TNT is rather voluminous and therefore, it takes quite a while before a teamcoach is able to completely internalise and handle these labour agreements. However, teamcoaches do not have enough time to internalise these labour agreements. Therefore, it is much easier to ask an HR specialist for support on these issues. Besides that, teamcoaches need to be supported on finding and using HR procedures as well. The main reason why teamcoaches ask for this type of support, is because the communication of the HR procedures is not sufficient. Therefore, these findings might indicate that the degree of needed support is influenced by the factors competencies and policies and procedures.

Besides that, I noticed that teamcoaches are supported in two different ways, through a partnership and through advice. Remarkably, Bond & Wise (2003) argued that line managers ask for advice (consultancy) about non-routine matters. However, in the case of the teamcoaches, non-routine or persistent HR issues, like an employee who is absent for more than 25 weeks or if an employee needs to be reprimanded, are discussed in a partnership. These findings show that Gennard & Kelly (1997) were partially right. They argued that a partnership is set up in order to (1) jointly solve problems and to (2) jointly develop HR policies (Gennard & Kelly, 1997). Only the first assumption is demonstrated during this research. Besides partnerships, support on routine or less persistent HR issues, like an application or a certain labour agreement is offered through advice or consultancy services. It could be necessary to engage in a partnership in order to have a discussion which helps to solve a unique or persistent personnel problem. Probably, such issues could be approached in the best way if both persons combine their specialist point of view. Less persistent or general personnel issues could therefore be solved by offering one-way advisory services to the teamcoaches. This situation seems to be shifting towards the situation that is described by Brewster & Larsen (2000). They have the opinion that HR should become partners with the line. As an implication, the HR department should not offer consultancy services, because these activities can easily be outsourced to external consultancy bureaus. However, in the case of TNT, this would not be a good development. TNT has its own collective labour agreement (in the Netherlands, this is the case in most large organisations). It is unlikely that an external consultancy bureau is competent to deliver consultancy services regarding a collective labour agreement that is company-specific. Therefore, the delivery of support through both partnerships and consultancy services is the best solution for TNT.

In most cases, the actual support meets the expectations of the teamcoaches in a quantitative and qualitative way. These findings are contradictory to the findings of Cunningham & Hyman (1999), Hall & Torrington (1998), Harris *et al.* (2002) and Thornhill & Saunders (1998), who argued that FLMs are insufficiently supported. Next to that, as Renwick (2000; 2003) argued, consensus between HR and the line is a necessary precondition if support needs to be established. Remarkably, the results did not obviously show this. As the teamcoaches indicated, they are quite experienced when it comes to implementing HRM. This might indicate that most HR tasks have been devolved years ago. Because of that, possible conflicting situations could have been taken away for quite a while as well. Therefore, teamcoaches could not highlight the fact that a consensual relationship is an essential precondition for support to flourish. It was normal for them to be supported and they did not indicate that HR and the line have been in conflict. Next to that, it seems that support also influences a consensual relationship between HR and the line. Several teamcoaches indicated that they accept the offered support (indicator of consensus), because the support lives up to their expectations in both a qualitative and quantitative way. Therefore consensus and support can be considered as the 'chicken or the egg' problem; it is not clear which of these two factors proceeds in time.

As the results show, the actual support is not all that interfering. However, the results show that pre-support is interfering to some extent. This is demonstrated by the findings that a substantial amount of

teamcoaches faces difficulties with finding the right person who is able to support them. This can be explained by the fact that teamcoaches do not request for support on a frequent basis. Next to that, the teamcoaches indicated that they need to be supported on rare HR issues. This results in the fact that the communication between the teamcoaches and the expert on these rare subjects is limited as well. Therefore, the teamcoaches do not know which person is an expert, which results in the fact that they need to search for this person first. It has to be said, however, that this issue is only interfering to some extent, because teamcoaches can always rely on an HR consultant. In the end, an HR consultant is the one who is able to either support the teamcoach or an HR consultant should be able to refer to other HR specialists who are able to support the teamcoach. However, if this is not the case, then such a situation will become interfering, because teamcoaches then need to search for an HR specialist themselves. Because of that, they go to non-specialists in HRM, like other teamcoaches or their supervisor. Such a situation would be even more interfering. Therefore, TNT should reconsider the HR role of the HR consultants. It would be more appropriate, if an HR consultant is a primary Service Provider. This HR role would imply that teamcoaches can be put through to secondary Service Providers (like e.g. HR SCC or social workers) by HR consultants if need. Because of that, teamcoaches do not have to look for secondary Service Providers themselves.

Next to that, teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection process also face pre-support hindrances, because a part of them cannot get into contact with their supporters, because these supporters are out of office after 5 o'clock p.m. It has to be said that the qualitative and quantitative results are different, because the quantitative results show that collection teamcoaches experience the factor support as least interfering compared to their colleagues who are responsible for the distribution of the mail. The qualitative results, however, show the situation that has been outlined above. The reason why this discrepancy occurs, can be explained by the fact that the teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection process are satisfied with the support they receive, however they have to wait for a day in order to be supported, which can be hindering now and then. This was not measured in a quantitative way.

Finally, the factor support is influenced by the internal organisational context to some extent. The organisational structure positively influences the factor support. First of all, the organisational structure makes it that the HR department is located near the line. Therefore, hindering situations in which the HR department is 'too distanced' from the line, as was found by Bond & Wise (2003) and Cunningham & Hyman (1997), are avoided. Next to that, the organisational structures enables a situation in which HR specialists and teamcoaches have a shared responsibility when it comes to implementing HRM. This finding is congruent with the finding of Brewster & Larsen (2000), who found out that HR and the line have a shared HR responsibility. Therefore, if a teamcoach does not implement HRM well, then the HR department and the HR specialists are also responsible for the fact that HRM is not implemented well. Thus, in the end, it is also in the interest of e.g. an HR consultant that the teamcoaches implement HRM well and this should motivate HR specialists to support the line.

The HR system also influences the degree of a perceived support hindrance. As the results show, all four HR roles are allocated to different persons within and outside the HR department. This practically means that the Service Provider role is allocated to e.g. the HR consultants. Because of that, the teamcoaches can rely on the HR consultants and other Service Providers, who are able to support them when it comes to implementing HRM.

The organisational size also has an influence on the factor support. The BU Operations consists of almost 50.000 employees and the HR department is large as well. Because of that, the teamcoaches can rely on a sufficient amount of potential supporters. This both makes it that teamcoaches are always supported well, because they can go to a second supporter if the first supporter did not support them in an appropriate way. However, this situation also makes it that finding the right supporter is like finding a 'needle in a haystack'.

Finally, as was not expected in advance, working in shifts also results into a support hindrance to some extent. The complete process of collection, sorting and distribution is split up into three shifts. The HR consultants are mainly working during the distribution shift. Because of that, teamcoaches

who work during the collection shift can only partially rely on HR consultants. This shift starts at 2 o'clock p.m. At that moment, e.g. HR consultants are at their office. However, after 5 o'clock p.m., the HR consultants go home. In the end, this results in the fact that teamcoaches cannot rely on HR consultants from 5 o'clock p.m. up till the end of their shift (approximately 10 o'clock p.m.).

To conclude, the factor support is interfering to some extent. In most occasions, the actual support meets the needed support in both a quantitative in qualitative way. However, pre-support is hindering to some extent, because teamcoaches need to search for HR specialists who can help them. In general, teamcoaches want to be supported on persistent or rare HR issues and collective labour agreements. They go to their direct colleagues (supervisor, other teamcoaches, etc.) or HR consultants in order to be supported. The teamcoaches are offered advisory services or they engage in a partnership with HR specialists. As the results show, the factor support is influenced by the HR system, organisational structure and company size. Besides that, working in shifts also influences pre-support. Finally, the factors competencies and policies and procedures (communication) seem to influence the support that is needed by FLMs.

5.5 Policies and procedures

Regarding the factor policies and procedures, it seems that teamcoaches experience a role uncertainty to some extent. Remarkably, teamcoaches only experience a role uncertainty when it comes to particular or rare HR issues. This can be explained by the fact that teamcoaches rely on experience and trainings, and not on policies and procedures. Brewster & Larsen (2000), Hall & Torrington (1998) and McGovern *et al.* (1997) argue that HR policies and practices should describe *what* FLMs need to do regarding HRM. However, the teamcoaches indicated that they know for which HR issues they are responsible, because they learned this during training courses. Next to that, they gained knowledge about their HR responsibilities due to experience. However, this results in the fact that teamcoaches perceive a role uncertainty when it comes to rare HR issues. If teamcoaches are not experienced with an HR issue, then they are not aware of their HR responsibilities regarding that issue. The same occurs, if teamcoaches did not attend a specific training course.

In the first instance, it seems that policies and procedures do not affect a possible role uncertainty. However, this is only partially the case. As the results show, the experience that is highlighted by the teamcoaches might also deal with experience regarding HR-related targets. If teamcoaches are confronted with these HR-related targets on a regular or yearly basis (experience), then they are also confronted with their HR responsibilities as well. Therefore, the degree of role uncertainty will decrease if the years of experience increase. In the end, the HR-related targets are based upon the HR policies. Therefore, these targets serve as some kind of communication of the HR policies and procedures. Based upon these findings, it can be argued that Brewster & Larsen (2000), Hall & Torrington (1998) and McGovern *et al.* (1997) are right about the influence of HR policies and procedures on a possible role uncertainty to some extent.

In the end, a role uncertainty regarding rare HR issues is only limitedly interfering, because role uncertainties only show up on an irregular basis. Next to that, teamcoaches can always rely on their supervisor or an HR consultant to ask for advice whether they are responsible or not.

When it comes to a clear description of HR procedures, it seems that teamcoaches experience a hindrance to a small extent as well. As Purcell & Hutchinson (2007) argued, HR policies and practices should tell *how* FLMs need to implement HRM. In order to do so, HR policies and practices should 'be as user-friendly' as possible (Purcell & Hutchison, 2007, p. 17). Next to that, HR procedures should act as guidelines (Hall & Torrington, 1998). The results show that the HR procedures match these criteria to a large extent. However, a small part of the teamcoaches indicated that HR procedures should be more concrete or the HR procedures do not match reality. However, an HR procedure which is too concrete, looks more like a set of rules, instead of a guideline. In such occasions, FLMs might interpret the HR procedures as rules which tell them exactly what to do. In the end, this could affect their motivation to implement HRM or to use HR procedures in a negative way. Therefore, HR procedures

should not become too concrete. Next to that, the fact that HR procedures do not match reality is only limitedly interfering as well. First of all, only one teamcoach indicated this. Besides that, it is not possible to set up specific HR procedures that match all situations which a teamcoach may encounter. Otherwise, FLMs will get caught in a bureaucratic web of HR procedures. Finally, if a teamcoach is confronted with an HR procedure that does not match the situation which he or she experiences, then a teamcoach can also ask for support of HR specialists.

What seems to be more interfering, is the fact that policies and procedures are not appropriately communicated to teamcoaches. This occurs, because they are difficult to find. These HR procedures can be found on the intranet of TNT Mail. However, the intranet of TNT Mail too extended. Not only the HR department of TNT Mail places HR procedures on the intranet, all other departments do as well. Perhaps it could also be the case that different actors within the HR department (HR SSC, central HR department, decentralised HR department) do not communicate which HR information is put on the intranet. In the end, teamcoaches are confronted with an information overload on the intranet and therefore, they cannot easily find HR procedures. Previous research on intranets found that information overload is a significant problem when it comes to sharing information (HR procedures) on the intranet (Curry & Stancich, 2000). In order to overcome information overload, the information on the intranet (e.g. HR procedures) should be tailored to each group of users (FLMs) (Ansari & Mela, 2003; Pangaro, 1999; Stoddart, 2001; Berghel, 1997). Next to that, I think that teamcoaches perceive difficulties with finding HR procedures, because they have not that many experience with finding HR procedures. This can be explained by the fact that the teamcoaches indicate that their HR-related competencies are sufficient or because they are supported well. If the teamcoaches know how they should handle a particular HR issue, then they do not need to search for an HR procedure which tells them how to handle a particular HR issue. The same goes for support. If e.g. an HR consultant tells the teamcoach how to act or handle an HR issue, then the teamcoaches does not have to search for an HR procedure as well. Finally, teamcoaches also indicated that they want to be supported when it comes to finding and using HR procedures. This indicates that teamcoaches have difficulties with finding HR procedures.

Finally, one issue seems to be interfering as well. The teamcoaches indicated that they implement HRM inconsistently. This finding is in line with the findings of Bond & Wise (2003). Bond & Wise (2003) and other authors (Hall & Torrington, 1998; Harris *et al.*, 2002; Lowe, 1992) argue that the development of HR policies and procedures prevents an inconsistent implementation of HRM by FLMs. And remarkably, teamcoaches argue the same. According to the teamcoaches, HR procedures prescribe how HR issues should be addressed and HR forms motivate them to address certain HR issues during conversations. However, the communication of HR policies and procedures is interfering and therefore, HR policies and procedures do not ensure a possible consistent implementation of HRM. Because of that, this research can neither reject nor support the assumption that HR policies and procedures contribute to a consistent implementation. However, the assumption of the teamcoaches that HR procedures do have a contribution to a consistent implementation, might be a small indication. In the end, a better communication of HR policies and procedures is needed to ensure a more consistent implementation of HRM and to test whether this assumption is true.

Besides that, it could be argued that an inconsistency is present, because teamcoaches implement HRM based upon experience. Their HR-related competencies are mainly developed through experience. Besides that, they gain knowledge about their HR responsibilities through experience. However, experience cannot be standardised, because teamcoaches can experience HR issues in multiple ways. Therefore, implementing HRM based upon experience might influence a consistent implementation of HRM in a negative way as well.

Finally, a consistent implementation can be ensured through coordination (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Harris *et al.*, 2002; Bond & Wise, 2003). It is the responsibility of the HR department to monitor (or coordinate) whether line managers implement HRM consistently (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Harris *et al.*, 2002). Therefore, I would argue that HR consultants (Service Providers) should not only engage

into offering support to the line. They should engage into coordination as well. During this research, it was not studied whether the HR department serves a coordination function. The HR department and the line have a shared responsibility when it comes to implementing HRM. Because of that, HR consultants monitor the HR-related performances of teamcoaches and offer advisory services to the line. A coordinating function in which HR consultants monitor a consistent implementation can therefore be easily assigned to the HR consultants (Service Provider role).

Finally, the organisational context influences the factor policies and procedures to some extent. The influences that are discussed below are possible influences, because the results did not explicitly demonstrate this.

As the results show, the teamcoaches know *what* their HR responsibilities are, because they experience the fact that HR-related targets have been set up. The teamcoaches need to execute HR activities (HR responsibilities) in order to achieve those HR-related targets. In the end, the HR-related targets are based upon the HR policy. Therefore, the HR system influences the factor policies and procedures in a way that the HR-related targets are the communication of the HR policy. Next to that, training courses influence a possible role uncertainty as well. The HR system of the BU Operation takes into account that teamcoaches need to attend HR-related trainings. Therefore, the HR system indirectly influences the perceive role uncertainty of teamcoaches.

Next to that, the size and structure of an organisation or business unit could be of influence on the communication of policies and procedures. Multiple and large staff functions produce a lot of information, which in the end can result into an information overload. Next to that, a fragmentation of the HR department can result into the fact that different HR specialist do not know whether other HR specialists have communicated HR policies, procedures or other HR-related information. In the end, this can result into an information over load as well.

Finally, the organisational structure might influence a consistent implementation. At TNT, a considerable amount of managerial layers are situated between the top management (who develops HR policies) and the teamcoaches (who implement them). It might be argued that every management layer adds another impulse to the implementation of HRM. Therefore, differences may occur regarding the way in which VBG managers (supervisor of the teamcoaches) pass on the HR responsibilities of teamcoaches.

To conclude, the factor policies and procedures is interfering to some extent. Teamcoaches experience a role uncertainty when it comes to rare HR issues. The HR procedures are clearly described in most cases. However, the communication of HR policies and procedures is interfering, due to an information overload on the intranet. Finally, almost all teamcoaches indicated that HRM is inconsistently implemented. This occurs, because teamcoaches do not implement HRM based upon Finally, it can be argued that the factor policies and procedures is influenced by the HR system, size and organisational structure.

5.6 Research model

As was predicted in advance, the internal organisational context is related to the HR system, the HR system is related to the interfering factors and the interfering factors are related to each other as well. The results show that the HR system is mainly influenced by the business strategy, organisational culture and organisational structure. The HR philosophy, HR policies and HR practices are influenced by the business strategy and the organisational culture to the largest extent. The business strategy can be considered as a low-price strategy. Next to that, the business strategy and organisational culture are mainly characterised by delivering a sufficient service quality. An influence on the HR system is clearly found in the fact that (1) mailmen need to flow out, (2) part-time mail deliverers need to flow in, (3) absence (through illness) needs to be lowered and (4) employees and line managers need to be developed. If these goals are attained, then operational costs should be lowered and service quality should be attained. The reason why the business strategy is related to the HR system, can be explained by the fact that an HR system needs to be vertically integrated with the business

strategy (Gratton & Truss, 2003; Guest, 1987; Huselid *et al.*, 1997; Storey, 1992). In the case of TNT, this seems to be the case. Besides that, the findings of Beer *et al.* (1984) which show that the HR system is influenced by the organisational culture, are also supported by these results.

The HR system is also partially influenced by the organisational structure to some extent. The partition of the HR department into a central HR department and six decentralised HR departments influences the allocation of HR roles. HR specialists in the central HR department are mainly Advisors. The HR specialists in the centralised HR department can be considered as Change Agents, Service Providers and Regulators. This finding was not discussed by e.g. Fields *et al.* (2000). However, departmentalisation did not explicitly influence the HR system, as was found out by Jackson *et al.* (1989). It is needed to study different types of departments in order to determine the influence of departmentalisation on the HR system. However, only one type of department was studied (service-based department) and therefore, no explicit influence could be found.

Besides that, the factors technology and size also did not have an explicit influence on the HR system. Only one type of manufacturing technology, one degree of routines and one type of interdependency were studied. However, it is needed to study multiple types of technologies in order to determine the influence of one type of technology on the HR system, just like e.g. Jackson & Schuler (1995) did. Next to that, no comparison was made between large organisations (like TNT Mail Netherlands) and small companies in order to study the influence of the company size on the HR system. According to Schuler & Jackson (1995) multi-company analysis would better to predict the influence of the organisational context on the HR system. Because of that, it was not possible to study explicit relationships between the technology / size and the HR system of TNT Mail Netherlands.

As was predicted in advance, the HR system influences all interfering factors. This can be explained, because all interfering factors are related to the HR system, however, in different ways. The HR system comprises of HR-related goals, which influence institutional reinforcement. The capacity of teamcoaches is also determined by the amount of HR activities and allocation of HR roles, which are embodied in the HR system. The HR system also incorporates the development of employees and therefore, influences the factor competencies. The allocation of HR roles determines whether line managers can rely on support. And HR-related goals also contribute to a perceived role uncertainty regarding HR.

An influence of the HR system on the interfering factors results into the fact that the internal organisational context indirectly influences the interfering factors. In these cases, the HR system can be regarded as an intermediating variable. In the end, the business strategy, organisational culture and organisational structure have the largest indirect influence on the interfering factors, because these context factors influence the HR system to the largest extent.

However, the interfering factors are also directly influenced by the internal organisational context to some extent. The research model did not take into account these relationships. It has to be said, however, that not all these context variables have the same degree of influence. The most influential direct relationships that were found are (1) business strategy and desire, (2) technology (degree of routines) and capacity, (3) structure (span of control) and capacity, (4) structure and competencies, (5) structure and support, (6) structure and policies & procedures (consistency), and (7) size and policies & procedures (communication). It seems that the business strategy and organisational structure are the context variables that directly influence the interfering factors to the largest extent. This is not surprising, because these context variables also influence the HR system to the largest extent.

Besides the internal organisational context, FLMs' characteristics also seem to influence the interfering factors to some extent. This was not expected in advance and not taken into account in the research model. However, it can be said the some interfering factors are influenced by these characteristics to a larger extent than by the internal organisational context. These interfering factors are desire, capacity and competencies. The willingness of FLMs to implement HRM is mainly influenced by personal motivation. The factor capacity is mainly influenced by the degree whether FLMs engage into time management behaviour. And the HR-related competencies of the teamcoaches are mainly influenced

by the (years of) experience as a line manager. Personal motivation, time management behaviour and years of experience are all personal characteristics. These results plead for the fact that FLM characteristic should also be taken into account when interfering factors are studied.

All interfering factors are good predictors of (possible) hindrances in implementing HRM. However, the results showed that the composition of the interfering factors is different than was expected in advance. The willingness (desire) to implement HRM is determined by a cumulative composition of the measures personal motivation and institutional reinforcement, instead of an average composition of both measures. Regarding the factor competencies, training courses and experience do not have the same degree of influence on the HR-related competencies of FLMS. HR-related training courses enable FLMS to develop elementary competencies. These elementary competencies are then further developed through experience. Therefore, experience determines the HR-related competencies of FLMS to a larger extent than training courses. Besides that, the degree of up-to-date HR knowledge should also comprise of the degree of actual support. Regarding support, pre-support can be interfering as well and should also be taken into account in order to determine a support hindrance. Besides that, the support source can be interfering as well.

Besides the HR system and the internal organisational context, the interfering factors also influence each other to some extent. This indicates that the interfering factors reinforce each other. Therefore, an interfering situation might become even more interfering or a non-interfering might become even less interfering. In other words, the influences that were found, might indicate that vicious or virtuous circles can come into existence if factors are interfering or not.

Finally, the figure below shows the relationships that were discussed in the research model and are confirmed during this research (solid lines). New relationships that were found during this research, are also presented in the figure below (dashed lines).

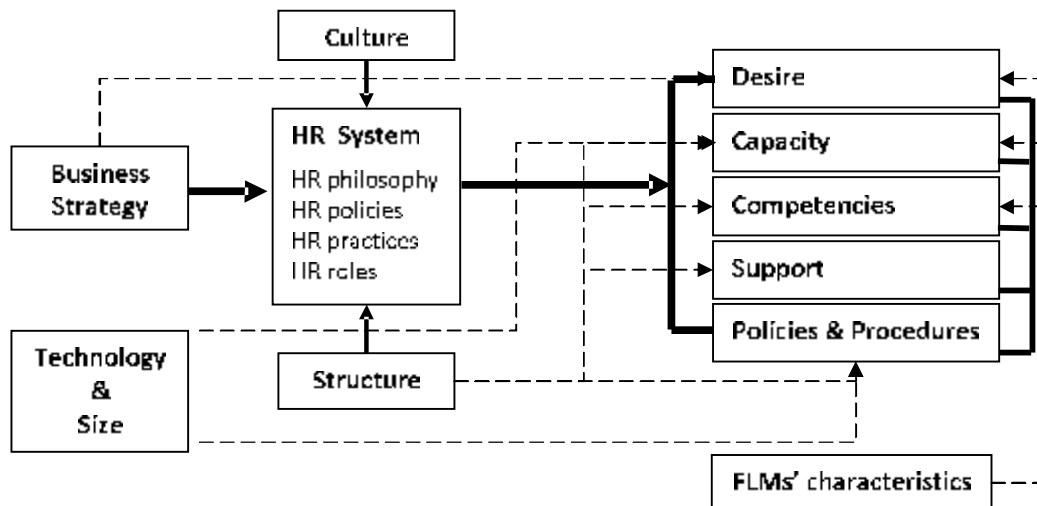


Figure 11: Revised research model

6. Conclusions

In the section below, the conclusions regarding the research findings and the research model will be presented. Paragraph 6.1 focuses on the research findings regarding the research question and related sub-questions. Paragraph 6.2 focuses on the research model and general results. Finally, paragraph 6.3 will focus on the limitations and further research.

6.1 Research findings conclusions

This research is conducted in order to find out whether teamcoaches at TNT experience hindrances that prevent them of implementing HRM effectively. The following research question has been formulated in order to find out whether teamcoaches experience hindrances that prevent them of implementing HRM effectively:

Which factors do the teamcoaches at TNT Mail experience as hindering in implementing HRM effectively and how do these factors come forth out of the organisational context?

The related sub-questions need to be answered first, in order to give an answer to the research question.

Sub-question 1: To what extent have HR responsibilities been devolved to the teamcoaches at TNT and for which HR issues are the teamcoaches responsible?

A considerable amount of HR responsibilities have been devolved to the teamcoaches at TNT. This practically means that they are (partially) responsible for all HR activities concerning the inflow, through flow and outflow of employees. More concretely, the HR responsibilities of the teamcoaches can be categorised into the following categories:

- Selection of employees
- Assessment interviews
- Performance interviews
- Development of employees
- Handling absenteeism
- Handling inconveniences
- Personnel planning
- HR-related administrations
- Mobility and outflow of employees

It has to be said that the teamcoaches agree upon these HR responsibilities. However a group of teamcoaches (17%) have the opinion that they are not responsible for explaining and applying collective labour agreements to their employees.

Sub-question 2: In what way does the implementation of HRM contribute to the overall HR system effectiveness and which interfering factors affect the implementation effectiveness of HRM by FLMs, according to the literature?

There are three factors that influence the effectiveness of an HR system: (1) vertical integration with the business strategy, (2) horizontal integration of HR policies and (3) the implementation effectiveness of line managers (Gratton & Truss, 2003; Guest, 1987; Huselid *et al.*, 1997; Storey, 1992). Therefore, line managers positively contribute to the effectiveness of the HR system if they implement HRM effectively. An ineffectiveness is demonstrated when teamcoaches do not implement HRM as was intended in advance. According to the devolution literature (e.g. Brewster & Larsen, 2000; McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Renwick, 2003), FLMs are hindered by five interfering factors. These

interfering factors hinder the teamcoaches in order to effectively implement HRM. The following five interfering factors can be distinguished:

1. Desire
2. Capacity
3. Competencies
4. Support
5. Policies and procedures

Regarding desire, FLMs are not always willing to implement HRM, because they have no personal motivation or due to the fact that no institutional reinforcement is perceived (Harris *et al.*, 2001; McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Next to that, FLMs are reluctant to implement HRM if they are confronted with short-termism (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999). Regarding capacity, FLMs do not always have a sufficient amount of time in order to implement HRM effectively (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Renwick, 2003). With respect to competencies, FLMs lack HR-related competencies in order to implement HRM effectively. FLMs might experience an insufficiency in HR-related training courses or experience (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Harris *et al.*, 2002; Hope Haily *et al.*, 2005; Lowe, 1992). Besides that, it seems that FLMs do not rely on up-to-date HR-related competencies and therefore, they implement HRM in a conservative way (Brewster & Larsen, 2000). Regarding support, FLMs are not always sufficiently supported in order to implement HRM effectively (Cunningham & Hyman, 1999; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Harris *et al.*, 2002; Thornhill & Saunders, 1998). Finally, FLMs cannot always rely on clear HR-related policies and procedures. The policies and procedures either do not tell for which HR issues the FLMs are responsible or how these HR responsibilities should be handled (Brewster & Larsen, 2000; Gennard & Kelly, 1997; McGovern *et al.*, 1997; Hall & Torrington, 1998; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007).

Sub-question 3: Of which contextual factors does an organisational context comprise, and how are these contextual factors related to the interfering factors, according to the literature?

According to the HRM literature (e.g. Jackson *et al.*, 1989; Jackson & Schuler, 1995), the following organisational contextual factors are related to HRM:

- Organisational structure
- Business strategy
- Technology
- Size
- Culture

These organisational contextual factors are related to the HR system of an organisation (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). In general, the HR system consists of an HR philosophy, HR policies, HR practices and (allocation of) HR roles (Schuler, 1992). The vertical integration between the business strategy and the HR system is one of the many examples that demonstrate that the organisational context is related to the HR system. When taking a closer look at the HR literature, it becomes clear that the HRM literature does not address a direct relationship between the organisational contextual factors and the interfering factors. However, the HR system is related to the interfering factors to some extent. This can be said, because the HR system consists of intended HR policies and practices that are implemented by FLMs. However, a discrepancy can occur between the intended HR policies and practices and the actual HR policies and practices that are implemented by line managers (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Truss & Gratton, 1994; Wright & Snell, 1998). Such a discrepancy can be the result of an ineffective HR implementation. In the end, a possible discrepancy could be a result of the

interfering factors and therefore, the HR system (intended policies and practices) is related to the interfering factors. Therefore, the HR system is the intermediating variable between the internal organisational context and the interfering factors.

Sub-question 4: Which interfering factors do the teamcoaches experience as being present or hindering and how can this situation be explained based upon the organisational context?

In general, the teamcoaches experience all interfering factors as hindering to some extent, except the factor desire. The factor desire is not hindering, which means that the teamcoaches are not reluctant to implement HRM. This is demonstrated by the fact that teamcoaches are personally motivated, because they like it to get involved with people, because implementing HRM makes their job divers or because they have the opinion that implementing HRM contributes to the performance of their teams. Besides that, they experience institutional reinforcement as well, because all their HR-related performances are directly or indirectly appraised. Short-termism is present, however, does not make teamcoaches unwilling to implement HRM. Short-termism only results into the fact that HR activities are postponed. The willingness of teamcoaches is mainly influenced by the HR system, business strategy and organisational culture. The HR system mainly influences institutional reinforcement (performance appraisal). The business strategy and organisational culture influence personal motivation (contribution of HR activities to the team).

The factor capacity, however, is interfering to some extent. The teamcoaches indicated that the actual time spent on implementing HRM is not the same as the time they would like to spend; they spent less time on HRM than is needed. Teamcoaches already spent most of their time on people-oriented HR activities and making a personnel planning. In the end, they want to spend even more time on these HR activities. Teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection and distribution of the mail experience a capacity hindrance to the largest extent. In general, teamcoaches indicated that a capacity hindrance is experienced when operational pressures or personnel planning problems are present, in combination with the fact that some teamcoaches are not capable to effectively plan their jobs. Solving operational pressures and personnel planning problems take time that otherwise could be spend on implementing HRM. Teamcoaches need to prioritise and effectively arrange their jobs in order to cope with solving (operational) problems and implementing HRM.

The factor capacity is mainly influenced by the span of control (organisational structure) and the degree of routines (technology), because these organisational context factors influence the pastime of teamcoaches.

The factor competencies is interfering to some extent. In general, teamcoaches indicated that their HR-related competencies are sufficient. The training courses are sufficient in terms of quality and amounts. Besides that, the experience of teamcoaches is sufficient as well. They attended a sufficient amount of trainings, because one of the main points of the HR policy of the BU Operations is to develop and train the first and second line managers. Besides that, the teamcoaches indicated to have gained a sufficient amount of HR-related experience, because most teamcoaches work as a line manager for more than 5 years or even more than 10 years.

Starting teamcoaches, however, experience a competency hindrance to some extent. They are not sufficiently experienced. Besides that, a group of starting teamcoaches does not attend any elementary HR-related training courses. In the end, the real problem seems to be that the HR policy is not implemented as it was intended in advance. This seems to the case, because the HR policy states that teamcoaches need to be offered an basic line education for teamcoaches. This situation is influenced by the fact that the HR policy needs to be implemented through different management layers in a sequential way.

The factor support is interfering to some extent as well. The teamcoaches indicated that the actual support lives up to the support they need in a quantitative and qualitative way. This can be explained by the fact that HR and the line have a shared responsibility when it comes to implementing HRM. Next to that, the Service Provider role (Caldwell, 2004) is allocated to the HR consultants, who offer support to the teamcoaches. Besides that, the HR department is not only centrally located but is decentralised as well. This results in the fact that the HR department is a staff function in the area's and a near-located support source for line managers. Finally, the BU Operations and the HR department employ a considerable amount of employees and therefore, the teamcoaches can rely on a sufficient amount of potential supporters.

Pre-support, however, seems to be interfering to some extent. A part of the teamcoaches does not know to which person they can go when they need to be supported on a particular HR topic. This can be explained by the fact that the BU Operations is rather large (in size). Besides that, a substantial part of the teamcoaches collection can not rely on an HR specialist during the evenings.

Finally, the factor policies & procedures seems to be interfering to some extent. The teamcoaches know for which HR issues they are responsible, because they learned this during HR-related training courses or because they gained this knowledge due to experience. Teamcoaches only experience a role uncertainty when they are confronted with particular or rare HR issues. This is not remarkable though, because teamcoaches implement HRM based upon their experience.

What seems to be interfering to a larger extent, is the fact that HR procedures have not been clearly communicated. First, a group of teamcoaches have never seen an HR procedure or do not know that HR procedures have been set up. Second, a group of teamcoaches who are aware of the fact that HR procedures have been set up, face difficulties with finding those HR procedures. This communication problems occur, because the source of the HR procedures, the intranet of TNT Mail, is too voluminous. Therefore, teamcoaches cannot (easily) find the HR procedures due to an information overload.

Finally, the teamcoaches indicated that they do not implement HRM consistently. This can be explained by the fact that teamcoaches mainly implement HRM based upon the HR-related experience they have gained and not based upon standardised HR procedures.

6.2 Research model & general conclusions

In general, the applied research model is suitable to study the interfering factors and the relatedness of those interfering factors with the internal organisational context, HR system and each other.

As was expected, the internal organisational context influences the HR system to some extent. The HR system is mainly influenced by the business strategy, organisational culture and organisational structure. Technology and company size should also influence the HR system, as was expected in advance. However, this was not explicitly demonstrated during this research.

The HR system influences all interfering factors, as was expected in advance. However, the interfering factors are not influenced in the same way. The factors desire, competencies and policies and procedures are mainly influenced by the HR philosophy, policies and procedures. The factors capacity and support are mainly influenced by the allocation of HR roles.

The internal organisational context influences the interfering factors in an indirect and direct way. As was expected in advance, the internal organisational context influences the interfering indirectly, with the HR system as an intermediating variable. Therefore, the business strategy, organisational culture and organisational structure are the internal context factors which indirectly influence the interfering factors. Besides that, the internal organisational context directly influences the interfering factors as well. The results showed that e.g. the business strategy directly influences the willingness to implement HRM and e.g. the organisational structure (span of control) directly influences the capacity of FLMs to implement HRM. All context variables influence at least one interfering factor. As was not expected, these results show that direct relations between the internal organisational context and the interfering factors should be studied as well.

As was not expected in advance, the characteristics of FLMs also influence the interfering factors. In some occasions, these characteristics are more influential than the internal organisational context. In general, influential FLMs' characteristics are e.g. years of experience as a line manager and time management behaviour. This research demonstrated that FLMs' characteristics should also be taken into account when interfering factors are studied.

Besides the internal organisational context and FLMs' characteristics, the interfering factors also influence each other to a large extent. These relationships show that vicious or virtuous circles can show up, in which the interfering factors reinforce each other.

In the end, this research confirmed assumptions and propositions to some extent that were mentioned in advance. However, new insights are gained as well. The most important ones are summarised below.

Regarding desire, it was not expected that personal motivation is the main determinant of the factor desire. Institutional reinforcement serves as a strong 'backup' if personal motivation is not present. In other words, institutional reinforcement is complementary to personal motivation, if personal motivation is not present. Therefore, these findings gained insight into the fact that the factor desire should be measured by cumulating the degree of personal motivation and institutional reinforcement, if personal motivation regarding specific HR activities is lacking. As was not expected on forehand, short-termism resulted into a postponement of HR activities and not into an unwillingness to implement HRM. It seems that personal motivation and institutional reinforcement gain the day over short-termism. Therefore, a lack of personal motivation and institutional reinforcement seem to be a necessary precondition in order to let short-termism affect the willingness to implement HRM.

Regarding capacity, the pastime of HR activities seems to be influenced by the personal motivation of teamcoaches to execute HR activities. This was not expected in advance and demonstrated by previous research. The main point of attention regarding capacity, is the fact that the time to implement HRM is not only affected by 'hard' capacity issues like lack of spare time or work overload. As was not expected in advance, 'soft' capacity issues, like the abilities to prioritise or to arrange jobs effectively (which are called time management behaviours), also heavily influence the factor capacity. Therefore, it is necessary to measure these issues as well, in order to determine the hindrances that affect the capacity to implement HRM. Besides that, as an indicator of a 'hard' capacity issue, the number of tasks of FLMs could be lowered in order to decrease a capacity hindrance. Remarkably, however, teamcoaches do not want to let go of most of their responsibilities.

Regarding competencies, both trainings and experience are good determinants for the factor competencies, as was expected in advance. As was not expected in advance, HR-related training courses and experience do not contribute to HR-related competencies of FLMs in the same way and to the same extent. Training courses only lay the elementary basis for HR-related competencies. However, experience determines the HR-related competencies of FLMs to the largest extent. In the end, experience mainly develops the HR-related competencies that are internalised during training courses. Besides that, it was expected that conservatism measures the HR-related competencies of FLMs as well. On an average, this is true. Handling HR issues based upon common-sense is a sufficient measure, and the same goes for degree of up-to-date HR knowledge. However, the degree of up-to-date HR knowledge should not only be measured by the extent to which trainings have been followed recently. The degree of up-to-date HR knowledge should also be measured by the degree of actual support.

The degree whether the actual support lives up to the needed support as a measure is sufficient to determine the interference of the factor support. However, pre-support, e.g. getting into contact with an HR specialists, can be interfering as well. This finding should also be taken into account in order to determine the interference of the factor support. As was expected in advance, FLMs are supported

through advisory services and partnerships. As was not expected in advance, FLMs receive advisory services regarding less persistent or routine HR issues. However, teamcoaches and HR specialists engage into a partnership in order to solve persistent or rare HR issues. Finally, as was not expected in advance, the source of support can be interfering as well. Therefore, actual support by non-HR specialists should also be measured in order to measure the interference of the factor support.

Regarding policies and procedures, a possible role uncertainty is not only determined by the policies and procedures. As was not expected in advance, training courses and experience also influence a possible role uncertainty. As was expected, HRM is inconsistently implemented. However, this can be caused by the fact HR procedures have not been clearly communicated. This seems to be a necessary condition in order to establish a consistent implementation of HRM. Besides that, another measure that should be taken into account in order to measure a consistent HR implementation is coordination by the HR department. Finally, the communication of HR procedures is influenced by the degree of information overload. This was not expected in advance.

6.3 Limitations and further research

The five interfering factors that were studied, offered a valuable insight into the extent to which the teamcoaches at TNT are hindered in implementing HRM effectively. Next to that, the internal organisational context also gave explanations why an interfering factor is hindering or why not. However, during the research, I also experienced several limitations.

First of all, the results and conclusions that came forward out of this study can not be generalised for other FLMs, because the results and conclusions are company-specific to a large extent. First of all, TNT as a company is constantly changing and the workforce that is supervised by the teamcoaches is also subject to change. Therefore, the hindrances that are perceived are supposed to be of another nature than the hindrances that are perceived by e.g. FLMs who supervise a stable workforce. Second, the population of teamcoaches at TNT is rather experienced and this also has an influence on e.g. the factor competencies. Therefore, this population of FLMs is not completely representative for all FLMs.

Besides that, the response rate of 88 (37%) was too small to thoroughly study differences between groups of teamcoaches. More quantitative data (or a higher response rate) is needed to compare different groups of teamcoaches with each other.

Regarding the measurement of the interfering factors, only the experiences or insights of the teamcoaches are measured. In other words, the measurement of the interfering factors is too subjective. For instance, regarding the factor competencies. It is up to the teamcoaches to assess their own level of HR-related competencies. However, this might be biased, because teamcoaches might not want to admit that their HR-related competencies are insufficient. For instance, a teamcoach indicated: "I am not going show my own incompetence". A better indicator of the HR-related competencies would be to e.g. conduct some kind of HR-related cognitive test or assessment in order to get a more objective insight into the competencies of the teamcoaches.

The internal organisational context, and especially the HR system, provided valuable insights into the explanations for the hindrances that are caused by the interfering factors. However, it would be better if the internal organisational context was measured in a quantitative way, in order to be able to conduct regression analyses between constructs that are related to the organisational context and the interfering factors. During this research I could only come up with explanations based upon assumptions regarding the internal organisational context. However, it would be even more useful if these assumptions could be tested in a quantitative way. In other words, the degree of influence of the organisational context cannot be studied, because the organisational context is only limitedly quantifiable.

Besides these suggestion regarding further research, the results of this study also demonstrated that the measure instruments should be altered to some extent. First of all, the factor desire should be measured by cumulating the measures personal motivation and institutional reinforcement, if personal motivation is lacking. This is argued, because it is shown that institutional reinforcement acts as a

backup, if personal motivation is lacking. Second, the factor capacity should not only be measured by 'hard' capacity issues like work overload or a discrepancy between the actual time and time needed. 'Soft' HR issues like time management behaviours should also be taken into account in order to measure the factor capacity. Third, the factor support should not only measure whether actual support meets needed support. The results showed that the phase before the actual support is offered can be interfering as well. Therefore, the measure pre-support should be taken into account as well.

During this research, I only took into account the organisational context variables as determinants of the HR system. However, the internal organisational context also directly influences the interfering factors. These direct relationships should also be studied when the interfering factors are studied. Besides the internal organisational context, it seems that personal characteristics of the teamcoaches are also important determinants. For instance, the competencies to make a decent planning or to prioritise were not variables that were taken into account in the theoretical framework. However, this variable seemed to have an influence on the factor capacity to a large extent. Therefore, further research could be more elaborative in order to study the influence of personal characteristics on the interfering factors..

Not only the personal characteristics seem to influence the interfering factors. I think that developments in HRM and especially the rise of electronic HRM or e-HRM also have a substantial influence as well. For instance, the communication of the HR procedures on the intranet made it difficult for teamcoaches to find the HR procedures they needed, because there seems to be an information overload on the intranet. Next to that, it could also be the case that the use of intranets could influence the support that is needed by FLMs. Besides that other e-HR instruments, like e-learning could influence the competencies of FLMs. Therefore, the influence of ICT and e-HRM should also be taken into account when further research is conducted regarding the interfering factors.

Finally, one limitation of this research is, that almost all respondents (interviews and questionnaire) are experienced line managers. Because of that, I could not get a thorough insight into the experiences of the starting teamcoaches. The research demonstrated that e.g. the years of experience of the teamcoaches is related to the degree of hindrance of the factor competencies. Next to that, other factors like support, capacity and policies & procedures could also be influenced by the years of experience. For instance, experience could be related to the fact whether teamcoaches might find the HR procedures they need. However, too little teamcoaches with a limited amount of experience were taken into account during this research, in order to come up with decent results about these relationships.

7 Recommendations

The recommendations that will be presented next are set up in order to cope with the hindrances of the interfering factors that were identified during this research.

1) Offer a time management training course

The results show that a group of teamcoaches does not engage in time management behaviour. As a result of that, these teamcoaches perceive a capacity hindrance. In order to decrease a capacity hindrance, a time management (TM) training course should be offered to teamcoaches who are not able to prioritise and effectively arrange their jobs.

In general, the TM training course should address the following dimensions: (1) goal setting and prioritisation, (2) mechanics of time management and (3) preference for organisation. The first dimension deals with the ability to prioritise and set goals. Mechanics of time management deal with the use of time management tools, like e.g. priority lists, planning lists or schedules. Finally, preference for organisation deals with the fact that a person has organised his context in such a way that he or she works in a structured way.

This implies that teamcoaches should not only be offered time management tools, like e.g. schedules or priority lists. The TM training course should also make teamcoaches aware of the basics of time management. Therefore, teamcoaches should be learned to manage their time in a way that they spend their time on things that are important to them in the long, mid-long and short run. In order to do so, teamcoaches need to learn the following aspects during the time management training course:

1. Develop a vision of putting things first
2. Set up goals of things to do in the mid-long run
3. Develop a decision-making framework for a time span of a week
4. Set up a daily planning
5. Evaluation of the pastime

First of all, the teamcoaches need to learn that they need to develop a long-term vision and mid-term goals if they want to be able to arrange their working hours in an effective way. In other words, they need to know which issues need to be put first if they want to effectively arrange their working hours. This long-term vision and mid-term goals can be based upon the agreements that have been set up between the teamcoach and the supervisor.

After this has been made clear to the teamcoaches, the time management training course should offer the teamcoaches practical instruments in order to effectively arrange their working hours. First of all, the teamcoaches have to be able to develop a decision-making framework for a working week that ties the long-term vision with the urgency of the day. The teamcoaches should become aware that particular goals should not be planned on a particular hour during the week, but that a list of priorities needs to be set up. Therefore, teamcoaches should be taught to make a priority list of issues that need to be handled at the end of the week. In other words, the teamcoaches need to learn to watch for the right time when the opportunity arises to work out the to do list of priorities. In order to do so, the teamcoaches should be able to combine operational pressures and the priorities that are situated on the to-do-list. Therefore, the teamcoaches should preview the day in order to look for possible operational pressures. These operational pressures should be prioritised as well, next to the priorities on the to do list. All these priorities should be listed on a T planning for the day. Time-sensitive priorities can be listed on one side, priorities that can be performed any time of the day or the following day can be listed on the other side. This daily T planning, serves as some kind of backup for the teamcoaches in order to prevent that operational pressures gain priority over other priorities that need to be attained at the end of the fortnight. Finally, the teamcoaches need to learn that they have to

evaluate their pastime at the end of the week; did they do the things they needed to do first, what challenges did they encounter, which decisions were made and how can the coming week be planned better? They need to do so, in order to make a new week planning again (in a better way).

2) Place collection employees under the supervision of a teamcoach collection

The teamcoaches who are responsible for both the collection and distribution experience a capacity hindrance to the largest extent. The teamcoaches who were interviewed, indicated that they were mainly responsible for the distribution process. Therefore, the core business of these teamcoaches is the distribution of the mail and not collection. Because of that, I would recommend to devolve the collection responsibilities to the teamcoaches who are responsible for collection. Therefore, the collection employees need to be placed under the supervision of a teamcoach collection as well.

By placing the collection employees under the supervision of a teamcoach collection the span of control of the teamcoaches who are responsible for both processes is decreasing. Next to that, this recommendation should lead to the fact that the teamcoaches who are responsible for both processes are not confronted with a time space capacity any more, because they do not have to stay longer at the business establishment in order to supervise the collection employees.

In order to place the collection employees under the supervision of the teamcoaches collection, I would recommend to hire part-time teamcoaches collection. Next to that the collection employees could be placed under the supervision of a teamcoaches who is already responsible for the collection process. However, there should be watched over the fact that the span of control of the teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection process does not transcend the average span of control of the teamcoaches. In order to prevent this problem, I recommend to hire part-time teamcoaches collection who supervise those collection employees who do not fall under the supervision of the teamcoaches collection who are employed right now.

3) Set up a standard training programme for starting teamcoaches

The experienced teamcoaches indicated that they found it important to follow elementary training courses when they started working as a teamcoach because these trainings laid the basis for their HR-related competencies. It seems, however, that a substantial part of the starting teamcoaches does not attend these trainings when they start working as a teamcoach. Therefore, I would recommend that a standard training programme for starting teamcoaches needs to be set up, that takes into account (at least) elementary HR-related trainings. It is the responsibility of the supervisors of the teamcoaches and the HR consultants to ensure that starting teamcoaches attend the standard training programme for starting teamcoaches. Therefore, the supervisor and especially the HR consultant should be aware of the content of this standard training programme. In order to ensure that all starting teamcoaches attend this training programme, I would recommend to motivate the supervisors and HR consultants through institutional reinforcement. In other words, the HR consultant and supervisor should be appraised on the fact whether a starting teamcoach attends the standard training programme.

Next to that, I would recommend that the standard training programme is offered to the teamcoaches in a tailored way, during the second stage of the development track of the teamcoaches. During this stage, the supervisor and the HR consultant should analyse, based upon a checklist of elementary HR-related competencies, together with the teamcoach, on which elementary (HR) issues the teamcoach needs to develop him- or herself. In the end, it is the responsibility of the HR managers and senior HR advisors central to accommodate the devolvment of HR activities. Therefore, it is their responsibility that HR consultants are provided with the checklist of elementary HR-related competencies. However, a checklist alone is not sufficient to accommodate devolution. The senior advisors central should also 'sell' the standard training programme to the HR consultants. This should be done, in order to make them aware of the possible HR-related trainings that contribute to the elementary HR-related competencies of the teamcoaches. In the end, the teamcoaches can chose

those training courses which develop those competencies that were insufficient according to the checklist. Therefore, the checklist, training programme and institutional reinforcement should result into the fact that the HR policy regarding development of (starting) teamcoaches is consistently implemented and that elementary HR-related competencies of starting teamcoaches are less interfering.

After this training programme, a teamcoach can develop him- or herself on issues that are taken into account in the personal development plan that has been set up with the supervisor of the teamcoach.

The content of this training course can be based upon the insights of the experienced teamcoaches. In other words, take into account those elementary HR-related trainings that were valued by the experienced teamcoaches. During the interviews, it became clear that the teamcoaches needed elementary trainings on the administration tools Harmony and HeRMES. Besides that, starting and experienced teamcoaches indicated that they find it important to be trained on conversation techniques or managing their workforce. This practically means that the training programme of starting teamcoaches should consist of trainings that are related to executing Harmony and HeRMES. And next to that, the training programme should consist of trainings that are related to the inflow of employees, the development of employees and people management. More concretely, starting teamcoaches need to receive a training on: selection interviews, job evaluation conversations, work meetings, absence conversations, correction conversations and solving conflicts.

4) The HR consultant should be the primary Service Provider

There are too many possible supporters that could support the teamcoaches. Therefore, teamcoaches would be confronted with too many primary 'supporters'. In the end, this results into the fact that pre-support is hindering. In order to avoid this, only one primary 'supporter' is needed. I would argue that the HR consultants should be the primary supporter or Service Provider. They are the ones who are in frequent contact with (secondary) Service Providers. Therefore, the HR consultants are able to put through or match the teamcoaches with secondary Service Providers, like TNT Mobility, social workers, facility desk, etc.

5) Develop a list of HR contact persons

However, the HR consultant does not always offer the needed support. Besides that, HR consultants are not always accessible. Finally, the teamcoaches indicated that they mainly go to their direct colleagues (supervisor, mailmen + and teamcoaches). However, these employees do not possess the same degree of HR expertise as HR specialists do. Therefore, I would recommend to set up a list with HR specialists that can be contacted when it comes to a particular HR subject. This can be a A4 paper with the names of the HR specialists, their field of expertise, their telephone number, email address and location. This list can be distributed to the teamcoaches.

During the interviews, it became clear that the teamcoaches mainly want to be supported on specific personnel problems, regulations and labour agreements. More specifically, they wanted to be supported on the following issues:

- Wages and contracts
- Leaves and sabbaticals
- Absence through illness
- Correction of non-cooperative employees
- Mobility and outflow of employees
- Dismissal of employees
- Regulations regarding conflicts
- HeRMES / Harmony

The teamcoaches indicated that they went to the following supporters besides their direct colleagues:

- HR SSC
- TNT Mobility
- HR&O Area
 - Advisor labour conditions
 - Senior HR advisor
 - Personnel assistant
 - Duty-roster assistant
- HR consultants
- Facility or help desk
- Social workers

It has to be kept in mind, however, that the teamcoaches mainly go to their direct colleagues and therefore, might are not aware which HR specialists can support them as well. Therefore, it has to be clear first, which HR specialists are experts on which HR issues, before the list of HR specialists can be developed. An example of a list of HR contact persons can be found in appendix 6.

6) HR-hotline after 5 o'clock p.m.

Some teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection of the mail indicated that they could not rely on support after 5 o'clock p.m. These problems occurred at least in the area North-West. Therefore, I would recommend the following. I think that HR consultants (who support the teamcoaches collection) should be accessible by telephone up till 9 o'clock p.m. It could also be possible that the working hours of these HR consultants are altered, however, this solution would be overdone. Such a solution would be overdone, because the working hours of the teamcoaches collection and the HR consultants that support them, have a sufficient amount of overlap. First of all, most teamcoaches who are responsible for the collection process start working around 2 o'clock p.m. During this period, the teamcoach is not engaging in the collection process, because this process starts around 5 o'clock p.m. Therefore, the teamcoach has a least three hours to plan an appointment with an HR consultant. Next to that, the teamcoach has the ability to contact an HR consultant as well during the first three working hours. Therefore, the teamcoach collection has enough time to ask for support between 2 and 5 o'clock p.m. However, after 5 o'clock the collection process starts. After this moment, the teamcoach is primarily engaging in managing the collection process. Because of that, the teamcoach is not able to plan an appointment with an HR consultant to some extent. And therefore, it is overdone if the HR consultants should remain at his or her office if the collection process starts. However, during this process, the teamcoach can be confronted with HR issues as well on which he or she needs to be supported. Therefore, it is always necessary to have an HR backup in the form of an HR consultant who is accessible. Next to that, the teamcoach can also decide to work on HR activities if the collection process is stable. In this situation it should be possible that he or she is supported by an HR consultant as well.

Therefore, I would recommend that the HR consultants who support the teamcoaches collection should be accessible by telephone up till 9 o'clock in order to support the teamcoaches if they need to be advised. Because of that, the teamcoaches can be advised during the second part of their working hours as well, if the HR consultant is not in-house. By adapting this solution, the teamcoaches can be supported through advisory and consultancy services before the collection process starts (at 5 o'clock p.m.) and through advisory service during the collection process.

7) Intranet portal for teamcoaches

The main hindrance regarding policies and procedures, is that the HR procedures are not communicated effectively, because the teamcoaches can not find or experience difficulties with finding

the HR procedures on the intranet. The intranet seems to be too voluminous. In the end, this results into an information overload. In order to overcome an information overload, it is needed that information is tailored to each group of users. Therefore, I would recommend that a part of the intranet is reserved for the communication of HR procedures and HR forms to the teamcoaches. These HR procedures are already placed on the intranet, however in an segmented and non-tailored way. More concretely, the an intranet portal for teamcoaches needs to be developed. This intranet portal should contain links to the HR procedures and forms that are 'scattered' over the intranet. By doing so, the communication of the HR procedures is tailored to the situation of the teamcoaches and therefore, the teamcoaches do not have to search in information that is irrelevant for them.

Besides the HR procedures and forms, the intranet of TNT Mail also contains (HR-related) information about checklists, work instruction, etc. This information is also relevant for teamcoaches and links to these information sources can also be placed on the intranet portal for teamcoaches.

Finally, the HR contact list (recommendation 5) can also be onto the intranet portal.

In the end, to limit the search process on the intranet portal, I would argue make sub-sites that contain all information (procedures, forms, instructions, etc.) about one subject (e.g. absence trough illness, collective labour agreements, etc.)

8) Coordination by HR consultants

HRM is not consistently implemented by teamcoaches. In order to ensure a consistent implementation of HRM, the HR department should coordinate the actions of teamcoaches (see p. 95). In the end, this should be the main responsibility of the HR consultants, because they are the ones who are in direct contact with teamcoaches. Besides that, HR consultants and teamcoaches have a shared responsibility when it comes to implementing HRM. Therefore, the HR consultants are the ones who are able to monitor and coordinate the implementation of HRM by teamcoaches.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Administration list of teamcoaches

130 postcodetelling	Antwoordnummers
PVK telling	Coorzenden postzendingen Faillissement en Schuldsanering
SAP SRM (AC)	Procedure huren Depots
AC rapportage	Bezorgrapporten postbezorgers
Realisatie verkeer	Depeche (Uitpakken)
analyseren en bijsturen obv dagsturing	Controle op zakboekjes, VBG MT
Inzetplanning Zomer & KNJ (AC)	Behandelen beschadigde zendingen
Saldo plus en minuren bewaken	Bedrijven gesloten op maandag/zaterdag
Verwerken datamodel	Woningbrievenbussen
Beheer wekrapportage sorteercentrum	Gerachtelijke brieven (afrekenen)
Beheer dashboard Sortering	Omni-stickers (ja/nee stickers)
SOX (Clarity)	Steunpuntadressen
Behandelen incidentmeldingen (IRIS)	Controle/aanwerken distributielijsten/archiveren
Admie in-uitgave postbussen	MAC zendijnen controle
Admie volledigheidcheck postbussen	Controle Inse frankieermachine post
Barp controle	Inputmeting outputs (Outputmeting)
MAC (medewerkers motivatie onderzoek)	Opmaak Beheer kleine kas
C.A.P.P.	Zero Defects HBB (Halen, Brengen, Buslichting)
Beheer Kennistesten	Controle gebruik mobiele telefoon chauffeur
Proeve van Bekwaamheid	Controle buslichting
sociale barometer	Haalbaarheidsverzoeken uitzetten en beantwoorden
Harmony	Administratie subcontractors
IPR invoeren, bewaken pingedrag, uitvoering	C.P.P. (gefrankeerde post postzegels)
verzuimgesprekken	Opnemen tellerstander Frankieermachines
Ziekmeldingsgesprek	Concurrentie post
Poortwachter	Beheer winkelassortiment (Vorradacontroles Bupo)
Sociaal Medisch Overleg (SMO)	Beheren kas Bupo
RAO (rekenmodel anders organiseren)	Terugploegen
Beheren, bewaken, uitvoeren ARBO	Spiegelen
BHV (Borgen bhv-cyclus, oefenen-opleiden, ontruimen)	Bestellingen Bupo
Uitvoeren lijncontroles ARBO	Depeche verzending
Integrale Walking Around (IWA)	SLA
Teamperatuurmeting	Digitaal
werkoeverleg	KNJ sharepoint
Webform/PZN formulieren	Wagenparkbeheer FIS (Heatsight,BOCO rapportages)
POP-gesprek	beheer/registratie tankpassen
Ontruimingsoefening (plannen, bewaken en uitvoeren)	Middelenrapportage
Werving personeel	Beheer dienst bromfietsen
Beheer / mutaties ITP (appl.)	Huren van (incidentele) auto's
P.C.S. Beheer	Wagenpark onderhoud
Zetlijst om werkzaamheden	Beheer Brievenbussen (oranje brievenbussen)

VBS Beheer	Beheer schadeadministratie
Dagrapport, PRS (Product Registratie Systeem)	Controlle/invullen rittenbriefjes voertuigen
Kwaliteitsmeting postbussen	Beheer middelen, rondruimer
Meethuis Kwaliteit (uitvoeren metingen)	Kleding bestellen
SKS Metingen	Beheren weegapparatuur (Kalibratie)
Klacht CRM (uitzetten, bewaken, terugkoppelen)	Controle op juistheid vrachthief (EYRA)
Navragen behandelen	Registratie: gas, water en elektra
Integrale voortgangmodel IVM (invullen ervan)	Registratie vullingsgraad afvalscheiding
invullen voortgang jaarplan	Beheer Milieu zorgboek
procesbeheersingstoets en risicoanalyse	Registratie, uitvoeren actie milieu jaarplan
documentbeheer	Code Slot
opvolging van interne audits en checks	Openings/sluit ronde
Volumе voorspelsysteem	Registratie controle legitimatie bewijs
Dashboard sorteren (decentraal)	Sleutel beheer
WAP	Documentbeveiliging
Porten administratie (AP4)	Beheer handboek Beveiliging
OGS (Dogs)	Bedrijfskaarten TNT Post (Aanvraag legitimatiebewijs)
Doorzenden postzendingen adreswijziging	Facilitydesk meldingen (na Matr/meub./ reparatie)
Bewaren postzendingen	Schoonmaak(bewaken prestatie, evaluatie)

Source: Rationalisation Administration Operations

Appendix 2: HR responsibilities of the teamcoaches

Recruitment and selection

Making a planning of the need for employees
Sending a recruitment request
Invite applicants
Conducting job interviews
Register and introduce new employee

Performance interview

Input performance interview
Conducting performance interview
Working out performance interview
Sending report performance interview

Handling absenteeism

Input absenteeism conversation
Conducting absenteeism conversation with employee
Work out the absenteeism conversation
Sending report of the absenteeism conversation

Handling employees inconvenient employees

Making an appointment with inconvenient employees
Case manager before and after 6 weeks of
Inconvenience
Absence interviews
Developing plan of action
Intervision

Mobility and outflow of employees

Distribution of external vacancies
Sending a request for the outflow of an employee
Conducting individual conversations about outflow
Synchronising with TNT Mobility about (dis)abilities
and trainings
Evaluation interviews about mobility track of employees

Other administrative HR activities

Registration of leave hours
Conducting ARBO controls
Social barometer
Employee motivation assessment
Updating personnel information

Assessment interview

Input assessment interview
Conducting assessment interview
Working out assessment interview
Sending report assessment interview

Development of employees

Input personal development program
Conducting personal development program
interview
Sending report personal development
program interview
Give input for new development programs and
assessing quality of those programs

Personnel planning

Making personnel planning in Harmony
Import actual personnel hours in Harmony
Planning personnel utilisation during
Christmas and New Year
Making personnel planning during the summer
Managing the holiday planning of personnel

Appendix 3: Letters and reminders to teamcoaches

Appendix 3.1: Letter with background information regarding questionnaire

Den Haag, juni 2008

Beste collega,

Als verantwoordelijke voor HR&O (human resources & organisatie) ben ik geïnteresseerd in uw ervaringen bij het uitvoeren van uw managementverantwoordelijkheden ten aanzien van HR. Hierbij kunt u bijvoorbeeld denken aan het houden van een koffiepraatje of een verzuimgesprek. Wij willen graag in kaart brengen hoe u als teamcoach deze managementverantwoordelijkheden ervaart en of u zich hierin voldoende ondersteund voelt door de afdeling HR&O. Het uiteindelijke doel van dit onderzoek is daarom ook om meer inzicht in uw ervaringen en belevingen te krijgen. Omdat het om uw ervaringen gaat, zou ik u willen vragen om uw medewerking aan dit onderzoek. Het onderzoek bestaat uit een vragenlijst, die als bijlage bij deze brief is gevoegd. Ik vraag u vriendelijk om deze vragenlijst in te vullen en voor woensdag 2 juli op te sturen naar de Universiteit Twente. Er is een retourenvelop bijgevoegd waarmee u de vragenlijst kan versturen.

Op basis van de resultaten van het onderzoek wordt bekeken of en hoe we u vanuit de afdeling HR&O beter kunnen ondersteunen in uw lijnverantwoordelijkheden ten aanzien van HR. Het onderzoek wordt uitgevoerd door Jeroen Meijerink (stagiair HR&O Productie / student Universiteit Twente) en Anna Nehles (promovenda aan de Universiteit Twente).

Wij vinden het belangrijk dat u zich vrij voelt om de vragenlijst in te vullen. Daarom zijn vertrouwelijkheid en anonimiteit gegarandeerd. De vragenlijst die u invult zal daarom ook rechtstreeks worden gestuurd naar de Universiteit Twente. Bij het verwerken van de vragenlijsten zullen uw persoonlijke gegevens losgekoppeld worden van de antwoorden die u heeft gegeven en daarmee anoniem worden behandeld.

Na afloop van het onderzoek ontvangt u een samenvatting van de resultaten.

Mag ik u bij voorbaat hartelijk danken voor het invullen van de vragenlijst en het versturen naar de Universiteit Twente door middel van de bijgevoegde retourenvelop? Mocht u nog vragen hebben, dan is Jeroen Meijerink (06-18582642) altijd bereid u de nodige informatie te geven.

Met vriendelijk groet,

<NAAM>
Directeur HR&O

Voor meer informatie: Jeroen Meijerink (jeroen.meijerink@tntpost.nl of 06-1858XXXX)

Appendix 3.2: Reminder 1 (e-mail)

Beste collega,

vorige week heeft u in het kader van het onderzoek naar managementverantwoordelijkheden ten aanzien van HR een vragenlijst ontvangen (envelop op uw werkadres) met het verzoek om deze ingevuld retour te sturen. Om een duidelijk beeld te krijgen van de ervaringen van onze teamcoaches is het van belang dat er voldoende vragenlijsten worden ingevuld en ingestuurd. Ik wil u dan ook vragen, indien u de vragenlijst nog niet heeft ingevuld, om dit alsnog te doen en terug te sturen voor woensdag 2 juli*.

Ik wil u graag bedanken voor uw medewerking. Mocht u nog vragen hebben, dan kunt u contact opnemen met Jeroen Meijerink, stagiair Universiteit Twente en betrokken bij dit onderzoek, via jeroen.meijerink@tntpost.nl of telefonisch via (06) 1858 XXXX

Met vriendelijke groet,

<NAAM>
Directeur HR&O

** Mocht u de vragenlijst inmiddels hebben ingevuld, dan wil ik u hartelijk danken voor uw medewerking en kunt u dit bericht als niet verzonden beschouwen. Omdat de vragenlijsten anoniem zijn kunnen wij niet zien wie de vragenlijsten hebben teruggestuurd.*

Appendix 3.2: Reminder 2 (e-mail)

Beste collega,

twee weken geleden heeft u in het kader van het onderzoek naar managementverantwoordelijkheden ten aanzien van HR een vragenlijst ontvangen met het verzoek om deze ingevuld retour te sturen.

Mocht u nog geen tijd hebben gehad om de vragenlijst in te vullen en terug te sturen, dan heeft u tot en met woensdag 2 juli a.s. de tijd om dit alsnog te doen*. Het zou jammer zijn als uw mening niet meegenomen kan worden, doordat we uw vragenlijst te laat ontvangen.

Ik wil u alvast bedanken voor uw medewerking. Mocht u nog vragen hebben, dan kunt u contact opnemen met Jeroen Meijerink, stagiair Universiteit Twente en betrokken bij dit onderzoek, via jeroen.meijerink@tntpost.nl of telefonisch via (06) 1858 XXXX.

Met vriendelijke groet,

<NAAM>
Directeur HR&O

** Mocht u de vragenlijst inmiddels hebben ingevuld, dan wil ik u hartelijk danken voor uw medewerking en kunt u dit bericht als niet verzonden beschouwen. Omdat de vragenlijsten anoniem zijn kunnen wij niet zien wie de vragenlijsten hebben teruggestuurd.*

Appendix 4: Interview protocol

Algemene vragen

1. Hoe lang bent u al werkzaam bij TNT Post?
2. Hoe lang bent u al werkzaam als teamcoach?
3. Hoe lang bent u werkzaam in een leidinggevende functie?
4. In welke functie bent u werkzaam? (collectie of bezorgen)
5. Hoeveel mensen werken er onder uw directe verantwoordelijkheid?
6. Wat is uw hoogst opleiding die u heeft voltooid?

HR verantwoordelijkheden

1. Wat verstaat u onder HR verantwoordelijkheden?
2. Voor welke HR taken bent u verantwoordelijk?
 - a. Administratieve taken m.b.t. de medewerkers in uw team
 - b. Personeelsplanning en -mutaties
 - c. Selecteren van potentiële nieuwe werknemers
 - d. Evalueren, trainen en beoordelen van uw medewerkers
 - e. Toepassen en toekennen van CAO-regelingen
 - f. Begeleiding, adviseren en motiveren van uw team

Omschrijving / definitie van HR taken

Vooraf aangeven wat onder het uitvoeren van een HR taak wordt verstaan:

De volgende activiteiten vallen onder 'het uitvoeren van HR taken' en staan in het teken van (1) het maken van een personeelsplanning zodat er ten alle tijden genoeg en gekwalificeerde medewerkers beschikbaar zijn, (2) het bijhouden van personeels administraties (in Harmony, Webforms of HeRMES), (3) het voeren van gesprekken met medewerkers waarin werkoverleg, hun beoordeling en ontwikkeling, (ziekte)verzuim, CAO-bepalingen en uitstroom centraal staan of (4) het zorgen voor een goede werksfeer en waar nodig het verlenen van sociale begeleiding.

Factor: motivatie

Personal motivation

1. Vindt u het leuk om HR taken uit te voeren? Waarom wel/niet?
2. Welke taken vindt u leuk om uit te voeren? En welke niet? Waarom?
3. Vindt u dat het uitvoeren van HR taken een deel van uw functie moet zijn? Waarom wel/niet?
4. Denkt u dat het uitvoeren van HR taken aan de prestaties van uw medewerkers bijdraagt? Waarom wel/niet?

Institutional reinforcement

5. Kunt u ergens in documenten terug vinden (e.g. functiebeschrijving) dat u HR taken moet uitvoeren? Zo ja, in welke? Zo niet, hoe weet u dan dat u HR taken moet uitvoeren?
6. Hoe groot is uw beslissingsbevoegdheid voor wat betreft uw HR taken? Hoe beïnvloedt dit uw motivatie om met uw HR verantwoordelijkheden om te gaan?
7. Wordt u beoordeeld op het uitvoeren van al uw HR taken?
 - a. Op welke taken wordt u beoordeeld? Op welke niet?
 - b. Welke van deze taken probeert u zo goed mogelijk uit te voeren?

Short-termism

8. Aan welke taken (zowel HR als niet HR) moet u volgens uw leidinggevende het meeste aandacht geven?
9. Op welke plek staat 'het uitvoeren van HR taken' op uw prioriteitenlijst?
10. Welke (andere) taken hebben uw hoogste prioriteit?

Internal organisational context

1. Als u naar TNT kijkt als organisatie, wat zijn dan volgens u de belangrijkste doelstellingen TNT? In hoeverre komen uw doelstellingen voor uw team hiermee overeen?
2. Vind u het uitvoeren van bepaalde HR taken voor sommige mensen of groepen gemakkelijker of lastiger dan voor andere mensen of groepen?
3. In welke mate vind u dat de HR taken van de teamcoaches ertoe bijdragen dat TNT betere diensten levert of gaat leveren dan haar concurrenten?
4. Vindt u uzelf en uw medewerkers klantgericht? Kunt u hier voorbeelden van geven?
5. Houden u en uw medewerkers meer van stabiliteit of meer van verandering? Waarom?
6. Beïnvloedt het feit dat er personeelsconsulenten bij u in de buurt werkzaam zijn uw motivatie voor het uitvoeren van HR taken? Zo ja, op welke manier?
7. Wat is uw mening over het aantal mensen waaraan u leiding moet geven? Hoe beïnvloedt dit uw motivatie voor het uitvoeren van HR taken?

Factor: tijd

Time needed vs. actual time spent

1. Hoeveel tijd besteedt u per week/jaar aan het uitvoeren van HR taken?
2. Aan welke HR taken komt u altijd toe?
3. Aan welke HR taken komt u nooit toe? Waardoor komt het dat u nooit aan deze taken toe komt?
 - a. Mijn werkweek zit qua uren al vol
 - b. Ik heb niet genoeg vrije, extra tijd
 - c. Ik heb geen reductie van andere taken gekregen
 - d. Ik moet aan te veel mensen leiding geven.
 - e. Ik heb te veel HR taken.
4. Voor welke taken hebt u meer tijd nodig om ze goed te kunnen uitvoeren? Waarom?
5. Voor welke taken hebt u minder tijd nodig om ze goed te kunnen uitvoeren? Waarom?

Internal organisational context

1. Vindt u het wel eens moeilijk om voor zo veel mensen verantwoordelijk te zijn en aan alle voldoende tijd te besteden? Waaraan merkt u dat?
2. Vind u dat u te veel taken heeft? Zo ja, welke taken zou u graag kwijt zijn?
3. Kunt u het ambitieniveau van uw leidinggevende aangeven? Probeert hij/zij continue te verbeteren en veranderen?
4. Tegen welke moeilijkheden loopt u vaak aan bij de collectie of de distributie van de post? In hoeverre vragen deze problemen veel van uw tijd?
5. Hebt u meestal standaard oplossingen voor de moeilijkheden waar u tegenaan loopt? Voor welke problemen hebt u niet altijd een oplossing klaar?
6. Hoe vaak komt het voor dat u moet wachten op de post van de Buba's of van het sorteercentrum?
7. Tegen welke moeilijkheden lopen uw medewerkers vaak aan tijdens de collectie of distributie van de post? Hoeveel tijd kost het u om hen hiermee te helpen?
8. Wordt u als teamcoach beoordeeld op een efficiënte inzet van uw personeel? Zo ja, welke moeilijkheden levert dit voor u op?

Factor: competenties

Experience

1. Heeft u door ervaring genoeg kennis en kunde in het verleden opgedaan om goed met uw HR taken om te kunnen gaan?
2. Waarin heeft u vooral (meer) ervaring op gedaan?
3. Heeft de ervaring die u opgedaan heeft m.b.t. HR taken u goed voorbereid op uw HR toekomst?

Trainings attended

4. Heeft u cursussen gevolgd in relatie tot uw HR taken?
5. Hoeveel cursussen heeft u gevolgd in relatie tot uw HR taken? Wanneer was de laatste?
6. Wat is uw mening over deze cursussen?
 - a. Kunt u aangeven wat u tijdens deze cursussen hebt geleerd?
 - b. Wat mist u in deze cursussen? Wat zou u inhoudelijk aan de cursussen willen veranderen?

- c. Zou u meer cursussen willen volgen?

Conservatism

7. Wat moet u volgens uzelf vooral kennen en kunnen om uw HR taken goed uit te voeren? En vindt u ook dat u deze kennis en kunde bezit?
8. Vind u dat u uw HR taken aan kan op basis van alleen gezond verstand?
9. Vind u het nodig om trainingen te volgen? Waarom wel/niet?
10. Wie ziet erop toe dat uw kennis en kunde op het gebied van HR goed is en blijft?

Internal organisational context

1. Vindt u dat TNT genoeg aandacht besteed aan het verbeteren van de kennis en kunde van de teamcoaches in het algemeen? Waaraan merkt u dat?
2. In hoeverre draagt uw kennis en kunde op het gebied van HR bij aan een goede efficiëntie en aan het leveren van een goede dienst richting de klanten?
3. In hoeverre draagt het feit dat HR specialisten in uw area werkzaam zijn er aan bij dat uw HR gerelateerde kennis up-to-date blijft?
4. In hoeverre moedigt men elkaar (in uw bedrijfsomgeving) aan om continue door te leren? Wie moedigt u daar in aan?
5. In hoeverre is uw kennis en kunde er vooral toegespitst om ervoor te zorgen dat de collectie of distributie van de post goed verloopt?

Factor: ondersteuning

Support needed

1. Heeft u ondersteuning, hulp of advies nodig bij het uitvoeren van HR taken? Zo ja, voor welke HR activiteiten heeft u naar uw mening ondersteuning, hulp of advies bij nodig?
2. Kunt u omschrijven hoe deze ondersteuning, hulp of advies eruit zou moeten zien?
3. Van wie kunt u dit krijgen?

Actual support

4. Hoe vaak vraagt u deze personen om ondersteuning, hulp of advies?
5. In hoeverre krijgt u dan ook alle ondersteuning, hulp of advies die u nodig heeft?
6. In hoeverre is deze ondersteuning, hulp of advies voldoende en bruikbaar?
7. Werkt u samen met bijvoorbeeld een personeelsconsulent als u een HR vraagstuk moet oplossen? Zo ja, hoe ziet deze samenwerking er dan uit?

Conflict

8. Hoe beschrijft u uw relatie/samenwerking met uw adviseurs, zoals bijvoorbeeld de personeelsconsulenten?
9. Zijn de personeelsconsulenten of personeelsmedewerkers bereid om u te helpen of ondersteunen?
10. Accepteert u de steun die door deze personen aan u aangeboden wordt?

Internal organisational context

1. Heeft u het gevoel dat personeelconsulenten ook verantwoordelijk zijn voor HR taken waarvoor u verantwoordelijk bent? Waaraan merkt u dat?
2. Op welke manieren kunt u uw ondersteuners bereiken? En in hoeverre gaat dit gemakkelijk?
3. In hoeverre hebben de personeelsconsulenten te veel team coaches aan wie ze advies moeten geven?
4. Hebt u er problemen mee om naar een personeelsconsulent te vragen of om aan anderen hulp te vragen?
5. Welke invloed heeft het feit dat er een HR&O afdeling in uw area is op de ondersteuning die u krijgt?
6. Welke invloed heeft het feit dat er een centrale HR&O afdeling is op de ondersteuning die u krijgt?

Factor: beleid and procedures

Communication

1. Is ergens vastgesteld welke HR taken u moet uitvoeren?
2. Zoals ja, waar kunt u die vinden? Zo niet, hoe weet u welke taken u moet uitvoeren?
3. Zijn er HR procedures opgesteld?
4. Zo ja, waar kunt u deze procedures dan vinden?
5. Zijn deze procedures gemakkelijk te vinden?

Role uncertainty

6. Waar kunt u nagaan (in uw functieomschrijving of bij uw leidinggevende) dat u verantwoordelijk bent voor het uitvoeren van specifieke HR taken?
7. Is het voor u duidelijk voor welke HR taken u precies verantwoordelijk bent?

Unclear description

8. Zijn er richtlijnen voor het uitvoeren van HR taken?
9. Waar kunt u deze richtlijnen vinden?
10. In hoeverre zijn deze richtlijnen duidelijk?
11. In hoeverre zijn deze richtlijnen ook makkelijk te gebruiken?

Inconsistency

12. In hoeverre voeren alle teamcoaches hun HR taken op dezelfde manier uit? Waardoor komt dat?
13. Dragen de procedures bij aan een consistente invoering onder alle teamcoaches? Zo ja, op welke manier dan?

Internal organisational context

1. In hoeverre verlangt uw leidinggevende dat u sommige HR taken moet uitvoeren, terwijl deze formeel niet onder uw verantwoordelijkheid vallen?
2. In hoeverre verlangen uw medewerkers dat u sommige HR taken moet uitvoeren, terwijl deze formeel niet onder uw verantwoordelijkheid vallen?

Hypotheses

Desire

1. Mocht u weinig extra tijd hebben, in hoeverre heeft u de motivatie om uw spaarzame tijd te besteden aan HR taken? Waardoor komt dit? (desire → capacity)
2. Beïnvloed uw motivatie voor het uitvoeren van HR taken ook uw motivatie om uw HR kennis te verbeteren of te onderhouden? Waarom wel/niet (desire → competencies)

Capacity

1. In welke mate beïnvloed de hoeveelheid tijd die u heeft, uw motivatie om HR taken uit te voeren? (capacity → desire)
2. In welke mate neemt uw kennis en kunde om uw HR taken uit te voeren toe, als u langer en vaker HR taken uitvoert? (capacity → competencies/experience)
3. Denkt u dat u genoeg tijd hebt om cursussen te kunnen volgen die ervoor zorgen dat uw HR kennis toeneemt? Hoe beïnvloedt dit uw HR kennis en kunde? (capacity → competencies/trainings)

Competencies

1. In hoeverre is uw motivatie om HR taken uit te voeren beïnvloed door de HR kennis die u hebt? (competencies → desire)
2. Hebt u meer tijd nodig voor bepaalde HR taken als u op dit gebied minder HR ervaring of HR kennis heeft? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven? (competencies → capacity)

Support

1. Wordt uw motivatie voor bepaalde HR taken door negatieve ervaringen op gebied van ondersteuning beïnvloed? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven? (support → desire)
2. Wordt u motivatie voor HR door uw relatie/samenwerking met de personeelsconsulent beïnvloed? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven? (support → desire)

3. In hoeverre denkt u dat een goede ondersteuning leidt tot een gelijke uitvoering van HR taken door de teamcoaches? (support → p&p)

P&P

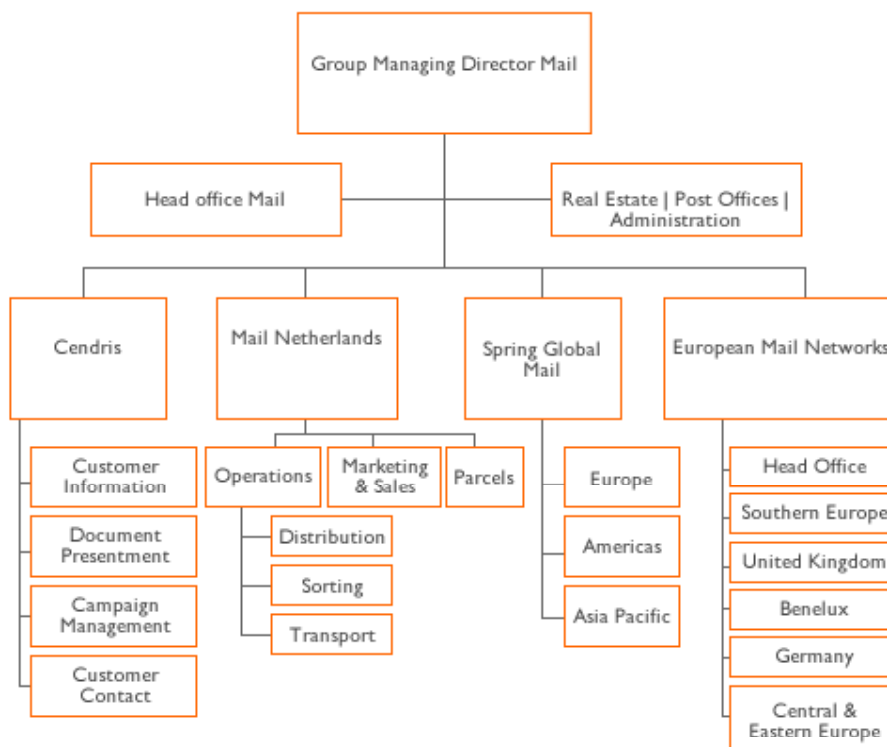
1. In hoeverre heeft u minder motivatie om HR taken uit te voeren als u niet weet voor welke HR taken u verantwoordelijk bent? (p&p → desire)
2. In hoeverre word u erdoor gemotiveerd als u terug kunt vallen op duidelijke en bruikbare procedures? (p&p → desire)
3. Hoeveel tijd kost het u voor het uitvoeren van uw HR taken, als u niet terug kunt vallen op duidelijke procedures? (p&p → capacity)

Appendix 5.1: The organizational structure of TNT



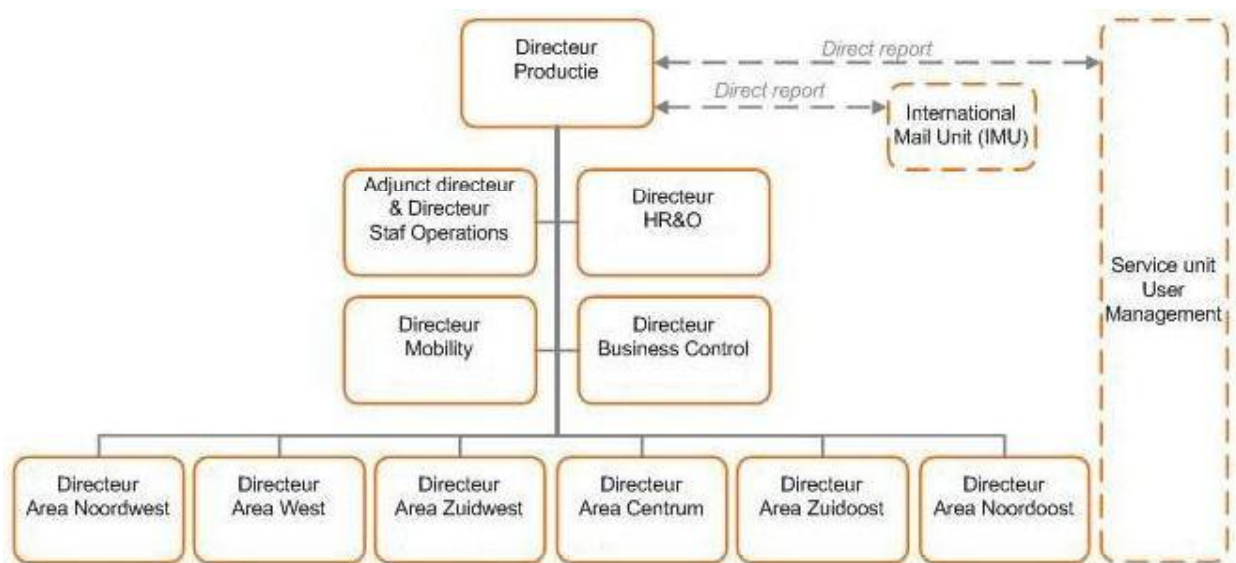
Source: <http://group.tnt.nl/overtnt/>

Appendix 5.2: The organizational structure of TNT Mail



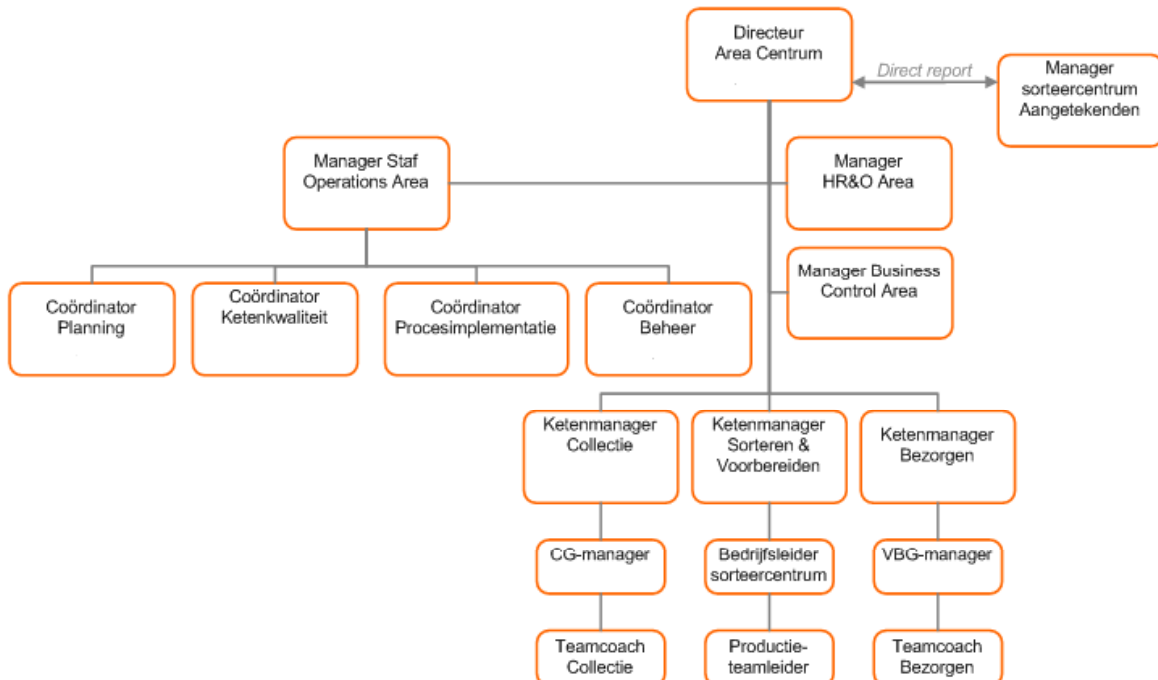
Source: <http://group.tnt.nl/overtnt/>

Appendix 5.3.1: The organizational structure of the BU Operations



Source: intranet TNT Mail

Appendix 5.3.2: The organizational structure of the BU Operations



Source: intranet TNT Mail

Appendix 6: List of HR contact persons

HR & O Area	06 nummer	intern nummer
Personeelsconsulenten		
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Comm. & overlegzaken		
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Adviseur arbeidsomstandigheden		
Pieters, W.F.	06 00000000	000-0000000
Senior adviseur		
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Medewerker personeelszaken		
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Medewerker roosterbeheer		
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Bedrijfsmaatschappelijk werk		
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000

HRSSC		
Algemeen nummer	06 00000000	000-0000000

USER MANAGEMENT		
Facility Desk info	06 00000000	000-0000000

MOBILITY		
Algemeen nummer	06 00000000	000-0000000
Mobilitétsadviseurs		
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000
Naam	06 00000000	000-0000000

	BMW		
Gebied		BMW	Telefoonnr.
VBG		Naam	000-0000000
VBG			06 00000000
VBG			
Gebied		BMW	Telefoonnr.
VBG		Naam	000-0000000
VBG			06 00000000
Gebied		BMW	Telefoonnr.
VBG		Naam	000-0000000
VBG			06 00000000