

What effect can poor line manager communication have on HR policies?

Key Findings:

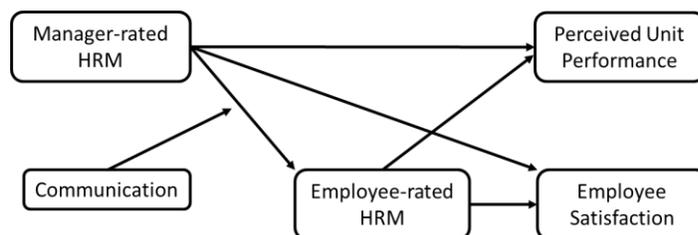
- The quality of managers' communication of HR policies plays a key role in employee perception of HR!
- It is important to emphasize clear, consistent, informative, and useful communication and to develop line managers' communication skills.

Executive summary

HR practices can affect firm performance through building a motivated, knowledgeable, and better performing workforce. However, **having a well-designed HR system on paper is not enough** to achieve these positive effects: employee perception and understanding of HR policies informed by their managers' communications about HR policies play a vital role for how aligned the intended vs. the implemented HR systems are. The authors explore how quality (i.e. is there enough information, is it understandable and useful) of line managers' communication effects employees' perception of the HR system, and how this in turn is linked to perceived performance of the unit and employee satisfaction.

Why is this important?

Low quality communications from line managers can lead to gaps between intended and implemented HR policies. **This is a problem since HR practices that are not properly communicated or not clearly understood are less likely to motivate employees to increase effort and improve performance.** Inconsistencies in communication and poor communication quality from line managers can lead to variances between business units' experience of HR, even though it is intended to be a standard system.



“Firms thus cannot rely solely on a strict paper policy and assume this will reach employees as intended”

What are the implications for my organization?

To drive performance and to avoid misalignments and misunderstandings managers need to communicate highly informative, useful, and clear information about the organization and its HR policies and practices.

What can I do?

- Provide tools and coaching to help managers communicate sufficiently, clearly and consistently about HR policies and practices. E.g., provide talking points, observe communications, and provide feedback
- Train managers to ensure understanding HR policies and ability to talk about them with their teams.
- Make the connection between communication and staff satisfaction and performance – higher perception of HR practices relates to higher satisfaction and perceived performance among employees.

Summary of: Hartog, D. N. Den, C. Boon, R. M. Verburg, and M. A. Croon. "HRM, Communication, Satisfaction, and Perceived Performance: A Cross-Level Test." *Journal of Management* 39, no. 6 (2013): 1637-1665.