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Getting the HR Message Across: The Linkage between Line – HR Consensus and “Commitment Strength” among Hospital Employees**

Related to the theoretical work of Bowen and Ostroff (2004; also Ostroff/Bowen 2000), this article focuses on the features of an HRM system that help or constrain organizations to get their HR message across. At a department-level of analysis, we focus on the consensus between line managers and decentralized HR professionals on the human resource practices in place and on the either strategic or operational role of the HR function in the process of the management of employees. Stating that an organization's HR policies are transmitted by decentralized line and HR managers, it is proposed that the more line and HR executives agree on the status of their relationship and the HR practices in place, the less employees vary in their affective attitudes of commitment to the organization. Central to this article is the “strength” of affective organizational commitment among unit-members in a sample of 671 employees from 66 hospital departments drawn from four Dutch hospitals. Multi-level analyses indicate that consensus between HR professionals and line managers on HR practices (career opportunities, appraisal criteria) and on HR's role is positively related to the commitment strength within a department. It is concluded that the collectivity of employee commitment to the organization is partly a function of department-level HR process indicators. Research limitations and implications for HR practitioners are discussed.

Key words: Line Manager-HR Professional Consensus, HR Practices, HR Roles, Employee Commitment, Climate Strength, Hospital Departments

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