



HPWS and Helping Behaviour: The Mediating Role of Perceived Supervisor Support and the Moderating Role of Hope

Master Thesis Human Resource Studies

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Abstract

Due to the dynamic changes in the world of work, new requirements arise. Nowadays, it is not enough to only conduct the tasks mentioned in the employment contract, as human interactions outside the stated contract become even more vital. Therefore, this thesis investigated whether the relationship between High Performance Work Systems (HPWS) and helping behaviour is mediated by perceived supervisor support (PSS) and whether this relationship between HPWS and PSS was moderated by hope. To further investigate these associations social exchange theory (SET) and HR attribution theory were used. Through conducting an analysis with 228 employees of different companies from Germany and the Netherlands, the mediating effect of PSS was confirmed, while the results revealed that hope has no moderating effect on the proposed relationship. However, after conducting a supplementary analysis, hope was found to be a parallel mediator besides PSS in the relationship between HPWS and helping behaviour. This thesis highlights the influence of HPWS on behavioral and attitudinal outcomes, and furthermore, provides implications for organizations.

Keywords: High Performance Work Systems, Hope, Perceived Supervisor Support, Helping Behaviour, Social Exchange Theory, HR attribution theory

Introduction

Employees are at the heart of every organization, demonstrating that organizations can only be successful if employees have the will to perform their job (Reichenwald, 2012). However, in a modern work environment it is not enough if employees simply conduct the work stated in the employment contract (Robbins & Judge, 2013). Due to the change in work, such as decreasing hierarchy and its related tasks, employees need to fulfill new requirements (Hulshof et al., 2020). These new work requirements focus not only on the work itself but also on the changing social aspects of work, meaning that organizations concentrate even more on their employees and building networks (LePine et al., 2002). Therefore, human interactions become even more vital in the workplace. One form of human interaction is helping behaviour (Ibukunoluwa et al., 2015), implying voluntary actions of generosity towards others, establishing and conserving relationships, and affirming interpersonal harmony (Srivastava & Shree, 2019). These voluntary actions go beyond the stated role requirements of the job, meaning that employees conduct extra-role behaviour (Van Dyne et al., 1995). When employees act in these extra roles, they are not rewarded or penalized (Organ, 1988) by the organization as these extra efforts are not part of their actual work tasks (Van Dyne et al., 1995). Furthermore, in this thesis, helping behaviour is seen as a vital part of Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) (Podsakoff et al., 2000), since helping behaviour is concerned with interactions and affiliative and collegial behaviour (Flynn 2006).

One of the antecedents of helping behaviour are High Performance Work Systems (HPWS). This set of Human Resource (HR) practices are used to increase organizational effectiveness by establishing a work environment that allows employees to participate in work-related activities to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Whitener, 2001). According to Evans and Davis (2005), HPWS are a combined system of HR practices aligned with external goals, such as the organizational strategy. Furthermore, these separated but connected HR practices can increase employees' skills, motivation, and the opportunity to participate at work (Appelbaum et al., 2000). Most HR practices can be clustered in three bundles, namely ability-, motivation-, and opportunity enhancing practices (Appelbaum et al., 2000). These HPWS bundles lead to positive employee and organizational outcomes (Zhang & Morris, 2013), such as OCB (Owor, 2015), including enhanced helping behaviour (Chuang & Liao, 2010). As these bundles have a better effect on the outcome than a single HR practice, this thesis follows a bundle-based approach (Jiang et al., 2012). Further, HPWS create a positive work atmosphere, which enhances helping behaviour (Evans & Davis, 2005).

To successfully implement HPWS in organizations, line managers or supervisors are needed. This is in line with the SHRM Process Model by Nishii and Wright (2007), which states that senior managers intend HR practices, line managers implement these practices and are consequently perceived by the individual employee. These perceived HR practices lead to employee reactions and organizational outcomes (Nishii & Wright, 2007). Furthermore, the line managers' implementation of HR practices is aligned with the HR devolution literature. The HR devolution literature states that supervisors receive more responsibilities to implement HR practices (Sikora & Ferris, 2014). Moreover, organizations nowadays focus on giving the responsibility of implementing HR practices to line managers (Knies & Leisink, 2013). Hence, it emerges that supervisors incorporate a central role in the relationship between employees and the organization, as they have the power to foster valuable and favorable relationships through their direct contact with employees (Yadav & Rangnekar, 2015). Therefore, perceived supervisor support (PSS) is defined as the employee's perception to what extent supervisors value employees' input and are concerned about their well-being (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988). Furthermore, the effectiveness of the relationship between employees and line managers is crucial for organizations, since a better relationship between the two parties leads to a higher reciprocation (Ballinger et al., 2010), which in turn encourages helping behaviour (Smith et al., 1983).

However, based on the SHRM Process Model, two disconnects can arise in the implementation process of HR practices (Nishii & Wright, 2007). First, differences in exposure, and second, differences in employee perceptions of HR practices (Liao et al., 2009). Differences in exposure refer to different backgrounds' employees have based on their past experience. Thereby, employees have experienced other training and development opportunities or other compensation than their colleagues. Differences in perceptions refer to the variety in people's personalities, backgrounds, and values, meaning that they interpret HR practices differently (den Hartog et al., 2004), explaining that employees interpret the same HR practice differently (Kuvaas, 2008). Moreover, differences can arise even in the same team because people might be treated differently by their supervisor or line manager (Liao et al., 2009). Therefore, this thesis aims to investigate how the perception of HPWS can influence PSS, which then, in the end, leads to helping behaviour.

HPWS have many positive outcomes for organizations and employees (Zhang & Morris, 2013). According to Mossholder et al. (2011), HR systems, such as bundles, were mainly studied concerning organizational-level outcomes rather than individual-level behavioural outcomes, such as helping behaviour. To enlighten this gap, this thesis

investigates the association between HPWS and individual-level helping behaviour. Kim and Ko (2014) revealed that employees feel that an organization cares about them if the organization uses supportive HR practices, which are according to the SHRM Process Model (Nishii & Wright 2007) implemented by supervisors. In response to these practices, employees tend to reciprocate to the organization with beneficial behaviours, such as helping behaviour. Therefore, this thesis investigates the association between HPWS and helping behaviour, using PSS as a mediator, since supervisors are the ones implementing these practices.

Since employees perceive HR practices differently, and this perception of HR practices depends on many factors, such as employee goals, values, or personalities (Nishii & Wright, 2008), it can be argued that personal characteristics moderate the relationship between HPWS and PSS, and in the end leading to helping behaviour. This connection between employee HR perceptions in general and personality traits still needs to be researched (Nishii & Wright, 2008; van Beurden et al., 2020). One personal characteristic is hope. Hope is a component of positive psychology, thus a psychological construct (Mukherjee & Sharma, 2020), belonging to the construct of psychological capital (PsyCap) (Luthans et al., 2015). Moreover, Snyder et al. (1991) define hope as the willpower to achieve goals and find alternative ways when difficulties arise. Hope is also an emotional state (Peterson & Luthans, 2003), and hence, people who are high in hope experience positive emotions more often (Paul & Garg, 2014). Further, hope is an indicator of mental health (Snyder, 2002) and buffers negative influences (Li et al., 2018). This is in line with the fact that employees who are high in hope focus on learning (Abrami & McWahw, 2001), overcoming challenging tasks, and concentrate more on work-related goals (Chen et al., 2019), leading to more motivation and goal achievement (Peterson & Byron, 2008). Therefore, people high in hope are more positive and have pathways to find innovative solutions since these employees perceive HR practices as less challenging (Luthans et al., 2005). Instead, they perceive HR practices as a support mechanism (Abubakar et al., 2019). Further, people who are high in hope show increased positive behaviours (Yavas et al., 2013) and strive for a career, which strengthens the argument that hopeful employees are more motivated than employees low in hope (Paul & Garg, 2014). Additionally, due to the positive state of hopeful employees and their will to achieve their goals (Snyder et al., 1996), positive organizational and individual outcomes will be increased (Sihag & Sarikwal, 2015). This is pursuant to the fact that people who are high in hope have a more positive attitude, and are more energetic in the workplace

(Nawaz et al., 2018). Consequently, it can be stated that employees high in hope tend to have positive expectations about the relationship of HPWS and PSS.

As many studies already enlightened the relation between manager-rated HR practices and organizational or individual outcomes, it is necessary to understand employees' perceptions of HR practices (van Beurden et al., 2020). According to the HR attribution theory (Nishii et al., 2008), employees differ in how they attribute to HR practices, meaning that employees make positive or negative assumptions about how they perceive HPWS (Nishii et al., 2008). Since the gap between HR perceptions and employees' personality remains, this thesis assesses whether hopeful employees perceive the relationship between HPWS and PSS more positive compared to less hopeful employees and how this association leads to helping behaviour. Moreover, due to the changing work-life (Hulshof et al., 2020) and the increase in team-based work (Salas et al., 2008), human interactions become even more vital. As positive emotions, such as hope, foster social relationships and bring people together (Diener & Seligman, 2002), hope is crucial to consider while examining the relationship between HPWS and helping behaviour. If organizations understand the mechanisms behind employee perceptions of HR practices, they can use these insights to optimize their organizational outcomes. Additionally, organizations will benefit if they understand under which conditions their employees are willing to show helping behaviour and working more than what their job description states (Becker & Kernan, 2003), For instance, positive outcomes like commitment (van Dyne & LePine, 1998) and team performance (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2012) will be enhanced. Further, line managers can be freed, as their employees can take over some social responsibilities such as helping new employees find their position in the team and offering help to colleagues when needed (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Besides, a more supportive work environment can restrain organizations against unethical and inequitable situations (van Dyne & LePine, 1998). From an employees' view, support from their supervisor creates positive perceptions of their work tasks (Baloyi et al., 2014), which increases the possibility to act in favourable behaviours (Yavas et al., 2013), such as helping behaviour. In regards to these theoretical findings, this thesis aims to answer the following research question:

'To what extent is the relationship between perceived HPWS and helping behaviour mediated by PSS, and to what extent is the relationship between perceived HPWS and PSS moderated by hope?'

Theoretical Framework

HPWS and helping behaviour

HPWS consist of three bundles, namely skill-, motivation-, and opportunity-enhancing practices (Appelbaum et al., 2000). First, skill-enhancing practices refer to employee development (Boon et al., 2014) and career opportunities (Bakker et al., 2010). These practices aim to give employees the needed knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their job (Boon et al., 2014). Second, motivation-enhancing practices consist of rewards (de Reuver et al., 2019), job security (Jiang et al., 2012), work-life balance (Boselie et al., 2005), and performance management (Sun et al., 2007). Moreover, motivation-enhancing practices increase employees' motivation to perform the job (Marin-Garcia & Martinez, 2016). Third, opportunity-enhancing practices like communication and information sharing, job design, and participation (Jiang et al., 2012) offer employees the possibility to contribute to their job (de Reuver et al., 2019).

Through the behavioral perspective, it is possible to explain the link between HPWS and organizational goals (Jiang & Messersmith, 2018). This perspective emerged from the role theory, which explains that organizations need desired role behaviours to survive in the competitive market (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). Moreover, in the role theory, HRM can lead to organizational success by executing and controlling desired employee behaviours (Jackson & Schuler, 1995). With the help of HPWS, employees can switch from a passive into a more active role (Spreitzer, 1996), leading to more motivation to participate in this active role (Pfeffer, 1998). Furthermore, through HPWS, employees have the opportunity to establish their role behaviours in the organization (Evans & Davis, 2005). One of these role behaviours is helping, an example of affiliative behaviour (LePine & van Dyne, 1998). Helping behaviour is collegial and social behaviour, and can enhance social relationships where the parties help each other (van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Furthermore, helping behaviour can be seen as an extra-role behaviour since helping is an extra effort or a voluntary effort taken by employees (Srivastava & Shree, 2019). According to the Social Exchange Theory (SET) (Blau, 1964), social exchanges are voluntary actions, leading to indebtedness between the parties involved. HPWS are seen as voluntary actions provided by the organization. Consequently, employees want to reciprocate, for instance, by showing desired behaviours (Gouldner, 1960). Therefore, SET can describe the relationship between HPWS and helping behaviour, since employees feel that the organization cares for their well-being. In return, employees want to give something back in return to the organization, therefore, showing more desired behaviours, such as helping behaviour.

When employees perceive HPWS positively, OCB increases, as employees feel that the organization or the supervisor cares for them (Chuang & Liao, 2010; Messersmith et al., 2011). Furthermore, through HPWS, organizations demonstrate that they care and want to support their employees through various HR practices, leading to more significant commitment. Additionally, employees are more likely to help their organization as they feel connected (Messersmith et al., 2011). Rupp and Cropanzano (2002) found out that social exchange relationships, in this case, working relationships, are positively related to helping behaviour. Moreover, when the social exchange relation is high, helping behaviour is enhanced, as employees benefit from help and then want to reciprocate this behaviour by providing help (Takeuchi et al., 2007). Hence, when employees have positive perceptions of HPWS, positive behaviour will increase (Gould-Williams, 2007), as employees are motivated to repay the organization through extra-role behaviour. All things considered, the following hypothesis can be stated:

H1: Perceptions of HPWS are positively associated with helping behaviour.

PSS and helping behaviour

PSS is defined as the employee's perception of to what extent supervisors value employees' input and are concerned about their well-being (Kottke & Sharafinski, 1988). Further, supportive supervisor behaviour includes feedback, training and development opportunities, and career support (Greenhaus et al., 1990). As employees work closely with their supervisors, it becomes evident that PSS is a crucial component that generates discernible attitudes (Whitener et al., 1998). Therefore, supervisors influence their employees' opinions and behaviours (Khan et al., 2015). According to SET, PSS creates a responsibility towards employees to reciprocate the supervisor (Neves, 2011) with positive behaviour (Marescaux et al., 2012). For instance, when employees perceive their supervisor as supportive, meaning that the supervisor is willing to help with complex tasks or foster employee abilities (Tepper & Taylor, 2003), the employee is likely to reciprocate with extra efforts (Liu et al., 2015; Stukas & Clary, 2012). Moreover, PSS leads to an obligation that employees want to support their supervisor in achieving their goals (Eisenberger et al., 2002). As this goes beyond the tasks defined in the labour contract, it can be assumed that helping behaviour is a part of these extra efforts (Becker & Kernan, 2003). Further, Gagnon and Michael (2004) found that if employees perceive a supportive relationship with their supervisor more favourable, outcomes such as satisfaction and commitment can be expected. Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) revealed that PSS is positively associated with extra-role

behaviour. As supported by SET and the fact that employees are likely to reciprocate with desired behaviour, the following hypothesis is:

H2: PSS is positively associated with helping behaviour.

HPWS and PSS

To explain the link between HPWS and PSS, it is necessary to demonstrate the difference between those constructs. HPWS are a bundle of HR practices that aim to provide employees with required skills, motivate employees to foster needed behaviours, and offer employees the opportunity to contribute towards organizational outcomes (Harney & Jordan, 2008). Contrastingly, PSS is concerned with acting in a social role (Eder & Eisenberger, 2008) and support employees (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006) with feedback (Allen & Shanock, 2013), work-related help (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004), or emotional support (Thoits, 1985).

As mentioned before, employees differ in the way they perceive HPWS (Nishii & Wright., 2008). This is in line with the HR attribution theory (Nishii et al., 2008) since employees make attributions about the cause of HR practices. These attributions vary between employees as the interpretation of the cause of HPWS depends on the individual reaction to social stimuli (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Moreover, employees make assumptions if HPWS have a positive or a negative outcome for them (Nishii et al., 2008). A positive attitude towards HPWS arises when employees perceive that HPWS benefit them personally (Yang & Arthur, 2019). On the contrary, a negative attitude arises when employees feel that HPWS are only there to enhance performance and therefore, only benefiting the organization's financial outcomes (Nishii et al., 2008). For instance, Sultana et al. (2016) found that employees who perceive performance management as more positive, see their supervisor as more supportive. When HPWS offer employees development practices and job security, the organization values their employees, which leads to enhanced PSS (Jabagi et al., 2020). Further, reward practices also lead to an increase in the perceptions of supervisor support (Smit et al., 2015). As these single HR practices are interconnected within HPWS construct, they reveal that the more HPWS are implemented, the more employees acknowledge the support of their supervisors (Shahid et al., 2017). Since employees' attribution influences their attitudes and behaviours (Hewett et al., 2018), it can be assumed that the way HPWS are perceived by employees influences PSS. Therefore, the following hypothesis states:

H3: Perceptions of HPWS are positively associated with PSS.

The mediating role of PSS

HPWS aim to invest in employees and offer them opportunities to develop themselves (Paauwe et al., 2013). As mentioned before, supervisors implement HPWS (Nishii & Wright, 2008). Through implementing these practices, supervisors consider employees' needs, leading to employees' perception that the supervisor cares about and supports them (Shahid et al., 2017). Further, supervisors can implement specific utensils and implicit emotional support, which generates satisfaction of employees' needs (Halbesleben, 2006). Therefore, the HPWS implementation leads to a feeling of supportiveness in the employees' minds (Shahid et al., 2017) and additionally, supervisors signal their employees what is expected and valued (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004). Due to the implementation of HPWS, employees feel valued, leading to PSS. Furthermore, PSS motivates employees to reciprocate and foster the social exchange with the supervisor (Sultana et al., 2016), who are seen as agents of the organization (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2010; Shahid et al., 2017). Therefore, it could be argued that when supervisors implement effective HPWS, employees feel supported. According to the HR attribution theory (Nishii et al., 2008), employee behaviours and attitudes depend on how employees perceive HPWS and how they attribute to the cause of these practices (Nishii et al., 2008), demonstrating that these attributions are directly influenced by HPWS (Kusluvan et al., 2010). Supervisors can help employees to understand why HPWS are implemented, as they are more involved in implementing HR practices (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013). This makes supervisors crucial to provide employees with the needed information (Beijer et al., 2019) in order to achieve desired behaviour, in this case helping behaviour. For instance, open communication and information sharing are parts of HPWS (Lawler, 1992; Pfeffer, 1998). These practices demonstrate to the employees that they are valued by the organization and the supervisor, leading to enhanced PSS. Consequently, open communication increases extra-role behaviour since employees attribute positively towards these practices because these practices are beneficial to the employee (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012).

Through supervisor support, supervisors can help employees to understand why HPWS are used (Nishii & Paluch, 2018) and to convey employees that these practices positively impact them. Therefore, help employees to understand HPWS as a positive offering from the organization (Eisenberger et al., 2002). This is in line with the fact that supervisors act as the mediator between HPWS and organizational outcomes, as they can steer HR practices in the right way to employees (Beijer et al., 2019). However, employees differ in the way they perceive HPWS, therefore only if HPWS lead to PSS, it will foster helping behaviour in the end. For instance, some employees are treated differently within the same

team or have different attributions towards HPWS (Liao et al., 2009). Therefore, it is crucial to take supervisors into consideration, as they can influence employee's attributions and consequently their attitudes and behaviours, such as helping behaviour (Malatesta, 1995; Wang et al., 2019). This is in line with Ho (2017), who states that when PSS is high, the employee will demonstrate positive attitudes and is more motivated to conduct extra-role behaviour (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). All things considered; the following hypothesis is expected:

H4: *PSS mediates the association between perceptions of HPWS and helping behaviour.*

The moderating effect of hope

Hope is a positive motivational state-like construct consisting of two parts, namely willpower and pathways to achieve goals (Luthans & Youssef, 2007; Peterson & Luthans, 2003; Synder et al., 2003). The latter means that hopeful people have the ability to achieve their goals in different ways when faced with difficulties (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). This is pursuant to the fact that people high in hope have a more significant set of methods to achieve their goals, which is required to find their pathway and develop more intrinsic motivation (Sweetman et al., 2010). Willpower, also called agency, is defined as the aim to achieve goals (Mukherjee & Sharma, 2020). Concluding, hope represents the intention to accomplish success and the ability to see, clarify, and pursue the way to success (Nawaz et al., 2018).

According to the HR attribution theory (Nishii et al., 2008), employees differ in their attribution regarding the same HR practice. Moreover, Nishii and colleagues (2008) see HR attributions as the causal explanations' that employees make for enduring HR practices. As mentioned before, people make positive or negative attributions about the perceived HR practices (Nishii et al., 2008). One construct that can influence these attributions is hope, as hope affect employees' attitudes and behaviours (Rand, 2009). Furthermore, hope is a positive emotional state, meaning that hopeful individuals have positive expectations of their outcomes (Synder, 2000) and perceive situations in general as more positive than less hopeful individuals (Carson & Adams, 1980). Through this positive emotional state, PSS is enhanced, as positive emotions strengthen the interaction between people (Diener & Seligman, 2002). Besides that, a supportive work climate is related to enhanced attitudes and behaviours (Day & Bedeian, 1991). Employees who are high in hope display a more supportive work climate (Chen et al., 2019), since these employees are more engaged and passionate throughout their

work (Gallagher & Lopez, 2009). Therefore, it can be argued that when employees are high in hope, it strengthens the association between HPWS and PSS.

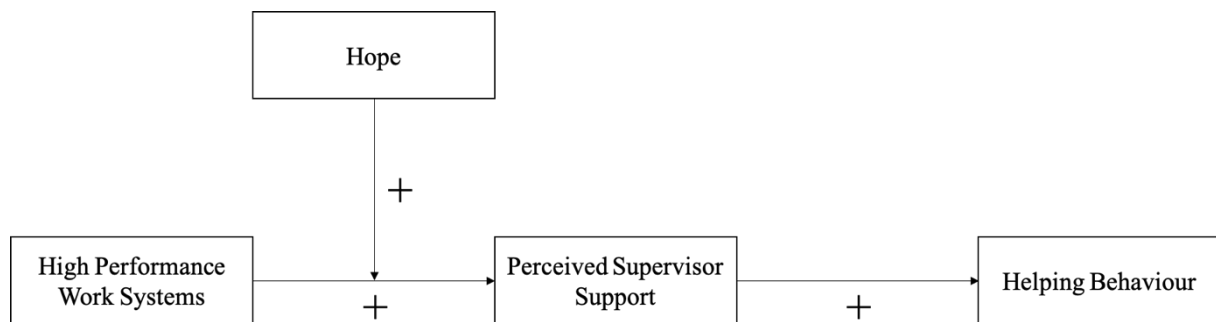
Luthans and colleagues' (2007) found that hopeful people think they can manage the outcomes of a task. Therefore, and based on the HR attribution theory (Nishii et al., 2008), it can be argued that people high in hope attribute to the association between HPWS and PSS more positively, as they can sway the work-related result while being more engaged in achieving their goals (Mukherjee & Sharma, 2020). Moreover, people who are high in hope have a positive attitude and an enhanced motivation (Snyder, 2000), which increases their attributions towards the association between HPWS and PSS, and ultimately strengthening this association. Further, people high in hope want to maintain their development with regard to achieving their goals (Seligman & Gillham, 2000), and through the enhanced intrinsic motivation (Ahmed et al., 2018), people high in hope trust in their cognitive resources (Barbosa, 2017). Additionally, in forceful situations people high in hope have enhanced problem-solving techniques (Xiang et al., 2020). Therefore, it can be argued that employees high in hope have positive attributions towards the association between HPWS and PSS, as they have mechanisms to accomplish their goals and through this positive attitude, they try to tackle challenges rather than giving up (Bressler, 2009). Contrastingly, people low in hope perceive situations as more challenging since they do not see an expedient (Bressler, 2009) and they do not have a buffer that decreases negative influences (Li et al., 2018), which then weakens their attributions towards the association between HPWS and PSS. Since hopeful employees develop more and better solutions to their work-related problems (Peterson & Byron, 2007), it can be assumed that hopeful employees experience their work (Abubaker et al., 2019) and their work-related expectations as more positive (Tilman et al., 2018). Consequently, their positive attributions are enhanced and therefore, people high in hope strengthen the association between HPWS and PSS. Further, high hope individuals have better competencies, which could also enhance the abovementioned fact. They perceive HPWS and the implementation of these practices by their supervisor as less complex and instead see it as a support mechanism (Marques et al., 2009) compared to people low in hope. Since HPWS and PSS are closely connected, it can be assumed that people who are high in hope make positive contributions towards HPWS and their supervisor, leading to a positive connection between HPWS and PSS. Therefore, the following hypotheses are:

H5: The association between perception of HPWS on PSS is positively moderated by hope in such a way that the higher the level of hope, the stronger the effect of perceptions of HPWS on PSS.

H6: *The association between perceptions of HPWS on PSS is positively moderated by hope in such a way that the higher the level of hope, the stronger the effect of perceptions of HPWS on PSS and this enhanced effect will lead to a stronger association of helping behaviour.*

Figure 1

Conceptual Model



Methods

Research design

The research was conducted by eight master students in Germany and the Netherlands. Moreover, the research design was quantitative, and the measurement was made at one point in time this study was cross-sectional (Mann, 2003). Since the scales used in the questionnaire are already validated and available in English and Dutch, it was necessary to translate them to German, as the students collected their data in the Netherlands and Germany. The translation process was done as follows: first, each of the two native Germans translated the English version to German. Second, the students compared their results. This was done by checking for errors and differences in general. These differences were discussed, and the students decided on a final version together. Furthermore, each of the eight master students had to send the survey to eight teams of their own network, each including at least three team members. Moreover, a convenience sampling method was used. Convenience sampling often includes participants that are easily available to the researcher and already willing to contribute to the study (Warner, 2013). This sampling method is commonly used in the field of HR research (Biron & van Veldhoven, 2016).

Research population and sample

The sample of this study consisted of employees working in Germany and the Netherlands. The thesis circle contacted 393 employees, of which 248 employees participated, leading to a response rate of 63.1%. However, not all participants finished the questionnaire. The unfinished cases were excluded from the sample, leading to a total amount of 228 participants (N = 228). Of these respondents, 65.8% worked in the Netherlands, and 34.2% worked in Germany. The majority of the participants is employed in the IT (N = 44), insurance (N = 35), health (N = 26), and the logistics (N = 21) sector and work in HR (N = 42) and in IT (N = 37) jobs. Further, most participants were employed in large organizations (> 250), with a permanent (81.1%) and full-time (67.1%) contract. Additionally, most participants were male (56.6%) and had a high educational level, meaning that 72.5% had a Bachelor's degree or higher. In Table 1, the detailed sample demographics information can be found.

Table 1
Demographics (N=228)

Variable	Total				Germany				Netherlands			
	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min-Max	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min-Max	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min-Max
Age	–	40.7	12	23-64	–	42.4	11.5	23-63	–	39.9	12.2	23-64
Team Size	–	8.9	4.4	3-25	–	11	4	6-25	–	7.7	4.2	3-20
Team Tenure	–	5.3	6.7	0-35	–	5.8	6.8	0-33	–	5.1	6.7	0-35
Organizational Tenure	–	9.5	10.3	0-44	–	11.9	11.5	0-44	–	8.2	9.4	0-36
Organizational Size												
Small (1 – 49 employees)	21.9%	–	–	–	15.4%	–	–	–	25.3%	–	–	–
Medium (50 – 249 employees)	15.8%	–	–	–	2.6%	–	–	–	22.7%	–	–	–
Large (>250 employees)	62.3%	–	–	–	82.1%	–	–	–	52%	–	–	–
Type of Contract												
Permanent	81.1%	–	–	–	94.9%	–	–	–	74%	–	–	–
Flexible	18%	–	–	–	3.8%	–	–	–	25.3%	–	–	–
Other	0.9%	–	–	–	1.3%	–	–	–	7%	–	–	–
Type of Employment												
Full-time	67.1%	–	–	–	74.4%	–	–	–	64%	–	–	–
Part-Time	32.5%	–	–	–	25.6%	–	–	–	36%	–	–	–
Gender												
Female	43.4%	–	–	–	47.4%	–	–	–	41.3%	–	–	–
Male	56.6%	–	–	–	52.6%	–	–	–	58.7%	–	–	–
Education												
School education	7.5%	–	–	–	14.1%	–	–	–	4%	–	–	–
Intermediate vocational education	21.1%	–	–	–	23.1%	–	–	–	20%	–	–	–
Bachelor	38.2%	–	–	–	19.2%	–	–	–	48%	–	–	–
Master / Diploma	30.7%	–	–	–	41%	–	–	–	25.3%	–	–	–
PhD	2.6%	–	–	–	2.6%	–	–	–	2.7%	–	–	–

Note. N = 228; Germany: n = 78; Netherlands: n = 150

The population consisted of employees working in Germany and the Netherlands. Data of the ‘Statistisches Bundesamt’ (2021) revealed that within the German labour force, 46.6% of women and 53.4% of men were employed in 2019. 85.4% of this workforce was between 25 and 54 years old (bpb, 2020). Further, the Dutch labour force consisted of 53% men and 47% women in 2020 (CBS, 2021c). 85.6% of this workforce was between 25 and 55 years old (CBS, 2021a). Additionally, 25.2% had a low educational level (school education), 55.9% had a medium educational level (intermediate vocational training), and 18.5% had a higher educational level (Bachelor’s degree and higher) within the German workforce (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2020). Moreover, in the Dutch workforce 17.7% had a low educational level (VWO, HAVO, VMBO), 39.4% a medium educational level (intermediate vocational training) and 42.9% a high educational level (Bachelor’s degree and higher) (CBS, 2021b). Lastly, in Germany 26.3% worked in small (1-49 employees), 20.3% in medium (50-249 employees) and 53.4% in large (>250 employees) organizations (Rudnicka, 2021). In the Netherlands 45.9% worked in small, 18% in medium and 36.2% in large organizations (European Commission, 2019). Moreover, both countries are part of the Rhineland model, meaning that their economic view regarding labour relations, knowledge and solidarity is equal (De Graaf et al., 2012). Further, De Graaf et al. (2012) state that Germany and the Netherlands can be clustered as one socio-cultural ethnicity. Both countries are quite similar in gender, age and socio-cultural ethnicity, but they differ in terms of education and organizational size. Therefore, an ANOVA was conducted to check for mean differences for the used variables (Kim, 2014). Table 2 illustrates the ANOVA for the variables used in this thesis. The results revealed that only PSS had no significant difference between the countries ($F(1,226) = 2.14, p < .147$), whereas all the other variables differ between Germany and the Netherlands. Since most of the variables differed between the countries it became visible that Germany and the Netherlands are not one overarching population. Therefore, the variable country will be used as a control variable in this thesis.

Table 2

One-Way ANOVA with variable Country

Variable	Germany		Netherlands		$F(1,226)$	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
HPWS	3.8	.52	3.6	.56	6.77	.010*
PSS	4.2	.44	3.9	.49	2.14	.147
Hope	4.0	.55	3.7	.51	13.40	.001**
Helping Behaviour	4.4	.49	4.1	.54	16.28	.001**

Organizational Tenure	11.9	11.5	8.2	9.4	19.19	.010*
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Note. ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed), * $p < .05$ (2-tailed)

Research procedure

The sample was conducted from students' personal networks via social media platforms such as LinkedIn. Before the questionnaires were sent out, the students clarified the study and provided the participants with all the needed information. When employees and supervisors wanted to participate in the survey, their names, email addresses, organization names, team size, and function were collected in a separate excel file. Further, the participants did not have access to this file. It was just for the students and their supervisor to kept an overview of the teams and their personal information and collected the number of respondents to see how many employees contributed to the survey. Afterwards, the participants got their invitation to conduct the survey via email. A cover letter with general information about the questionnaire and the link to conduct the survey were included in the email. The cover letter included the purpose of the survey and a confidentiality section. Further, in this section the participants were informed about the anonymity, the data storage procedure, and the code¹ that was part of the survey. The last part of the cover letter provided the participants with an explanation of the research procedure, including when the data was collected, the amount of time they will need to conduct the survey. After two weeks a reminder was sent out, to remind the participants to conduct the survey. The first step in the questionnaire was to type in the first code, followed by a consent form. After the data collection, the names and email addresses were deleted so that just the general information was left, leading to a fully anonymous data set. Furthermore, the ERB approved this research.

Research instruments

The survey was conducted via a questionnaire, which can be found in Appendix A. All the variables were measured with scales that are already existing and validated. Nevertheless, the scales were checked for validity and reliability. To investigate the scale's validity, a factor analysis including, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (KMO) ($> .6$) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < .05$) was carried out (Little, 2013). A Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was conducted and revealed that all variables had a KMO value of ($> .6$) and a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($p < .05$). All variables in this thesis are one-

¹ The researchers provided the first code to the participants to guarantee anonymity. Further, this code consists of the initials of the researcher, the first two letters of the company, a number to keep the overview if more teams of a company participate, and a number (1 or 2; whereas 1 stand for the supervisor questionnaire and 2 stands for the employee questionnaire) to link the questionnaire to employee or supervisor data.

dimensional and loaded on one factor with a factor loading score higher .30 without any form of rotation. Therefore, all single items measured the same construct (Field, 2009). Further, to test the reliability of the scales Cronbach's alpha (α) was used. Reliability values of Cronbach's alpha can be seen acceptable ($.6 \leq .7$), good ($.7 \leq .9$) or excellent ($\alpha \geq .9$) (Pallant, 2013). The results of the factor and reliability analysis can be found in Appendix B. As this thesis investigates the associations on individual level, the intraclass correlations (ICC's) were calculated to see if the collected data can be analyzed on individual level. The ICC demonstrates the proportion of the total variability for each team. If the variability within the teams is small, meaning that the ICC value is lower than .3, the teams had made similar responses and indicating low dependence (Field, 2009). All ICCs in this thesis had a value lower .3, therefore, the individual level approach was supported (Bliese, 2000; Shrout & Fleiss, 1979).

HPWS: This construct was measured with the perceptions of HR practices based on van Beurden et al. (2018). The scale consisted of 32 items, namely employee development (3 items), career opportunities (3 items), performance management (4 items), job design (4 items), participation (3 items), communication and information sharing (4 items), work-life balance (3 items), job security (3 items), and rewards (5 items). These nine subscales were proven to be valid, as all factors load on one factor. Since this thesis followed a bundle-based approach, the categories needed to be clustered in the three bundles. First, the skill-enhancing bundle consisted of employee development and career opportunities. An example item was: "Trainings, courses and workshops for employees." Second, rewards, job security, work-life balance and performance management formed the motivation-enhancing bundle. An example item was: "A higher salary than the market rate." Third, the opportunity-enhancing bundle included communication and information sharing, job design and participation. An example item was: "Variety in job." To answer the above-mentioned item, a five-point Likert scale was used (1= totally disagree to 5= totally agree). The factor analysis revealed that all skill-enhancing items load on one factor, with an explained variance of 81.5%. The motivation-enhancing items load on one factor, with an explained variance of 47.6%. The opportunity-enhancing items load on one factor, with an explained variance of 70.9%. Therefore, the construct perception of HPWS was formed, where all items loaded on one factor, with an explained variance of 74%. This was done by using the compute variable's function. The mean values of the three bundles, namely skill-enhancing, motivation-enhancing and opportunity-enhancing were added up and divided by three to form the new construct of HPWS. Reliability for this scale was good ($\alpha = .80$) and the ICC1 was .21. This examined

ICC1 value indicated that 21% of the individual-level variance is explained by group membership, showing that enough variance was left to conduct the analysis on individual level.

Perceived Supervisor Support: This construct was measured with the Supervisor Support scale, consisting of four items (Rhoades et al., 2001). An example item was: “My supervisor cares about my opinions”. To answer these items, a five-point Likert scale was used (1= completely disagree to 5= completely agree). The factor analysis revealed that all items load on one factor, with an explained variance of 68.5%. Reliability for this scale was good ($\alpha = .83$) and ICC1 was .07. This examined ICC1 value indicated that 7% of the individual-level variance was explained by group membership, showing that enough variance was left to conduct the analysis on individual level.

Helping Behaviour: This construct was measured with the OCB dimensions scale, consisting of three items (Farh et al., 2004). An example item was: “I help new employees adapt to their work environment”. To answer these items, a five-point Likert scale was used (1= totally disagree to 5= totally agree). The factor analysis revealed that all items loaded on one factor, with an explained variance of 67.9%. Reliability for this scale was good ($\alpha = .75$) and ICC1 was .11. This examined ICC1 value indicated that 11% of the individual-level variance was explained by group membership, showing that enough variance was left to conduct the analysis on individual level.

Hope: This construct was measured with the Adult State Hope scale, consisting of four items (Synder et al., 1996). An example item was: “I can think of many ways to achieve my current goals”. To answer these items, a five-point Likert scale was used (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). To prove construct validity, factor analysis was conducted to ensure that all items measure the same construct, showing that all items loaded on one factor, with an explained variance of 53.3%. Reliability for this scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .69$) and ICC1 was .01. This examined ICC1 value indicated that 1% of the individual-level variance is explained by group membership, showing that enough variance was left to conduct the analysis on individual level.

Control variables: There were two control variables used in this thesis. First, organizational tenure since employees who have a longer tenure in the organization are more likely to conduct helping behaviour (Messersmith et al., 2011). Second, since the ANOVA reveals country differences between Germany and the Netherlands, this variable was included as control variable. This variable was measured on dichotomous response scale (1 = Netherlands, 2 = Germany).

Analysis

To analyze the data of this study, the software IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 was used. To test Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 a multiple regression analysis was conducted. To test Hypothesis 4, Hayes' PROCESS macro was used with Model 4. This analysis aims to understand the relation between the variables based on a causal sequence (MacKinnon et al., 2007). HPWS was used as predictor variable, helping behaviour as criterion variable and PSS as mediator, and the control variables were included as covariates. First, the significance of the indirect effects (between HPWS and PSS and between PSS and helping behaviour) were conducted while using bootstrapping. According to MacKinnon (2008), it is not necessary to interpret the total effect of HPWS on helping behaviour. However, the total effect between the predictor and criterion variable needs to be significant (MacKinnon et al., 2007) or needs to have a theoretical background that supports their relationship (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). The upcoming step was to look at the path while entering the mediator variable (PSS) into the model. Lastly, the table Indirect effect(s) of X on Y or HPWS on helping behaviour was investigated. Here the confidence intervals (BootLLCI and BootULCI), which were built through bootstrapping, were analyzed if zero is included in these intervals. If zero is not included in these intervals, it can be assumed that the indirect effect is significant. Another essential assumption is to follow to ensure that the mediation exists, namely, the coefficient between the IV and DV needs to be larger than this effect with the mediator included (MacKinnon et al., 2007). To test the whole model, a moderation mediation analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS Model 7, as this model allows to test the conditional effect of hope on the relationship between HPWS and PSS, under three different circumstances of hope (- 1 standard deviation, mean, + 1 standard deviation). To test the moderation, the first step was to see if the interaction term (HPWS and hope) had a significant conditional effect on PSS, the mediator. Further, all components of the interaction terms in this scenario were centered by PROCESS itself before the actual interaction term was calculated (Hayes, 2018).

Results

Descriptive statistics

In Table 3 the means, standard deviations and correlations of the used variables are illustrated. The results revealed that there was a positive significant association between HPWS and PSS ($r = .47, p < .001$), a positive significant correlation between HPWS and helping behaviour ($r = .23, p < .001$), a positive significant correlation between HPWS and hope ($r = .34, p < .001$), and a positive significant correlation between PSS and helping behaviour ($r = .30, p < .001$). The control variable organizational tenure ($r = .14, p < .05$) had a positive significant correlation with helping behaviour. The control variable country correlated positively significant with HPWS ($r = .26, p < .001$), hope ($r = .22, p < .001$), and helping behaviour ($r = .25, p < .001$). Moreover, the data did not indicated multicollinearity (HPWS, Tolerance = .74, VIF = 1.40; PSS, Tolerance = .76, VIF = 1.32; hope, Tolerance = .86, VIF = 1.16).

Table 3

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. HPWS	3.7	.56	–					
2. PSS	4.1	.66	.47**	–				
3. Hope	3.8	.53	.34**	.30**	–			
4. Helping Behaviour	4.2	.54	.23**	.30**	.39**	–		
5. Country	1.3	.48	.17**	.10	.24**	.26**	–	
6. Organizational Tenure	5.3	6.70	-.01	-.01	.04	.12*	.17**	–

Note. ** $p < .01$ (2-tailed), * $p < .05$ (2-tailed)

Min/max scores: HPWS, PSS, Hope, Helping Behaviour (1-5); Country (1 = Netherlands, 2 = Germany); Organizational Tenure (0-44)

Hypotheses testing

To test the Hypotheses Hayes' PROCESS macro model 7 was used. The results revealed that hope does not moderate the effect of HPWS and PSS ($B = .16, s.e. = .19, t = .84, p = .399$). Moreover, the overall moderation mediation model was not supported with the index of moderated mediation = .03, 95% CI [-.0457, .0884], since zero was included within

the bootstrap interval, indicating no significant moderation effect of hope on HPWS on the indirect effect via PSS (Hayes, 2015). Therefore, Hypothesis 6 is not supported.

The moderating effect of hope on the association between HPWS and PSS was tested with PROCESS model 1. The overall model was significant $F(5,222) = 13.89, p < .001$, predicting 24,51% of variance. The relationship between hope and PSS was not significant ($B = .19, s.e. = .10, p = .073$) and further, hope did not moderate the effect between HPWS and PSS significantly, $F(1,222) = .71, p = .3992, LL = -.2148, UL = .5369$. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 is not supported.

The mediating role of PSS between the association of HPWS and helping behaviour was tested using PROCESS model 4. A total effect of HPWS on helping behaviour was found ($B = .19, s.e. = .07, p = .006$). After entering PSS as a mediator into the model, HPWS predicted the mediator PSS significantly ($B = .49, s.e. = .07, p < .001$), which predicted helping behaviour significantly ($B = .20, s.e. = .06, p < .001$). Moreover, the association between HPWS and helping behaviour is mediated by PSS (indirect effect $ab = .11, LL = .0435, UL = .1769$). Therefore, Hypothesis 4 is supported. All results can be found in Table 2.

The direct effects between the variables were tested through multiple regressions. The direct effect between HPWS and helping behaviour was significant ($B = .19, s.e. = .06, p = .002$), the direct effect between HPWS and PSS was significant ($B = .55, s.e. = .07, p < .001$), and the direct effect between PSS and helping behaviour was significant ($B = .23, s.e. = .05, p < .001$). Therefore, Hypotheses 1,2 and 3 are supported.

Table 4*Results of moderation mediation analysis*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4			
	Helping Behaviour			PSS			PSS			Helping Behaviour			
	<i>B</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>T</i>	
Constant	2.73**	.30	9.04	1.59**	.33	4.86	4.08**	.12	34.15	3.03**	.25	11.90	
Organizational Tenure	.01	.00	1.87	-.00	.00	-.18	-.00	.00	-.21	.01	.00	1.87	
Country	.23**	.07	3.26	-.01	.09	-.16	-.00	.09	-.06	.23*	.07	3.26	
HPWS	.08	.07	1.10	.49**	.07	6.64	.48**	.09	5.21	.08	.07	1.10	
PSS	.20**	.06	3.40	–	–	–	–	–	–	.20**	.06	3.40	
Hope				.19*	.08	2.48	–	–	–	–	–	–	
HPWS * Hope							.16	.19	.84	.16	.19	.84	
	$R^2 = .11$			$R^2 = .239$			$R^2 = .25$			$R^2 = .16$			
	$F(3,224) = 9.39**$			$F(4,223) = 17.50**$			$F(5,222) = 13.89**$			$F(4,223) = 10.29**$			
Indirect effect	<i>B</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>									
HPWS → PSS → HB	.11	.03	.0435	.1769									
Index of moderated mediation										<i>B</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
										.03	.03	-.0457	.0884

Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; $N = 228$, unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. Bootstrap sample size = 5000; LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval 95%; UL = upper limit

Discussion

This thesis investigated to what extent the relationship between perceptions of HPWS and helping behaviour is mediated by PSS and to what extent the relationship between perceptions of HPWS and PSS is moderated by hope. The results indicated a direct relationship between HPWS and helping behaviour, PSS and helping behaviour, and HPWS and PSS. Further, a full mediation of PSS on the association between HPWS and helping behaviour was found. However, the moderating effect of hope on the association between HPWS and PSS was rejected. Therefore, the overarching model was not supported as well.

The moderating role of hope in the relationship of employee perceptions of HPWS and PSS was investigated. As stated in the HR attribution theory (Nishii et al., 2008), employees differ in their perceptions of HPWS. Since hope is a positive emotional state (Peterson & Luthans, 2003) where individuals expect more positive outcomes (Tilman et al., 2018) and have mechanisms to overcome challenging tasks (Bressler, 2009), it was proposed that the higher the level of hope the more positive the association between HPWS and PSS. However, the results did not confirm this association. Therefore, Hypothesis 5 and Hypothesis 6 were not supported. Nevertheless, when recalling the theoretical foundation, hope could mediate the association between HPWS and helping behaviour. As hope can be influenced, it rather acts as an explanation in the aforementioned relationship than as a condition. For instance, one part of HPWS are training and development practices (Boon et al., 2014), allowing the employee to foster and develop new knowledge (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2000). Through this new knowledge, employees can find new pathways to solve problems and find the motivation to overcome challenges (Snyder, 2002), which are components of hope. Therefore, it can be argued that HPWS can enhance employees' level of hope since it offers them new mechanisms to achieve their goals (Snyder et al., 1991). Through this investment and based on SET (Blau, 1964), employees are willing to reciprocate to the organization (Gouldner, 1960). As enhanced hope leads to positive emotions, enhancing the interaction between employees (Diener & Seligman, 2002), and additionally through the developed positive attitude, it can be expected that employees will participate in helping behaviour (Pradhan et al., 2016). Additionally, the enhanced level of hope leads to more happiness, which fosters the motivation to conduct extra-role behaviour (Corral-Verdugo, 2012). Hence, HPWS can foster positive moods in employees, such as hope, through which employees are more motivated to help others (Avey et al., 2008). This is in accordance with the positive psychology literature, which states that positive moods are linked to helping behaviour (Salovey et al., 1991).

Therefore, HPWS can influence levels of hope, which ultimately lead to helping behaviour. To investigate this, a supplementary mediation analysis was carried out. The analysis revealed that HPWS predicts hope significantly, and hope predicts helping behaviour significantly. Furthermore, the results revealed that the association between HPWS and helping behaviour is fully mediated by hope. The results can be found in Appendix C.

Moreover, the mediating role of PSS on the association between HPWS and helping behaviour was investigated. In agreement with the HR attribution theory, employees make assumptions about how they perceive HPWS (Nishii et al., 2008). This can be influenced by supervisors, as they explain why these actions are beneficial and demonstrate to employees that HPWS can be seen as positive actions (Eisenberger et al., 2002). Further, when employees perceive that their supervisor uses HPWS as support and cares for their well-being, they want to reciprocate with desired (Gouldner, 1960) and positive behaviour (Marescaux et al., 2012). In line with the supported Hypothesis 1, this also holds for the direct relationship between HPWS and helping behaviour. According to SET and the confirmed Hypothesis 2, PSS leads to an obligation to support the supervisor (Eisenberger et al., 2002), which goes beyond the employment contract and, therefore, employees participating in extra-role behaviour (Becker & Kernan, 2003). Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) found out that employees are more motivated to conduct helping behaviour when PSS is high, and Shahid et al. (2017) found out that the more HPWS are implemented, the more PSS arise. This is in line with the confirmation of Hypothesis 3. Taking the abovementioned findings into account, it was anticipated that PSS mediates the relationship between perceptions of HPWS and helping behaviour. This is in accordance with the results since it was demonstrated that PSS acts as a mediator. Consequently, the association between HPWS and helping behaviour is fully mediated by PSS, revealing that only when HPWS leads to PSS helping behaviour will be executed and therefore, supporting Hypothesis 4.

Further, due to the mediating role of hope in the same relationship, it was tested whether a parallel mediation of hope and PSS exists. A simultaneous mediation with Hayes PROCESS Model 4 was performed. Through simultaneous mediation, it can be examined if the mediators are independent of each other (MacKinnon et al., 2007). The results can be found in Appendix C. The analysis revealed that PSS and hope fully mediate the relationship between HPWS and helping behaviour in a parallel way. Through the parallel mediation of hope and PSS, it becomes apparent that HPWS lead to positive attitudes and behaviour, which in the end leads to helping behaviour. This aligns with SET as employees are willing to reciprocate towards the organization with positive behaviour (Gouldner, 1963). Further,

HPWS has a positive influence on employees, which fosters hope and PSS and, in the end, employees are in a positive mood and perceive their supervisor as supportive to conduct in helping behaviour.

Limitations and future research

Although insightful results were revealed in this thesis, different limitations came arose. First, the sample was collected using convenience sampling, which generates a specific sample composition (Warner, 2013). Therefore, convenience sampling led to some possible sample bias estimates (Jager et al., 2017). When looking back at the age distribution of the workforce of Germany and the Netherlands 85.5% of the workforce were between 25 and 55 years old (bpb, 2020; CBS, 2021a). However, 77.2% are between 25 and 55 years old in the sample, and 14.5% are older than 56 years. This reveals that the sample can be considered rather old compared to the population, making the results more applicable for older people. Further, the sample is highly educated as most of the participants (73.9%) hold a bachelor's degree or higher, making the results less generalizable to people with a lower educational level. Therefore, future research should use random sampling techniques, including all ages and educational levels, to ensure the generalizability of the results.

Second, a cross-sectional design and self-reported data were used in this thesis. Since the participants assess their behaviour through self-ratings, it could be the case that a social-desirability bias occurred, as the participants wanted to make a good impression even if they knew that the research was anonymous (Rosenman et al., 2011). This is in line with the high average scores of the variables. For instance, the average score on helping behaviour was 4.3 out of 5 and 4.1 out on 5 on PSS. As cross-sectional design collects data once (Warner, 2013), it is difficult to make inferences about causality since causality is based on time (Zhang et al., 2017). Further, cross-sectional studies measure the effect and the cause at the same time (Gad, 2014). Therefore, future research should use a longitudinal design to increase the result quality, observe changes and provide a temporal order. Moreover, longitudinal designs can examine if the perceptions of HPWS are associated with a change in employees' behaviour (Wall & Wood, 2005).

Practical implications

This thesis offers new insights, as most studies, contrastingly to this thesis, focus on the association between HPWS and organizational-level outcomes (Combs et al., 2006; Mossholder et al., 2011) and not on individual-level behaviours, such as helping behaviour

(Mossholder et al., 2011). It stands out that it is beneficial for organizations when employees conduct extra-role behaviour, as it increases commitment, performance, and a supportive work environment (Dyne & LePine, 1998; Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2012). Accordingly, it is crucial to understand which factors enhance the willingness to show helping behaviour to achieve the intended outcomes. First, in accordance with Zhu and Akhtar (2014) and the result of this thesis revealed, when HPWS leads to PSS, it influences employees to reciprocate with helping behaviour, which leads to a cooperative work climate. Further, this enhanced cooperative work climate reduces unproductiveness and conflicts between the organizational members (Tjosvold & Johnson, 2000). Thereby, organizations should offer employees HPWS so that employees feel supported which motivates them to conduct extra-role behaviour, which goes beyond the stated employment contract.

Since PSS acts as a mediator between the association of HPWS and helping behaviour, it is needed for organizations to favor PSS to achieve the intended outcome. This makes supervisors a crucial mechanism to achieve intended outcomes (Fu et al., 2018). Therefore, organizations should follow the SHRM Process Model, meaning that supervisors should implement HPWS so that employees perceive them as supportive. Here organizations and senior managers should support supervisors to enable them to carry out consistent messages and to treat all employees equally, which are aligned with organizational values and goals (Kehoe & Wright, 2013). These organizational goals should be communicated to the supervisor understandably to allow them to communicate clearly to the employees. To support the understanding of the organizational values and goals and treat employees equally, it is recommended to offer training opportunity to supervisors. Moreover, when supervisors help employees understand why and how HPWS are used and which aim they follow, employees are willing to reciprocate the organization and the supervisor by helping others (Deckop et al., 2003).

This thesis revealed that hope acts as an explaining, mediating, mechanism instead of a conditional effect on the relationship between HPWS and helping behaviour. HPWS have the ability to enhance employees' levels of hope (Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Moreover, employees in positive and hopeful states attribute towards HPWS in a more positive manner. This is due to the fact that they perceive HPWS as mean to support their skills, motivation and opportunity to contribute towards work related goals (Tillman et al., 2018). Furthermore, hopeful employees are willing to overcome challenging tasks (Bressler, 2009) and to achieve their goals (Synder, 2002). This makes hopeful employees more engaged in their work, which is beneficial for organizations (Gallagher & Lopez, 2009). Hopeful employees have enhanced

job satisfaction, lower turnover motivation and perform better than employees who score lower in hope (Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2003). Therefore, organizations should use HPWS to foster PSS and hope to achieve helping behaviour.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to examine the association between HPWS and helping behaviour, the role of PSS as a mediator on this association, and the moderating role of hope on the association between HPWS and PSS. The results revealed a positive relationship of all direct effects, namely the effect on HPWS and helping behaviour, the effect on PSS and helping behaviour, and HPWS on helping behaviour. Further, the results revealed that PSS and hope fully mediate the association between HPWS and helping behaviour. This is in accordance to SET and HR attribution theory, as employees display reciprocal actions in return for positively perceived HPWS. Outcomes of this reciprocal behaviour are positive attitudes and favorable employee behaviours, such as helping behaviour. Moreover, these findings offer valuable insights for organizations, as they underline the importance and usefulness of HPWS to achieve the intended organizational outcomes, which can go beyond the settled employment contract. Concluding, employee perception of HPWS influence behavioral outcomes, such as helping behaviour.

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Appendix A

Employee Questionnaire English

HR Practices: To what extent do you agree that there are opportunities for your team to benefit from the programs and/or arrangements listed below:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Training, courses and workshops for employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The opportunity to obtain new skills and knowledge during work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Coaching in developing knowledge and skills of employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guidance for the career development of employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities to do another job within the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Career prospects within this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A periodic appraisal of the work results by the supervisor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Periodic appraisal conversations with the supervisor about the	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

employees' work results.

Determining the work results to be achieved by the employees.

Self-monitoring of quality of work.

Variety in the job.

Challenging work.

The opportunity to make independent decisions in work.

Own responsibility for work.

Participation in the organisation's policy.

Opportunities for employees to express their opinions on work-related issues within the organisation.

Opportunities to take part in consultations that determine the division of tasks between employees.

Receiving information on the general affairs of the organisation.

Receiving information on specific procedures within the organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving information on important changes within the organisation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Receiving insight into the way decision-making runs within the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support for combining work and care responsibilities in the private sphere of employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Possibilities to adapt the work schedule to the private situation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities to work part-time if the private situation requires it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
An employment contract that offers employees job security with their current employer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Certainty that employees can keep their current job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Certainty that employees can	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

continue to work in the current team.

A higher salary than the market rate.

Other financial compensations and benefits in addition to the basic salary.

A reward that depends on the performance of the employee.

A bonus which depends on the team or department performance.

A share in the profit of the organization.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Perceived Supervisor Support: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
My supervisor cares about my opinions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My work supervisory really cares about my well-being.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor shows very little concern for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Helping Behaviour: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I initiate help to co-workers who have a heavy workload.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I help new employees adapt to their work environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am willing to offer assistance to co-workers to solve work-related problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Hope: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can think of many ways to achieve my current goals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix B

Validity and Reliability Check

Factor Analysis HR Practices

Factor analysis			
	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Factor loading
HR Practices	.713	.001	
Ability	.602	.001	.718
Employee Development			.793
Career Opportunities			.793
Motivation	.619	.001	.833
Performance			.304
Management			
Work-Life Balance			.632
Job Security			.865
Rewards			.393
Opportunity	.664	.001	.794
Job design			.574
Participation			.864
Communication and Information sharing			.823
Employee development	.721	.001	
Training, courses and workshops for employees.			.753
The opportunity to obtain new skills and knowledge during work.			.888
Coaching in developing knowledge and skills of employees.			.811

Career opportunity	.716	.001	
Guidance for the career development of employees.			.722
Opportunities to do another job within the organization.			.865
Career prospects within this organization.			.885
Performance Management	.707	.001	
A periodic appraisal of the work results by the supervisor.			.860
Periodic appraisal conversations with the supervisor about the employees' work results.			.951
Determining the work results to be achieved by the employees.			.721
Self-monitoring of quality of work.			.303
Job design	.722	.001	
Variety in the job.			.750
Challenging work.			.812
The opportunity to make independent decisions in work.			.802
Own responsibility for work.			.730
Participation	.653	.001	
Participation in the			.628

organisation's policy.		
Opportunities for employees to express their opinions on work-related issues within the organisation.		.841
Opportunities to take part in consultations that determine the division of tasks between employees.		.585
Communication and Information sharing	.769	.001
Receiving information on the general affairs of the organisation.		.775
Receiving information on specific procedures within the organisation.		.769
Receiving information on important changes within the organisation.		.804
Receiving insight into the way decision-making runs within the organisation.		.733
Work-Life balance	.686	.000
Support for combining work and care responsibilities in the private sphere of employees.		.712
Possibilities to adapt the work schedule to the		.879

private situation.

Opportunities to work
part-time if the private
situation requires it. .679

Job security .682 .001

An employment contract
that offers employees job
security with their
current employer. .783

Certainty that employees
can keep their current
job. .982

Certainty that employees
can continue to work in
the current team. .749

Rewards .743 .001

A higher salary than the
market rate. .587

Other financial
compensations and
benefits in addition to the
basic salary. .597

A reward that depends on
the performance of the
employee. .749

A bonus which depends
on the team or
department performance. .858

A share in the profit of
the organization .680

Factor Analysis Perceived Supervisor Support

	Factor analysis		
	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Factor loading
Perceived Supervisor Support	.795	.001	
My supervisor cares about my opinions.			.820
My work supervisory really cares about my well-being.			.828
My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values.			.791
My supervisor shows very little concern for me.			.606

Factor Analysis Helping Behaviour

	Factor analysis		
	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Factor loading
Helping Behaviour	.673	.001	
I initiate help to co-workers who have a heavy workload.			.705
I help new employees adapt to their work environment.			.616
I am willing to offer assistance to co-workers to solve work-related problems.			.847

Factor Analysis Hope

	Factor analysis		
	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Factor loading
Hope	.668	.001	
If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it.			.591
At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goal.			.413
There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now.			.603
I can think of many ways to achieve my current goals.			.848

Table 5

Cronbach's alpha analysis per item

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
HPWS	.803	3
Ability enhancing	.770	2
Employee Development	.855	3
Career Opportunities	.862	3
Motivation enhancing	.610	4
Performance Management	.808	4
Job Security	.871	3
Rewards	.822	5
Work-Life Balance	.795	3

Opportunity enhancing	.789	3
Job Design	.856	4
Participation	.717	3
Communication and Information sharing	.849	4
PSS	.830	4
Hope	.688	4
Helping Behaviour	.751	3

Appendix C

Supplementary Analysis

The mediating role of hope

A mediating analysis was performed by using Hayes PROCESS model 4 to test if hope acts as a mediator in the relationship between HPWS and helping behaviour and if hope and PSS act as parallel mediators. First, the role of hope as a mediator. As mentioned before, a total effect between HPWS and helping behaviour was found ($B = .19, s.e. = .07, p = .006$). After entering hope as a mediator, HPWS predicted hope significantly ($B = .30, s.e. = .07, p < .001$), which predicted helping behaviour significantly ($B = .32, s.e. = .06, p < .001$). Further, the association between HPWS and helping behaviour is mediated by hope (indirect effect $ab = .09, LL = .0458, UL = .1593$). In Table 5 the results can be found.

Table 6

Results of the mediation analysis of hope

	<i>B</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Direct effect on dependent variable Helping Behaviour					
Constant	2.35**	.26	9.16	1.8473	2.8599
HPWS	.10**	.07	1.36	-.0433	.2360
Country	.17*	.07	2.50	.0360	.3056
Organizational Tenure	.01	.00	1.74	-.0007	.0119
Hope	.32**	.06	5.16	.2004	.4477
$R^2 = .20$					
$F(4,223) = 15.80^{**}$					
Direct effect on mediating variable Hope					
Constant	2.43**	.24	10.10	1.9588	2.9085
HPWS	.30**	.07	4.25	.1591	.4338
Country	.20*	.08	2.59	.0490	.3591
Organizational Tenure	.00	.00	.25	-.0051	.0066
$R^2 = .15$					
$F(3,224) = 13.01^{**}$					

Indirect effect on dependent**variable**

HPWS → Hope → Helping Behaviour	.09	.03	.0458	.1593
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Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; $N = 228$, unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. Bootstrap sample size = 5000; LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval 95%; UL = upper limit

The parallel mediation of PSS and hope**Table 7**

Results of the parallel mediation analysis

	<i>B</i>	<i>s.e.</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>LLCI</i>	<i>ULCI</i>
Direct effect on dependent					
variable					
Constant	2.10**	.27	7.74	1.5644	2.6325
HPWS	.02	.07	.23	-.1299	.1649
Country	.17*	.07	2.59	.0413	.3047
Organizational Tenure	.01	.01	1.80	-.0005	.0119
PSS	.16**	.05	2.94	.0530	.2690
Hope	.29**	.06	4.52	.1652	.4207

$$R^2 = .23$$

$$F(5,222) = 14.97**$$

Direct effect on mediating**variable PSS**

Constant	2.05**	.28	7.25	1.4962	2.6128
HPWS	.55**	.08	7.26	.3984	.6955
Country	.03	.09	.29	-.1493	.2008
Organizational Tenure	-.00	.00	-.15	-.0077	.0066

$$R^2 = .22$$

$$F(3,224) = 19.34**$$

Direct effect on mediating**variable Hope**

Constant	2.43**	.24	10.10	1.9588	2.9085
----------	--------	-----	-------	--------	--------

HPWS	.30**	.07	4.25	.1591	.4338
Country	.20*	.08	2.59	.0490	.3591
Organizational Tenure	.00	.00	.25	-.0051	.0066

$$R^2 = .15$$

$$F(3,224) = 13.01**$$

Indirect effect on dependent
variable

Total indirect effect	.18	.04		.0992	.2600
HPWS → PSS → Helping Behaviour	.09	.03		.0284	.1525
HPWS → Hope → Helping Behaviour	.09	.03		.0405	.1460

Note. ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$; $N = 228$, unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. Bootstrap sample size = 5000; LL = lower limit; CI = confidence interval 95%; UL = upper limit