

**CAN DUALITY OF BOUNDARY SPANNERS BE NESTING SPACE
FOR ATTRIBUTIONS? A MIXED-METHOD STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

Today's workforce ecosystem comprises interdependent actors from within the organization and beyond, functioning to attain both individual and group objectives. The structure of such ecosystems has undergone a radical change, influenced by technological, social, and economic influences. These changes have enabled organizations to extend internal projects to incorporate external workers, thereby shifting towards more short-term, team-based work engagements. Consequently, the number of non-employees with specialized skills and knowledge who participate in collaborative projects is rising. Organizations are now opening opportunities for teamwork with external members of varied backgrounds, orientations, and abilities who can engage in time-bound projects. Interestingly, this conceptualization of the workforce ecosystem offers a unique context to study how distinct individuals involved in these collaborative projects span their behaviors to drive the success and effective workforce orchestration required for these projects.

To attain individual and group goals, organizational actors in these contemporary ecosystems engage in boundary-spanning behavior, which involves integrating activities within and outside organizations across diverse environmental contexts. A review of the boundary-spanners literature suggests that their actions and behaviors take place intra- or inter-organizationally, resulting in the formation of a shared understanding of organizational practices. Hence, it is of utmost importance to comprehend employees' perceptions of boundary-spanners, both those who span behavior internally and those who span behavior externally, as perceptions influence subsequent outcomes. Employee perceptions and their ensuing behavioral activities necessitate extensive theoretical and empirical consideration to establish a solid foundation for the effectiveness of outcomes of collaborative projects. Building on structuration theory, this thesis intends to investigate how the boundary-spanning behavior of individuals working on collaborative consulting projects impacts employees'

perceptions of the strength of the human management system. The thesis explores HR intervention consulting projects in the collaborative association of HR consulting firms and their client organizations.

By employing an exploratory approach, I gain insight into the boundary-spanning behaviors experienced by participants in these projects, as well as employee perceptions and other organizational factors that affect how activities are perceived to be related to the effectiveness of the suggested HR system. The outcomes from this research supplement the extant body of knowledge on boundary-spanning and employee perceptions by unraveling a unique relationship between them. Evidence highlights the simultaneous boundary-spanning behavior of HR consultants ‘and’ project sponsors of client organizations is identified as ‘duality.’ The novel conceptualization of the ‘duality’ of boundary-spanning behavior suggests that integrated approaches to boundary-spanning behavior encompass more than the effects of single-unit boundary-spanning activities. This explains the underlying mechanism that creates positive employee perceptions of suggested HR interventions and generates a judicious method for determining the long-term viability of recommended HR interventions. It also makes a remarkable contribution by introducing the plurality of the source of boundary-spanning behavior. It is the structure of this plurality and the interactions within that form an effective approach to workforce orchestration in such a diverse ecosystem.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Definition
ABDC	Australian Business Deans Council
AF	Attitude Formation
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BSBHR	Boundary Spanning Behaviour of Human Resource Consultant
BSBPS	Boundary spanning behaviour of project sponsors
CB-SEM	Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHRO	Chief Human Resource Officer
CMB	Common Method Bias
DV	Dependent Variable
EAC	Employee Affective Commitment
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource Management
HTMT	Hetero-Trait Mono-Trait
IJ	Interactional Justice
IJV	International Joint Venture
IV	Independent Variable
M&A	Mergers and Acquisition

MNE	Multi-National Enterprise
PAC	Perceived Absorptive Capacity
PHRMSS	Perceptions of Human Resource Management System Strength
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling
RTC	Resistance to Change
SEM	Structural Equation Modeling
SRMR	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
TMT	Top Management Team
TTO	Technology Transfer Offices
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

Similar to the f^2 effect size, q^2 is assessed to measure the relative impact of predictive relevance Q^2 . It allowed me to assess the contribution of BSBHR and BSBPS to PHRMSS' Q^2 value. It was calculated manually using the formula $q^2 = \frac{Q^2_{included} - Q^2_{excluded}}{1 - Q^2_{included}}$. [Table 25](#) presents the values of q^2 . The values of q^2 obtained show that both the exogenous constructs have large predictive relevance for PHRMSS.

Table 235: Calculation of q^2 Effect Size values

Exogenous construct	$Q^2_{included}$	$Q^2_{excluded}$	q^2
BSBHR	0.262	-0.082	0.466
BSBPS	0.262	-0.057	0.432

11. DISCUSSION

Through a systematic blending of research approaches (qualitative and quantitative), and research designs (interviews and survey questionnaire), I attempted to attain a deeper, broader, and enhanced knowledge of the phenomena of boundary-spanning behavior in a workforce ecosystem that promotes multiple players to work together on collaborative projects. To do so, I employed an exploratory sequential mixed-method research methodology and created two research questions mentioned below to guide the thesis:

RQ1: How do individuals in a diverse workforce ecosystem operate at the periphery of the boundary in HR consulting projects?

RQ2: What are the aspects that lead to the successful reception of suggested recommendations by consultants in HR consulting collaborative projects?

The first question guided Phase 1 of the thesis, intending to uncover new understandings of a diverse workforce ecosystem phenomenon as seen in the context of HR consulting projects.

Specifically, I aimed to understand how actors in inter-organizational collaborative projects function and span their behaviors across the boundaries to achieve collective goals. I garnered retrospective and present-day testimonies from individuals working on HR consulting projects from both the client and consulting sides.

In this regard, Chapter 6, which reported the findings of Phase 1, aimed to respond to the thesis question to explain the phenomenon of working in an ecosystem where both internal and external actors work towards aligning organizational strategic goals. The findings revealed that perceptions of the human resource management system strength shaped by consulting recommendations result from the interplay of the boundary-spanning behavior of external HR consultants and the boundary-spanning behavior of project leaders/sponsors of client organizations. The themes uncovered in Phase 1 also served as constructs or variables for the thence-created conceptual model describing relationships among different constructs. The conceptual model established from the results of the qualitative study was then quantitatively evaluated. The results of Phase 2 of the thesis statistically confirm the reliability and validity of the model. Aiming at further refining the comprehension of the phenomena, in the next parts, I address how boundary-spanning behaviors of diverse individuals influence the perceptions of employees in client organizations.

Drawing on structuration theory, this thesis examined the dynamics of boundary-spanning behavior in the contemporary workforce ecosystem. Multivariate analysis reveals that the boundary-spanning behavior of HR consultants and project sponsors positively impacts the perceived strength of the human resource management system (H1a, H2a). As seen in [Table 24](#), the coefficient of determination (R^2) is large, and the Q^2 value is greater than 0 – these findings together represent that the boundary-spanning behavior of both these actors in an HR consulting project collectively has a substantial effect on the employee perceptions of recommendations. The combined impact is further validated and reinforced by the large values

of the f^2 effect size and q^2 effect size. This can be understood as – if either of the constructs of boundary-spanning behavior is removed from the model, employee perceptions will be considerably impacted. Alternatively, the thesis suggests that both these actors together have to exert positive spanning behavior to fill the structural holes in a collaborative project. Hence, I assert that it is the ‘duality’ of boundary-spanning behavior that elicits desired employee perceptions towards the recommended interventions and promotes employees’ combined comprehension of the actions and conducts that are appreciated and compensated by the organizations. The concurrent interplay of boundary-spanning behaviors between distinct organizational entities conceptualized as duality is the intersecting range of organizational interests giving rise to a strong base for further implementation of suggested practices in the HR system. The duality facilitates the employees’ sensemaking enabling them to align individual and organizational goals better. Additionally, it accentuates maintaining consultant-client associations by shaping how client employees perceive the services' success and hence offers an effective approach to workforce orchestration.

Second, the PLS-SEM tested the moderating roles of perceived absorptive capacity, attitude formation, resistance to change, and interactional justice in the model (H1b, H1c, H2b, H2c). As seen in [Figure 17](#), it is inferred that as the perceived absorptive capacity of the client project sponsor increases, the relationship between the boundary-spanning behavior of HR consultants and employee perceptions is strengthened (H1b). Specifically, the results indicate that HR consultants’ boundary-spanning behavior more strongly reinforces the employee perceptions when the client project sponsors clearly display their willingness to identify, understand, and acquire new knowledge suggested by the consultants. Sponsors with robust perceived absorptive capacities lower the barriers to knowledge and expertise transmission across organizations. This further enables the client employees to absorb the recommendations

offered by consultants, thereby accelerating the process of joint sense-making since actors on both sides collaboratively constructed and reconstructed new knowledge structures.

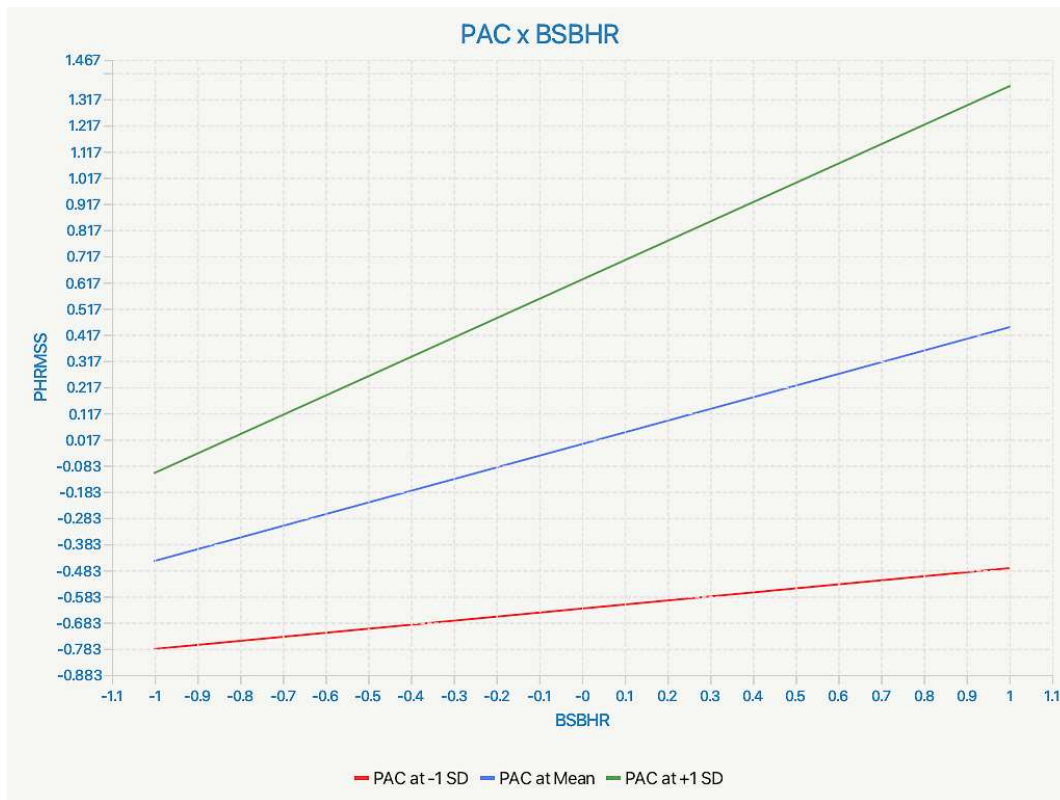


Figure 17: The moderating effect of the perceived absorptive capacity of project sponsors on the relationship between boundary-spanning behavior of HR consultants and employee perceptions of the strength of the HRM system

Contrary to that, as seen in [Figure 18](#), as the attitude of project team members formed towards HR consultants increases, the relationship between the boundary-spanning behavior of HR consultants and perceptions of the strength of the HRM system of employees is weakened (H1c). Boundary-spanning behavior implies crossing organizational territories (Mell, van Knippenberg, van Ginkel, Heugens, 2022), and this also evokes organizational dynamics, which causes negative reactions and responses toward HR consultants. According to territoriality theory, people engage in provincial defense strategies to protect or preserve their control over important organizational areas, especially when that control is under threat

(Gardner, Munyon, Hom, and Griffeth, 2018). The findings indicate that when project team members from the client side experience the boundary-spanning behavior of HR consultants, they form a negative attitude towards their behavioral dispositions. I suggest that this negative attitude is generated primarily by two factors. First, given the perception that external consultants represent their teams, project team members lose control over the teams' outward identity, thereby diluting their understanding of who is in charge of the team or the organization's internal operations. Second, project team members do not necessarily align with the resolution strategies of consultants. Consequently, these explain the negative moderation of attitude formation on the relationship between boundary-spanning behavior and employee perceptions.

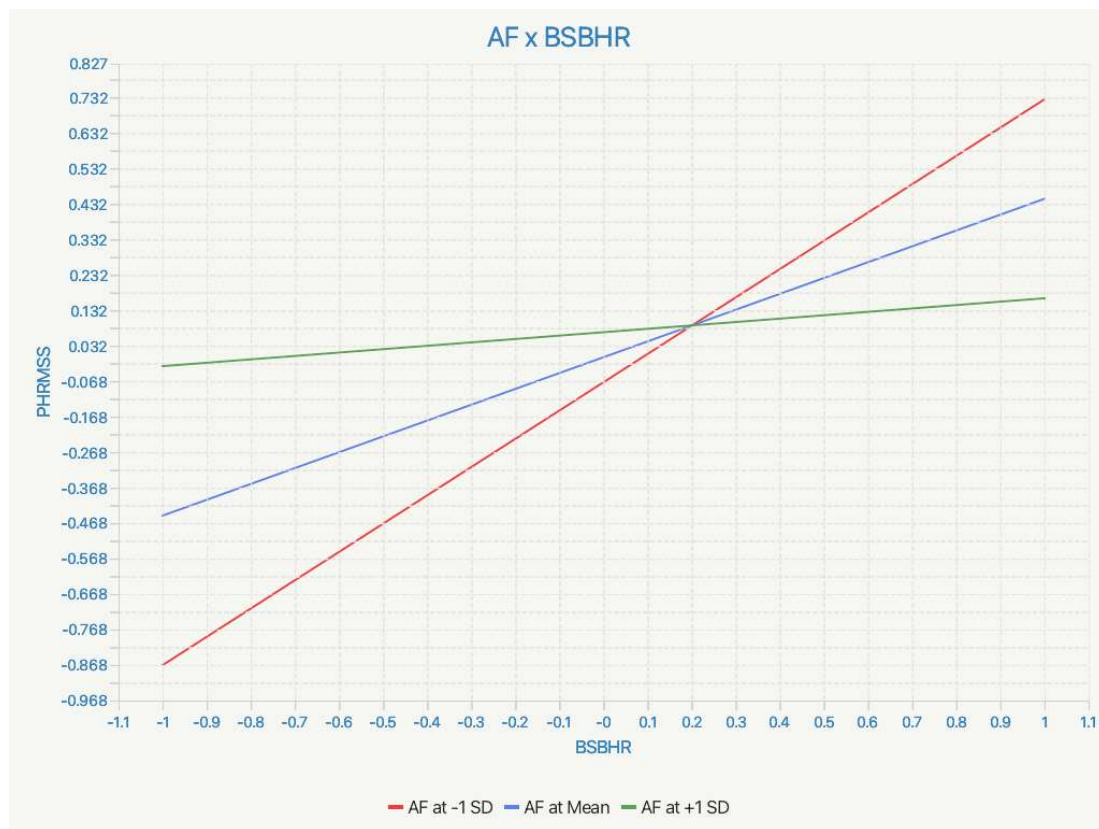


Figure 18: The moderating effect of the attitude formation on the relationship between boundary-spanning behavior of HR consultants and employee perceptions of the strength of the HRM system

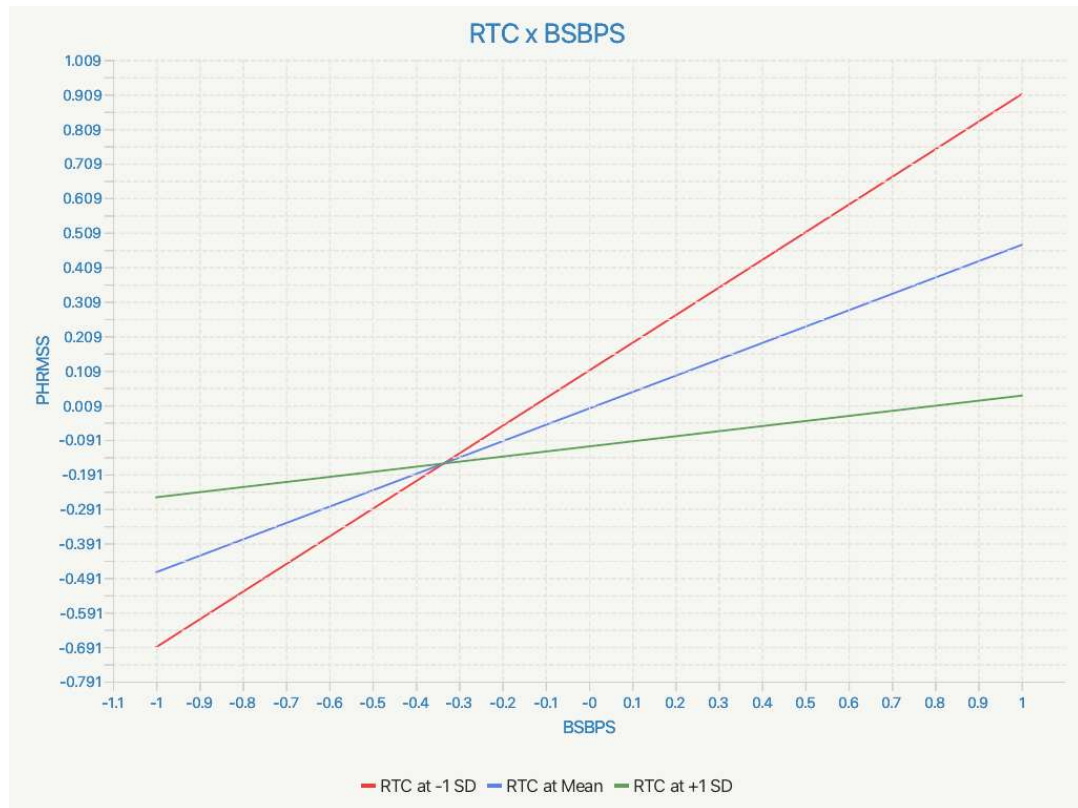


Figure 19: The moderating effect of resistance to change on the relationship between boundary-spanning behavior of project sponsors and employee perceptions of the strength of HRM

Similarly, [Figure 19](#) presents that client employees' higher resistance to change weakens the positive relationship between the boundary-spanning behavior of client project sponsors and the strength of the HRM system as perceived by the employees (H2b). Consulting projects with external consultants are laden with changes, ambiguity, and uncertainty, and so client employees experience resistance to the suggested change interventions. Building on Wanberg and Banas (2000), I suggest that the effects of this resistance are explained by the amount and quality of information on consulting projects provided to the employees. Employees' perceptions of organizational change interventions and willingness to work with it are more favorable when they receive timely, useful information about the change (Oreg, 2003). On consulting projects, the employees do not directly interact with the consultants; only the project

team from the client side does. So, their minimal to nil involvement in consulting projects strengthen their resistance to the intervention changes, thereby weakening the impacts of the boundary-spanning behavior of project sponsors.

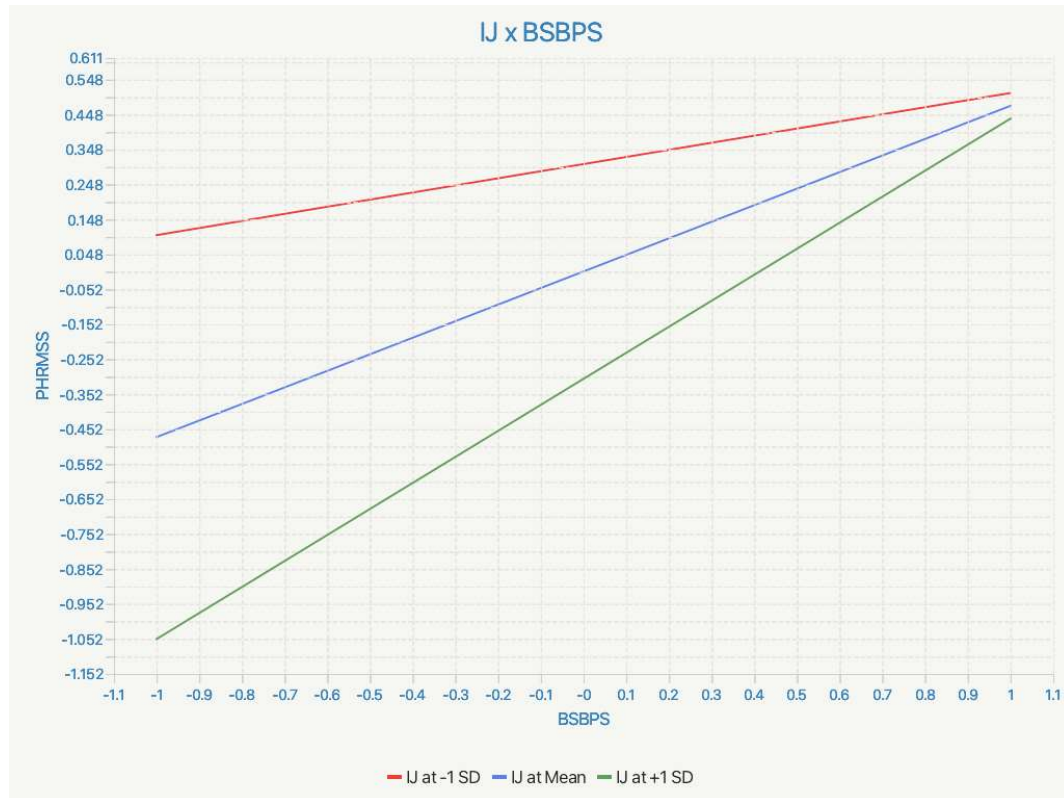


Figure 20: The moderating effect of interactional justice on the relationship between boundary-spanning behavior of project sponsors and employee perceptions of the strength of HRM

While Figure 20, on the contrary, shows that higher interactional justice observed between project team members and project sponsors will strengthen the relationship between the boundary-spanning behavior of client project sponsors and the strength of the HRM system as perceived by the employees (H2c). The analysis of the moderator interactional justice in the model suggests that when project sponsors adhere to the facets of justice in interpersonal treatment and information exchange, it spurs communal attachment and reciprocal support between project sponsors and project team members. Project sponsors span their behaviors

through supportive coaching behavior towards the project team members. Interactional justice, combined with the boundary-spanning behavior of the project sponsor, also promotes information processing via open communication, enhanced willingness to share information, and curtail differences. Consequently, when client members work in the complex ecosystem of a consulting project, improved interactional justice between project sponsors and project team members leads to enhanced collective decision-making, as revealed in positive perceptions.

12. THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Theoretical Contribution to the boundary-spanning approach

Beyond HR consultant-client relationships established in this analysis, these conclusions purposefully reinforce the understanding of how to build and maintain inter-organizational relationships through collective boundary-spanning behavior reflected in the duality approach. Primarily the thesis results offer a scaffold of a system of positive ramifications to orchestrate the workforce ecosystem effectively. This contribution to the workforce ecosystem is significant for comprehending how to establish effective acceptance and sustenance of recommended HR solutions and knowledge transfer. The novel approach to the duality of boundary-spanning behavior emphasizes that facilitative orchestration from either side of the boundary stimulates conditions for activating positive employee perceptions of outcomes of associative working. The complementing effects of this approach reduce the complexity of the working environment with multiple stakeholders and accelerate the acceptance and empowerment of stakeholders through interactions.

The results of the thesis significantly contribute to the literature of boundary-spanning theory by addressing the plurality of the source of boundary-spanning behavior. Previous studies have focused on the single sources of boundary-spanning behavior, While Huyghe et al. (2014) do explore the hybrid model of boundary-spanning behavior, they contend that it is

the different types of boundary-spanning behavior exhibited by a single entity. There are not ample studies that primarily focus on the non-singularity of the source of boundary-spanning behavior. The findings of my thesis significantly contribute to this gap in the spanning behavior literature. The plurality of boundary-spanning behavior establishes a structure of positive ramifications of the perceived strength of the human resource management system. This structure subsequently establishes another structure of effective workforce orchestration in such a diverse ecosystem.

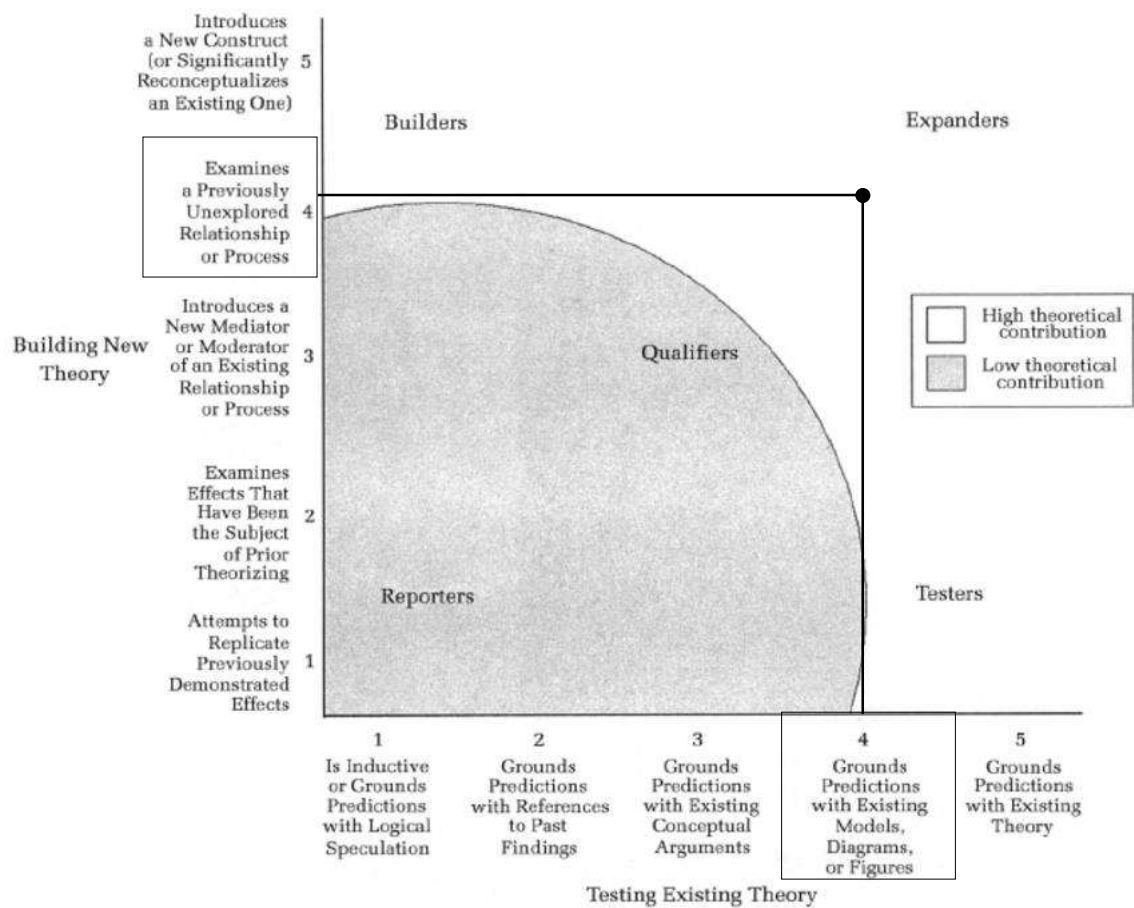


Figure 21: Theoretical contribution based on the dimensions of Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007)

The thesis results further contribute to the comprehension of boundary-spanning by extending the scope of literature on the concept of boundary-spanning behavior as conduits of knowledge flows and network systems. Results establish that the duality of boundary-spanning behavior fosters approaches of interactions to enable multiple individuals to acquire and integrate external knowledge. The thesis also presents the importance of integrative participation for stable structures and more dynamic collaboration.

12.2 Theoretical Contribution to the Structuration Theory

The findings of the thesis state that the actions of drivers of consulting projects – HR consultants and project sponsors are embedded in the structure of the workforce ecosystem. Giddens (1984) posits that social structures are continuously being created through the flow of everyday social practice; along these lines, the thesis contributes to explaining the interactions among elements in this ecosystem and their effects. By examining the previously unexplored interactive relationships of moderators, the thesis model explains how their interactive effects highlight the very fundamentals of structuration theory by demonstrating the continuous interplay and reciprocity of structure and action. Primarily, my thesis contributes to the theory of structuration by showing that recurrent and interactive actions of boundary-spanning of HR consultants and project sponsors lead to positive ramifications, which are reflected in the perceived strength of the human resource management system. The findings show that a sustainable social system is created not as a product of the mere presence of individuals but as a series of ongoing activities and practices that people carry on and is encapsulated in the form of ramifications of positive perceptions of strong HR systems. By utilizing structuration theory, thesis outcomes offer leaders and organizations operating in such diverse ecosystems a manual on approaches to leverage authoritative resources in the enactment of systems that encompass all types of workers and embrace the values they bring in for mutual benefits. The alignment and balance in this structure, characterized by the boundary conditions of norms, power, and

interests, are established and supported by dynamics of boundary-spanning behavior and employee perceptions. The multi-sample model allows me to analyze the structure of an HR consulting project acts as a) a medium, enabling a positive relationship between boundary-spanners and employee perceptions, and b) an outcome, reflecting the effects of moderators on the structure of the previously established direct relationship. When actors follow the rules of the structure, it is strengthened; nevertheless, when they consistently deviate from the rules, the structure is changed. The thesis findings illuminate the ways in which actions of HR consultants, project sponsors, project team members, and client employees result in the formation of a modified structure of positive ramifications that dynamically maintain and recursively transform the very existing structure that was created.

Using the dimensions of Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007) first, by examining the previously unexplored interactive relationships of perceived absorptive capacity, attitude formation, resistance to change, and interactional justice, this thesis explains how the actions of HR consultants, project sponsors, and client employees lead to the formation of a modified structure which is reflected in the duality of boundary-spanning behavior; their actions in this structure further enable client project sponsors and client project team members to dynamically maintain and recursively transform the very existing structure that was created. Conclusively, these interactive effects of moderators highlight and exemplify the very fundamentals of structuration theory by demonstrating the continuous interplay and reciprocity of structure and action.

Second, by studying the impact of the boundary-spanning behavior of these actors on employee perceptions of the suggested HRM system, the thesis highlights the simultaneous monitoring of actions and responses in the process of creating a social system for mutual benefit. Hence, the predictions are based on existing theory – delving into the underlying process that explains the relationship between structure and action. So, in accordance with the

framework of Colquitt and Zapata-Phelan (2007), the thesis lies on (4, 4) on the graph, lies on the coordinates of Expanders, and has a high theoretical contribution ([Figure 21](#)).

12.3 Theoretical Contribution to the antecedents of the perceived strength of the human resource management system

In this thesis, I evaluated a model that exhibited the unique abstraction of the antecedents of the perceived strength of the human resource management system. Findings from the theoretical and statistical analysis aptly demonstrate how employee perceptions of the strength of recommended HRM system are greatly impacted by the duality of boundary-spanning behavior exhibited by drivers of collaborative consulting projects. HR consulting projects primarily focus on suggesting change interventions in client organizations. These findings extensively enrich the current extant literature on change interventions by means of demonstrating the contextually embedded antecedents of employee perceptions. It is interesting to note that organizations can control how strong the consultant-suggested HR system is perceived. This is particularly imperative as the change interventions were externally imposed through external HR consultants. This indicates that it is essential to identify and comprehend the successful drivers of collaborative change interventions. Specifically, the thesis contributes by providing organizations that intend to implement change interventions with a technique that guides involved stakeholders with a manual to plan the implementation of change interventions so as to make them acceptable to the employees in the form of positive perceptions.

12.4 Practical and Managerial Implications

The results and findings of the thesis have significant practical implications for practitioners and policymakers. Organizations today are changing the way they operate to support increasingly complex and interconnected workforce ecosystems that include not only workers but also freelancers, gig workers, app developers, professional service providers,

consultants, and even some technologies. Drawing on the interview analysis of individuals operating in these ecosystems and the knowledge gained via quantitative analysis of actions within, I have developed a scaffold of a system of positive ramifications that support the sustenance of proposed interventions by HR consultants in client organizations. This scaffold guides the key actors about the considerations essential for effective workforce orchestration. Leaders from client and consulting organizations must recognize the degree of diversity prevalent in these systems and their challenges and thereby adopt approaches to address these challenges to ensure the sustenance of interventions. Our findings assert that effective orchestration involves considering novel integrated approaches that span organizational boundaries. The enactment of interventions must closely consider the requirements, attitudes, and dispositions of involved stakeholders in undertaking a cohesive and integrated approach. When incorporating varied contributions, the thesis findings may provide leaders and project sponsors with a scaffold that would stimulate and expedite workforce orchestration across boundaries. It is to be noted that, as suggested by Atلمان et al. (2023), we use the term orchestration because this term conveys the idea that individual players have agency or autonomy beyond structures imposed by management. Efficient orchestration will further create systems of positive ramifications in the form of positive perceptions of the strength of the human resource management system. Consequently, more collaborative relationship models are likely to snowball across organizational boundaries.

Further, organizations need to be more aware of how the diverse ecosystem function and the counter-tensions arising in this context of divergent and convergent stakeholder interests must be managed in order to improve fit and alignment (Donnelly and Hughes, 2022). Incorporating the perspectives and perceptions through focused dual boundary-spanning behaviors exhibited via repeated interactions related to the projects' objectives and results would boost alignment amongst different parties.

The context of the workforce ecosystem demands consistent coordination and collaboration from actors. Moreover, consulting projects in such ecosystems also struggle to maintain balance from the interplay of synergies and conflicts. Consequently, management strives to improve collaboration amongst involved players. The findings of the thesis indicate that focusing on only internal boundary-spanning endeavors is not adequate. To maintain the synchronous interplay, external boundary-spanning endeavors are also essential. Therefore, senior management must collaborate with those consulting organizations in which the team of consultants exhibits or can develop to exhibit boundary-spanning behavior needed to fulfill the duality of boundary-spanning behavior necessary for positive ramifications.

13. DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS

The outcomes from the thesis pave the way for further investigations into the connections between boundary-spanning behavior and HR-related practices. For example, the thesis could be expanded upon in future research by looking at the influence of dual boundary-spanning behavior on the implementation of suggested HR interventions by the consultants. Implementation of suggested HR interventions would include different organizational actors from within and outside the organization. Studying the collective impact along with the boundary-spanning behavior can further strengthen the concept by focusing on the requirements of the implementation process.

A better understanding of group and organizational level variables that influence the boundary-spanning behavior of either or both actors may produce a more robust working of the duality. Future research may examine the interactions between firm-level factors such as organizational culture on individual boundary-spanning behavior and subsequent employee perceptions.

Although the thesis renders unique and novel perspectives on boundary-spanning behavior, workforce ecosystem, and fresh antecedents of employee perceptions of the HRM system, it has a few limitations that can be undertaken as research focus in succeeding investigations. The analysis of the model was based on the sample that consisted of the diverse industry from the client side. Given the extent of variability among these types of organizations, broader generalizability is not as applicable across industry-specific firms. Future studies could take a fixed industry sample to expand the applicability of the results.

A second limitation is the relatively small size of projects observed. There are several reasons for the small size of observed projects. One reason is the time frame in which the model was tested. I focused on ongoing HR consulting projects. While the client organizations engage in multiple projects, these projects are not evenly spread throughout the year. Future research could focus on a dedicated collaboration of researchers with a particular client organization to get data on every ongoing HR consulting project and explore more factors that will more strongly validate the efficacy of boundary-spanning behavior in HR consulting projects.

Finally, this thesis is restrictive in the fact that I have included diverse capabilities (e.g., organizational strategy, rewards, assessments, talent acquisition, leadership, and professional development) that client organizations avail of from consulting organizations. As different capabilities impact the client's organizational outcomes differently based on the current organizational conditions and requirements, it would be constructive to distinguish the capabilities and examine the effects of boundary-spanning behavior to strengthen claims and support practitioners while implementing suggested HR interventions.

14. CONCLUSION

The thesis, in the context of the contemporary workforce ecosystem, explores and examines the factors that facilitate the formation of positive perceptions of the strength of

change interventions of the HRM system as recommended by HR consultants. The prime antecedents of the perceived strength of the HRM system are the dual boundary-spanning behavior of HR consultants and the project sponsors of the client organizations. The thesis results reveal that the impact of the boundary-spanning behavior of HR consultants on the perceived strength of the HRM system is influenced by the project sponsors' perceived capacity to acquire external knowledge and assimilate it into the client organization. It is also adversely influenced by the attitude that the project team members form toward the HR consultants' disposition and behavior. The thesis model further finds that the impact of the boundary-spanning behavior of project sponsors on the perceived strength of the HRM system is influenced by client employees' resistance to the process through which the changes are incorporated into the organization via external consultants. On the contrary, it is positively influenced when project sponsors exhibit honest and open interactions with project team members, thus leading to the formation of stronger positive perceptions of recommended interventions in the HRM system.

Through this thesis research, I advance the collective understanding of boundary-spanning behavior, contemporary workforce ecosystems with multiple actors from several organizations, antecedents of employee perceptions in consulting projects, and actions and responses of other organizational members engaged in collaborative projects. With structuration theory as the base to explain the relationships between various constructs, the thesis augments the comprehension of the interplay and interactivities of actors across organizational boundaries. Structuration theory plays a key role in obtaining the insights that were embedded in this complex context. Through its fundamental structure as the means as well as a result, it provided the thesis with a theoretical lens to integrate the dynamism of actions and responses. It allowed for testing the model by appropriately describing the connections among a set of variables. Thus, by logically providing the model with a strong

base made up of the clear and nuanced configuration of actions within and across boundaries, the structuration theory enabled valid predictions, which the thesis research robustly investigated and verified.

Finally, the findings from the thesis have significant practical consequences for practitioners. Given that the thesis asserts a relationship between the dual boundary-spanning behavior and employees' perceptions of HRM system strength, HR consultants are pushed to guarantee that change interventions to enhance the existing HRM systems in their respective client organizations are structured, developed and executed in a way that is perceived as strong by the employees. The existing medium of the structure must be designed in a way that reduces negative actions from individuals working on the project and thereby deliver productive outcomes even to the employees who are distal from the consulting projects. Finally, HR consultants can encourage organizational leaders to actively participate in consulting projects to assure support from within-organization stakeholders for better functioning of recommended solutions.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Protocol for Qualitative Study

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL



SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The study on boundary-spanners and change interventions through HR consulting will be conducted in a two-phase Exploratory Design. To explore the phenomenon in depth and identify relevant variables, we are conducting a qualitative study. Through semi-structured interviews of individuals engaged in HR consulting projects we intend to understand the phenomena in depth and consequently isolate relevant variables from their responses.

For the qualitative examination two set of individuals are interviewed – 1) clients: individuals who are part of the HR consulting project team in organizations that receive consulting services from external consultants – these include project sponsors, project team members, HR managers and employees at different hierarchical levels; 2) HR consultants, individuals who are part of the consulting team involved in providing services to client organizations – these include HR consultants and academicians who consult organizations on diverse HR related issues. The interviews will focus on stakeholders' views on boundary- spanning behaviors of external actors on HR interventions, impact on implementation effectiveness, relationship with the other stakeholders, and attributions, perceptions, and other individual/organizational factors regarding the recommended interventions of human resource management system. The questions aim to uncover and understand their perspectives on effectiveness of HR consulting projects.

Interviews will be guided by the following questions. These questions are based on the relevant literature from academic papers, on practitioners' perspective, and practitioners' articles. **Responses from the interviewees will be kept completely anonymous; the responses will be taken in aggregate and will not be attributed to individual participants.**

Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interview for

External HR Consultants

S.No.	Questions for Consultants	Source
1	Does the composition of team in the Consulting Team play any role in strengthening the intervention in the HRM system?	Altman et al., 2021; Rasiel et al., 2001; Trullen, Bos-Nehles, & Valverde, 2020; Yost et al., 2011
2	How do you minimize the difference in the level of competence sophistication between the client and the consulting team to facilitate the sustenance of HR interventions?	Rasiel et al., 2001; <i>Practitioners' perspective</i>
3	How do you ensure that there is alignment in the intended HR practices and actual HR practices recommended by you to be implemented by the client organization?	Trullen, Bos-Nehles, & Valverde, 2020
4	Which are the ways in which you ensure that the client team is on your side to enhance the receptiveness of the recommendations? How do you create a fit between client and consultant?	Trullen, Bos-Nehles, & Valverde, 2020; Yost et al., 2011; <i>Practitioners' perspective</i>
5	What are the factors on which the adoption and continuity/persistence of HR interventions depend?	Mirfakhar et al., 2018; Liu & Meyer, 2020; Rasiel, 1999; Caldwell, 2001; <i>Practitioners' perspective</i>
6	How do you create consensus and consistency amongst the members of the client team to facilitate adoption of recommendations?	Altman et al., 2021; Caldwell, 2001;
7	Which organizational factors are most significantly considered in the implementation process?	Caldwell, 2001; Yost et al., 2011

Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

HR Managers and Employees at different hierarchical levels

S.No	Questions	Source
1	Do external consultants persuade and include organizational (client) team members in intervention decisions?	Altman et al., 2021; Liu & Meyer, 2020; Minbaeva & Santangelo, 2018; Mirfakhar et al., 2018; Yost et al., 2011
2	What causes some HR interventions suggested/recommended by external consultants to successfully thrive in the long run while others fail over time?	Liu & Meyer, 2020; Yost et al., 2011; <i>Practitioners' perspective</i>
3	Do you believe that the minimum to zero intended-actual implementation gap can be attributed to external consultants?	Trullen, Bos-Nehles, & Valverde, 2020
4	How does an external consultant establish the credibility of the process so that the members of the organization positively perceive the HR intervention?	Trullen, Bos-Nehles, & Valverde, 2020; Yost et al., 2011; <i>Practitioners' perspective</i>
5	How significant do you think is the composition of the consulting team in strengthening the intervention in the HRM system?	Trullen, Bos-Nehles, & Valverde, 2020; Yost et al., 2011
6	What are the factors on which the adoption and continuity/persistence of HR interventions suggested/recommended by external consultants depend?	Mirfakhar et al., 2018; Liu & Meyer, 2020; Rasiel, 1999; Caldwell, 2001; <i>Practitioners' perspective</i>
7	Do HR practices (as suggested by consultants) in your organization established based on consensus among organizational members	Altman et al., 2021; Caldwell, 2001;
8	Which organizational factors are most significantly considered in the implementation process when working with external consultants?	Caldwell, 2001; Yost et al., 2011

Appendix 2: Sample Recruitment Email

Dear Sir/Ma'am,

Sincere gratitude for your help, time, and consideration. I have briefly described the background of the research and have then shared the links for the survey.

When organizations work collaboratively, actors on both sides of organizational boundaries channel their efforts toward the proper alignment of objectives and achievements of collective goals. The success and sustainability of collaborative projects depend not only on external environmental factors but also on internal factors and inter-organizational interactions. In our study of actors in multinational organizations, we focus on the boundary-spanning behavior of external human resource (HR) consultants and employees/members of their client organizations. We intend to recognize factors that facilitate the acceptance of recommendations by HR consultants in client organizations.

It is an exploratory mixed-method study consisting of a qualitative examination followed by quantitative testing. In the first part of the research, we qualitatively analyzed the real-time accounts of people (HR consultants and members of the client organization) experiencing the phenomenon of interest and developed a model. In the second part, we aim to test the model hence created.

I humbly request that you allow me to conduct the study in your organization. Two sets of participants are required for this study - 1) the HR consultants and 2) the members of the client organization working with HR consultants. The participants are required to fill out the following surveys.

I - For Sample - HR Consultants

(I) https://iimi.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3kqVOGqOg0C0oHc

II - For Sample - Members of Client Organization

Level 1: For team members of the HR consulting project (client side)

1a. https://iimi.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dgVPS9YW4viP5Hg

1b. https://iimi.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cD2QOHGwYRaGpBI

1c. https://iimi.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0NiDoRCXPy9IzAa

1d. https://iimi.syd1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4Zb3Og8vEtdzVA2

Level 2: For client employee

2a. https://iimi.sydl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_71z7cuGmwTic9kq

2b. https://iimi.sydl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9RVKnaflnkLa538

2c. https://iimi.sydl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3CxYPAk0wZIQBzo

Level 3: For Project Sponsors/Project Leader

3a. https://iimi.sydl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0BC2yxvP56MjQFg

3b. https://iimi.sydl.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9REdIVnImToTtGK

Please share your queries with me so that I can be at your service while you generously help me with my research!

There are no correct or incorrect answers. Your responses will be completely anonymous. It will take around 5-10 minutes to finish responding to each survey. Your responses are immensely valuable to us!

Take care and stay safe!

Warm regards,

NEETI INGOLE

FPM Scholar 2019 | OB&HR Area

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<https://www.iimdr.ac.in>

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Appendix 3: Sample Letter for Data Collection

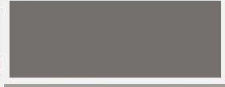


भारतीय प्रबंध संस्थान इन्दौर
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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT INDORE
Prabandh Shikhar, Rau-Pithampur Road, Indore - 453 556 (M.P.), India

10th January 2023

To

The Head-HR



Sub: Letter for data collection

Dear Madam/Sir,

Through this letter kindly permit me to introduce Ms. Neeti Ingole, a fourth year PhD student at IIM Indore in OB&HR Area. Ms. Neeti is conducting her research under my guidance and supervision.

She needs data for her research and is acquiring it in the form of surveys. I request you to extend your help to her to conduct the surveys with relevant samples. I assure you that the data will be solely used for research purposes and will not be misused and/or shared with any other party. Also, all the responses will be anonymous and none of the responses will be attributed to a particular individual/organization.

We shall be grateful for your support and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Shrihari Suresh Sohani,

Associate Professor

Chairperson MBA Program

Indian Institute of Management Indore

E-mail: shriharis@iimidr.ac.in

Phone: +91

