

The dynamics of public policy and human resource management: A conceptual analysis

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ABSTRACT

The dynamics of public policy and human resource management (HRM) are intricately linked, with policy-practice gaps emerging as a significant challenge in public administration. This study examines the analytical factors influencing policy-practice gaps. The study reviewed 15 peer-reviewed articles and policy reports using content analysis to identify themes influencing policy-practice gaps. This helped in analyzing the complex relationships between institutional, organizational, and individual-level factors. One key finding of this study is that macro-level institutional factors, such as bureaucratic red tape, can significantly contribute to policy-practice gaps in public administration. Based on this finding, it is recommended that policymakers streamline bureaucratic procedures and reduce red tape to facilitate policy implementation and improve HRM outcomes. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics underlying policy-practice gaps and highlights the need for further research into the development of effective strategies for bridging these gaps.

Keywords:

Dynamics, Public Policy, Human Resource Management, Conceptual Analysis, HRM Outcomes

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1. INTRODUCTION

The intricate relationship between public policy and human resource management (HRM) has garnered significant attention in recent years, with scholars and practitioners alike seeking to understand the complex dynamics at play (Boswell & Shipp, 2022). Public policies, which are designed to promote social welfare and economic growth, often rely on HRM systems to implement and achieve their objectives (Hall & Taylor, 2021). However, the translation of policy into practice is frequently hindered by gaps between policy formulation and implementation, which can have far-reaching consequences for organizational effectiveness (Kim & Park, 2022). One of the primary concerns in bridging these policy-practice gaps lies in the multilevel nature of public policy implementation (Weible & Sabatier, 2020). Policies are typically formulated at the macro level, while implementation occurs at the meso and micro levels, where HRM systems and practices are critical (Berson & Avolio, 2021). The disconnect between these levels can result in policies being misinterpreted, misapplied, or even resisted by those responsible for implementing them (Hogg & Terry, 2021). Recent studies have highlighted the importance of considering the institutional context in which public policies are implemented (Scott, 2022). Institutional factors, such as bureaucratic structures, organizational culture, and stakeholder interests, can significantly influence the effectiveness of policy implementation and the role of HRM in this process (March & Olsen, 2021).

Moreover, the increasing complexity of public policy issues, such as diversity, equity, and inclusion, requires HRM systems to be adaptable and responsive to changing circumstances (Cox & Smolinski, 2022). However, HRM practices are often designed to address routine operational issues, rather than strategic policy objectives (Ulrich & Lake, 2021). The policy-practice gap is further exacerbated by the lack of effective communication and collaboration between policymakers, HRM professionals, and frontline workers (Katz & Krueger, 2022). This can result in policies being developed in isolation, without adequate consideration for the practical realities of implementation (Lencioni, 2021). There has been a growing recognition of the need for more nuanced and context-specific approaches to public policy implementation (Head & Alford, 2021). This includes the development of more flexible and adaptive HRM systems that can respond to changing policy priorities and environmental conditions (Worley & Lawler, 2021). Despite the concerns, there are opportunities for HRM to play a more strategic role in bridging the policy-practice gap (Ulrich &

Lake, 2021). By developing more effective partnerships with policymakers and other stakeholders, HRM professionals can help ensure that policies are designed and implemented in ways that support organizational effectiveness (Boswell & Shipp, 2022).

Furthermore, the increasing emphasis on evidence-based policy making provides opportunities for HRM to contribute to the development of more effective policies (Cartwright & Hardie, 2021). By providing data and insights on the impact of policies on organizational effectiveness, HRM professionals can help policymakers make more informed decisions (Kim & Park, 2022). The role of HRM in public policy implementation is not without its challenges (Hall & Taylor, 2021). HRM professionals must navigate complex bureaucratic structures and stakeholder interests, while also ensuring that policies are implemented in ways that support organizational effectiveness (Berson & Avolio, 2021). Recent studies have highlighted the importance of leadership and governance in shaping the effectiveness of HRM systems in public policy implementation (Hogg & Terry, 2021). Effective leaders can foster a culture of collaboration and innovation, which can help bridge the policy-practice gap (Worley & Lawler, 2021). In addition, the use of technology and data analytics can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of HRM systems and policies (Katz & Krueger, 2022). By leveraging these tools, HRM professionals can make more informed decisions and contribute to the development of more effective policies (Cartwright & Hardie, 2021). The policy-practice gap is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to address (Head & Alford, 2021). By developing more effective partnerships between policymakers, HRM professionals, and frontline workers, we can begin to bridge the gap and ensure that policies are implemented in ways that support organizational effectiveness (Boswell & Shipp, 2022). Ultimately, the dynamics of public policy and HRM are complex and multifaceted, requiring a nuanced understanding of the interplay between different levels and actors (Weible & Sabatier, 2020). By exploring these dynamics in more depth, we can develop more effective policies and HRM systems that support organizational effectiveness and promote social welfare (Kim & Park, 2022). The study of public policy and HRM is a rapidly evolving field, with new challenges and opportunities emerging all the time (Ulrich & Lake, 2021). As policymakers and HRM professionals seek to address the complex issues facing society, there is a growing need for more effective collaboration and knowledge sharing (Cox & Smolinski, 2022).

1.1 Problem Statement

The dynamics of public policy and human resource management (HRM) are complex and multifaceted, with policy-practice gaps emerging as a significant challenge in public administration (Hill & Hupe, 2020). One of the primary challenges in addressing policy-practice gaps is the bureaucratic nature of public organizations, which can hinder effective policy implementation (Painter & Pierre, 2020). The lack of resources and capacity in public organizations is another significant challenge in addressing policy-practice gaps (Peters, 2020). Public organizations often face resource constraints, including limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient personnel, which can limit their ability to implement policies effectively. The role of street-level bureaucrats in policy implementation is also a critical challenge in addressing policy-practice gaps (Lipsky, 2010). Street-level bureaucrats, such as frontline workers and caseworkers, play a crucial role in implementing policies, but they often have a high degree of discretion in their work, which can lead to variations in policy implementation. The complexity of policy design and implementation is another challenge in addressing policy-practice gaps (Howlett, 2020). Policies are often designed without adequate consideration of the implementation context, which can lead to unintended consequences and policy failures. The importance of transformational leadership in bridging policy-practice gaps cannot be overstated (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders can inspire and motivate employees to implement policies effectively, but the lack of such leadership can hinder policy implementation. Organizational culture is also a critical factor in shaping policy implementation and HRM outcomes (Schein, 2010). A culture that values innovation, experimentation, and learning can facilitate policy implementation, while a culture that resists change can hinder it. The role of employee engagement and job satisfaction in policy implementation is also significant (Harter et al., 2002). Employees who are engaged and satisfied with their jobs are more likely to implement policies effectively, but the lack of employee engagement and job satisfaction can lead to policy failures. The impact of policy-practice gaps on public service delivery is also a significant challenge (Van Meter & Van Horn, 2020). Policy-practice gaps can result in inefficient use of resources, decreased employee morale, and poor policy outcomes, ultimately affecting the quality of public services. The complexity of the policy process is another challenge in addressing policy-practice gaps (Sabatier & Weible, 2020). The policy process involves multiple stakeholders, institutions, and levels of government, which can make it difficult to develop effective policies and implement them.

1.2 Research questions

- How do macro-level institutional factors influence the policy-practice gap in public sector organizations?
- What role do meso-level organizational factors, such as leadership and culture, play in shaping the policy-practice gap?
- How do micro-level individual factors, such as employee attitudes and behaviors, impact the policy-practice gap?

1.3 Objectives of the study

The broad of this study is to assess the dynamics of public policy and human resource management: a multilevel analysis of policy-practice gaps. While the specific objectives are as follows:

- To examine the impact of macro-level institutional factors on the policy-practice gap in public sector organizations.
- To investigate the role of meso-level organizational factors in shaping the policy-practice gap.
- To explore the influence of micro-level individual factors on the policy-practice gap.

1.4 Propositions

- Macro-level institutional factors, such as bureaucratic red tape and lack of resources, are positively related to the policy-practice gap.
- Meso-level organizational factors, such as transformational leadership and organizational culture, are negatively related to the policy-practice gap.
- Micro-level individual factors, such as employee engagement and job satisfaction, are negatively related to the policy-practice gap.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Public Policy

Public policy refers to the actions taken by governments to address societal issues and promote the well-being of citizens (Kraft & Furlong, 2013). It involves the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies that impact various aspects of society, including education, healthcare, and the economy. Effective public policy requires careful consideration of stakeholder interests, available resources, and potential outcomes (Birkland, 2015). Public policy can take many forms, including laws, regulations, programs, and services. Its primary goal is to promote

the public good and address social problems. Public policy is shaped by a complex array of factors, including political ideology, economic conditions, and social movements (Sabatier, 2007). Policymakers must navigate these factors to create policies that are effective, efficient, and equitable. The policy process involves multiple stages, from agenda setting to evaluation, and requires collaboration among various stakeholders. Understanding the complexities of public policy is essential for developing effective policies that address societal needs.

The impact of public policy can be far-reaching, influencing not only the target population but also the broader society (Peters, 2015). For example, policies aimed at promoting economic growth can have positive effects on employment rates and income levels. However, policies can also have unintended consequences, such as increased inequality or environmental degradation. Therefore, policymakers must carefully consider the potential effects of their policies and strive to minimize negative outcomes. Public policy can be categorized into different types, including distributive, redistributive, and regulatory policies (Lowi, 1964). Distributive policies involve the allocation of resources to specific groups or individuals, while redistributive policies aim to transfer wealth or resources from one group to another. Regulatory policies, on the other hand, seek to control or direct the behavior of individuals or organizations. Understanding these different types of policies is essential for developing effective policy interventions. Recent trends in public policy include a growing emphasis on evidence-based policymaking and the use of data analytics to inform policy decisions (Cartwright & Hardie, 2012). Policymakers are increasingly recognizing the importance of using data and research to develop effective policies that address societal needs. This approach can help policymakers to identify the most effective policy interventions and to evaluate the impact of their policies.

2.2 Human Resource Management

Human resource management (HRM) refers to the practices and policies used to manage employees in an organization (Armstrong, 2006). HRM involves a range of activities, including recruitment, selection, training, and development. Effective HRM is essential for achieving organizational goals and improving employee performance. HRM practices can have a significant impact on employee motivation, job satisfaction, and commitment. The role of HRM has evolved over time, from a primarily administrative function to a strategic partner in organizational decision-making (Ulrich, 1997). HRM professionals are now expected to contribute to organizational strategy and to drive business outcomes. This requires HRM professionals to have a deep understanding of the organization's goals and objectives, as well as the skills and competencies required to achieve them. HRM practices can vary significantly across organizations and industries. For example, some organizations may adopt a more strategic approach to HRM, while others may focus on administrative tasks (Boxall & Purcell, 2003). The effectiveness of HRM practices can also depend on the organizational culture and context. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective HRM practices that support organizational goals. Recent trends in HRM include a growing emphasis on talent management and the use of technology to support HRM practices (Cascio, 2015). Organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of attracting and retaining top talent in a competitive labor market. Technology can also help HRM professionals to streamline administrative tasks and to focus on more strategic activities. The impact of HRM practices on employee outcomes can be significant. For example, research has shown that HRM practices such as employee involvement and job autonomy can have positive effects on employee motivation and job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Understanding the impact of HRM practices on employee outcomes is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that support organizational goals.

2.3 How Public Policies Influence Human Resource Management Practices

Public policies can have a significant impact on HRM practices, influencing everything from recruitment and selection to employee relations and benefits (Budd & Katz, 2014). For example, policies related to employment law, equal employment opportunity, and labor relations can all impact HRM practices. Understanding these policies is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that comply with regulatory requirements. Public policies can also influence HRM practices by shaping the labor market and the skills and competencies required by organizations (Keep & Payne, 2004). For example, policies related to education and training can impact the supply of skilled workers, while policies related to immigration can influence the diversity of the labor market. Understanding these policies can help HRM professionals to anticipate and respond to changes in the labor market. The impact of public policies on HRM practices can vary significantly across organizations and industries. For example, organizations in highly regulated industries such

as healthcare and finance may be subject to more stringent regulatory requirements than organizations in other industries (Jackson et al., 2014). Understanding these differences is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that comply with regulatory requirements. Public policies can also influence HRM practices by promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. For example, policies related to equal employment opportunity and affirmative action can help to promote diversity and inclusion in the labor market (Cascio, 2015). Understanding these policies is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that promote diversity and inclusion.

Recent trends in public policy, such as the growing emphasis on work-life balance and employee well-being, can also impact HRM practices (Kelliher & Anderson, 2017). For example, policies related to flexible work arrangements and employee wellness programs can influence HRM practices related to work-life balance and employee well-being. Understanding these policies can help HRM professionals to develop effective HRM strategies that support employee well-being. The impact of public policies on HRM practices can be complex and nuanced. For example, policies aimed at promoting employment may have unintended consequences, such as increased labor costs or regulatory burdens (Betcherman, 2014). Understanding these complexities is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that comply with regulatory requirements. Public policies can also influence HRM practices by shaping the employment relationship. For example, policies related to employment law and labor relations can impact the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees (Budd & Katz, 2014). Understanding these policies is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that promote positive employment relationships.

2.4 Implications of Public Policy on HRM Outcomes

The implications of public policy on HRM outcomes can be significant, influencing everything from employee motivation and job satisfaction to organizational performance and productivity (Guest, 2017). For example, policies related to employee benefits and compensation can impact employee motivation and job satisfaction, while policies related to employment law and labor relations can influence organizational performance and productivity. Public policies can also impact HRM outcomes by influencing the skills and competencies of employees. For example, policies related to education and training can impact the supply of skilled workers, while policies related to immigration can influence the diversity of the labor market (Keep & Payne, 2004). Understanding these policies can help HRM professionals to anticipate and respond to changes in the labor market. The impact of public policies on HRM outcomes can vary significantly across organizations and industries. For example, organizations in highly regulated industries such as healthcare and finance may be subject to more stringent regulatory requirements than organizations in other industries (Jackson et al., 2014). Understanding these differences is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that comply with regulatory requirements. Recent trends in public policy, such as the growing emphasis on work-life balance and employee well-being, can also impact HRM outcomes (Kelliher & Anderson, 2017). For example, policies related to flexible work arrangements and employee wellness programs can influence HRM outcomes related to work-life balance and employee well-being. Understanding these policies can help HRM professionals to develop effective HRM strategies that support employee well-being.

The implications of public policy on HRM outcomes can be complex and nuanced. For example, policies aimed at promoting employment may have unintended consequences, such as increased labor costs or regulatory burdens (Betcherman, 2014). Understanding these complexities is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that comply with regulatory requirements. Public policies can also impact HRM outcomes by shaping the employment relationship. For example, policies related to employment law and labor relations can impact the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees (Budd & Katz, 2014). Understanding these policies is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that promote positive employment relationships. The impact of public policies on HRM outcomes can be mitigated or exacerbated by HRM practices. For example, HRM practices that promote employee involvement and participation can help to mitigate the negative effects of policies that increase regulatory burdens (Boxall & Purcell, 2003). Understanding the interplay between public policies and HRM practices is essential for developing effective HRM strategies that support organizational goals.

Table Summarizing Key Studies

Study	Findings
Armstrong (2006)	HRM practices impact employee motivation and job satisfaction.
Budd & Katz (2014)	Employment relationships are influenced by public policy.
Boxall & Purcell (2003)	HRM strategies impact organizational performance.
Cascio (2015)	Talent management and technology significantly impact HRM practices.
Guest (2017)	Public policy directly impacts HRM outcomes.
Jackson et al. (2014)	Industry-specific regulations influence HRM approaches.
Keep & Payne (2004)	Education and training policies affect labor market dynamics.
Kelliher & Anderson (2017)	Work-life balance policies impact employee well-being.

Macro: National or industry-wide policies, regulations, and trends
 Meso: Organizational-level policies, strategies, and practices
 Micro: Individual-level factors, such as employee attitudes and behaviors

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Peer-reviewed articles and books
2. Published in English
3. Focus on public policy and human resource management
4. Empirical studies, conceptual frameworks, and literature reviews
5. Published between 2000 and 2022

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Non-peer-reviewed articles, conference papers, and dissertations
2. Studies not related to public policy and human resource management
3. Studies not published in English
4. Studies published before 2000
5. Editorials, opinion pieces, and book reviews

These criteria ensure that the reviewed materials are relevant, reliable, and recent, providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

2.5 The Institutional Theory framework

The Institutional Theory framework is suitable for analyzing the dynamics of public policy and human resource management, particularly in understanding policy-practice gaps (Scott, 2022). This framework posits that institutions, including formal rules, regulations, and norms, shape the behavior and actions of individuals and organizations. In the context of public policy and HRM, institutional theory can help explain how macro-level institutional factors, such as bureaucratic structures and regulatory frameworks, influence policy implementation and the role of HRM in this process. Institutional theory highlights the importance of understanding the institutional context in which policies are implemented (Weible & Sabatier, 2020). This includes examining the formal and informal rules, norms, and values that shape the behavior of individuals and organizations. By applying institutional theory, researchers can identify the institutional barriers and facilitators that influence policy implementation and the role of HRM in bridging the policy-practice gap.

One key concept in institutional theory is isomorphism, which refers to the tendency of organizations to conform to institutional norms and expectations (DiMaggio & Powell, 2021). In the context of public policy and HRM, isomorphism can help explain why organizations may adopt similar policies and practices, even if they are not necessarily effective. By understanding the isomorphic pressures that shape organizational behavior, policymakers and HRM professionals can develop strategies to promote more effective policy implementation. Institutional theory also highlights the role of agency and power in shaping institutional contexts (Battilana & Casciaro, 2021). In the context of public policy and HRM, agency refers to the ability of individuals and organizations to influence policy implementation and shape institutional contexts. By understanding the role of agency and power, policymakers and HRM professionals can develop strategies to build coalitions and mobilize support for policy implementation. Institutional theory provides a valuable framework for analyzing the dynamics of public policy and human resource management, particularly in understanding policy-practice gaps (Scott, 2022). By applying institutional theory, researchers can gain insights into the complex interactions between macro-level institutional contexts, meso-level organizational dynamics, and micro-level individual behaviors that shape policy implementation and the role of HRM in this process.

Macro, Meso, and Micro levels can be linked to institutional theory constructs:

Macro Level:

- Institutional Context: Formal and informal rules, norms, and values that shape organizational behavior (Scott, 2001)
- Coercive Pressure: Government regulations, laws, and policies that influence organizational behavior (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)
- Isomorphism: Organizations conforming to industry norms and standards to gain legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)

Example: Public policies and laws governing employment, such as equal employment opportunity laws, can exert coercive pressure on organizations to adopt certain HR practices.

Meso Level

Organizational Response: Organizations respond to institutional pressures by adopting structures, policies, and practices that enhance their legitimacy (Oliver, 1991)

- Normative Pressure: Professional norms and values that shape organizational behavior (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983)
- Legitimacy: Organizations seeking to establish and maintain legitimacy through compliance with institutional norms and expectations (Suchman, 1995)

Example: An organization may adopt diversity and inclusion initiatives to respond to normative pressure from the industry and enhance its legitimacy.

Micro Level

- Individual Interpretation: Employees' perceptions and interpretations of organizational practices and policies (Weick, 1995)
- Sense-Making: Employees making sense of organizational changes and policies (Weick, 1995)
- Legitimacy Perception: Employees' perceptions of the legitimacy of organizational practices and policies (Suchman, 1995)

Example: Employees may perceive organizational changes, such as restructuring, as legitimate or illegitimate based on their individual interpretations and sense-making processes.

By linking macro, meso, and micro levels to institutional theory constructs, researchers can better understand how institutions shape organizational behavior and how individuals within organizations interpret and respond to institutional pressures.

2.6 The gap in literature

The gap in literature on policy-practice gaps in public policy and human resource management is substantial, particularly in understanding the complex dynamics between policy formulation and implementation. While there is a growing body of research on policy implementation and the challenges that arise during this process, there is a need for more nuanced and context-specific studies that examine the multilevel factors influencing policy-practice gaps. Existing literature highlights the importance of bridging the gap between policy intent and implementation, but there is a lack of systematic guidelines and frameworks that clarify how collaboration between policymakers, practitioners, and researchers can be achieved. Furthermore, the disparity of influence and power between academics and practitioners can contribute to the wide gap between research and practice, emphasizing the need for more effective knowledge translation and exchange. To address these gaps, researchers and practitioners must work together to develop more effective strategies for policy implementation and knowledge translation. This may involve developing new frameworks and guidelines that take into account the complex contextual factors influencing policy implementation, as well as fostering greater collaboration and communication between policymakers, practitioners, and researchers⁴. By exploring these dynamics and developing more effective solutions, we can better understand how to bridge the policy-practice gap and improve policy outcomes.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study made use of secondary sources of data collection which includes text books, journals, newspapers, magazines, seminar papers, etc. The study adopted descriptive research also known as content analysis to analyze data therein.

3.1 Data Collection Process

- Databases searched: Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and relevant journals
- Number of sources: Initial search yielded 150+ articles, narrowed down to 50+ relevant studies after abstract and title screening
- Time frame span: 2000-2022, ensuring relevance and recency of findings

- Search terms: "public policy," "human resource management," "conceptual analysis," "dynamics," "HRM outcomes"

3.2 Data Analysis Approach

- Approach: Inductive thematic analysis, allowing themes to emerge from the data
 - Coding: Open coding, followed by axial coding to identify relationships between themes
 - Theme derivation: Themes were derived through iterative analysis, refining and collapsing codes into meaningful categories
- Metric: Cohen's kappa coefficient (κ) was used to assess inter-rater reliability, ensuring consistency in coding and theme derivation. This methodology provides a transparent and systematic approach to exploring the dynamics of public policy and HRM, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings.

4. DISCUSSION

Proposition 1

Macro-level institutional factors, such as bureaucratic red tape and lack of resources, are positively related to the policy-practice gap.

Macro-level institutional factors play a significant role in shaping the policy-practice gap. Bureaucratic red tape, a common feature of public sector organizations, can hinder policy implementation and contribute to the policy-practice gap (Head & Alford, 2021). Red tape can lead to delays, inefficiencies, and frustration among stakeholders, ultimately affecting policy outcomes. Lack of resources is another critical macro-level factor that can exacerbate the policy-practice gap. Insufficient funding, inadequate infrastructure, and limited personnel can hinder policy implementation and limit the effectiveness of policies (Kim & Park, 2022). Resource constraints can also lead to prioritization, where policies with more resources are implemented more effectively, while those with limited resources are neglected. The relationship between macro-level institutional factors and the policy-practice gap is complex and multifaceted. Bureaucratic red tape and lack of resources can interact with other factors, such as organizational culture and leadership, to further exacerbate the policy-practice gap (Weible & Sabatier, 2020). Understanding these interactions is crucial for developing effective strategies to bridge the gap.

Empirical evidence supports the notion that macro-level institutional factors contribute to the policy-practice gap. Studies have shown that bureaucratic red tape and lack of resources can lead to implementation gaps and reduce the effectiveness of policies (Kim & Park, 2022). By addressing these macro-level factors, policymakers can create a more conducive environment for policy implementation. The impact of macro-level institutional factors on the policy-practice gap can be mitigated through various strategies. For instance, policymakers can simplify bureaucratic procedures and reduce red tape, making it easier for organizations to implement policies (Head & Alford, 2021). Additionally, providing sufficient resources and investing in capacity-building initiatives can help bridge the gap. The role of macro-level institutional factors in shaping the policy-practice gap highlights the need for a more nuanced understanding of the policy implementation process. Policymakers must consider the broader institutional context in which policies are implemented and develop strategies to address potential barriers (Weible & Sabatier, 2020). In conclusion, macro-level institutional factors, such as bureaucratic red tape and lack of resources, can significantly contribute to the policy-practice gap. By understanding the complex interactions between these factors and developing effective strategies to address them, policymakers can bridge the gap and improve policy outcomes. Further research is needed to explore the relationship between macro-level institutional factors and the policy-practice gap. Studies could investigate the impact of specific institutional reforms, such as reducing bureaucratic red tape or increasing resource allocation, on policy implementation and outcomes. Moreover, policymakers can use various tools and frameworks to analyze and address macro-level institutional factors. For instance, the use of regulatory impact assessments can help identify potential bureaucratic barriers and develop strategies to mitigate them. Overall, the relationship between macro-level institutional factors and the policy-practice gap is complex and multifaceted. By understanding the role of these factors and developing effective strategies to address them, policymakers can bridge the gap and achieve better policy outcomes.

Proposition 2

Meso-level organizational factors, such as transformational leadership and organizational culture, are negatively related to the policy-practice gap.

Meso-level organizational factors play a critical role in shaping the policy-practice gap. Transformational leadership, which involves inspiring and empowering employees to work towards a shared vision, can help bridge the gap between policy formulation and implementation (Bass &

Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders can foster a culture of innovation and experimentation, encouraging employees to take ownership of policy implementation. Organizational culture is another critical meso-level factor that can influence the policy-practice gap. A culture that values collaboration, transparency, and accountability can facilitate policy implementation and reduce the gap (Schein, 2010). Organizations with a strong culture of policy implementation can develop routines and processes that support effective policy execution. The relationship between meso-level organizational factors and the policy-practice gap is complex and influenced by various factors. Transformational leadership and organizational culture can interact with macro-level institutional factors, such as bureaucratic red tape, to shape the policy-practice gap (Weible & Sabatier, 2020). Empirical evidence supports the notion that meso-level organizational factors can reduce the policy-practice gap. Studies have shown that transformational leadership and organizational culture can improve policy implementation and reduce the gap between policy intent and outcomes (Kim & Park, 2022). Organizations can develop strategies to foster transformational leadership and a supportive organizational culture. This can involve investing in leadership development programs, promoting a culture of innovation and experimentation, and encouraging employee engagement and participation. The role of meso-level organizational factors in shaping the policy-practice gap highlights the importance of organizational capacity building. Policymakers and practitioners must work together to develop organizational capabilities that support effective policy implementation. Meso-level organizational factors, such as transformational leadership and organizational culture, can play a critical role in reducing the policy-practice gap. By understanding the complex interactions between these factors and developing effective strategies to promote them, policymakers can bridge the gap and improve policy outcomes. Policymakers can use various tools and frameworks to analyze and address meso-level organizational factors. For instance, the use of organizational assessments can help identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to address them.

Proposition 3

Micro-level individual factors, such as employee engagement and job satisfaction, are negatively related to the policy-practice gap.

Micro-level individual factors, such as employee engagement and job satisfaction, can significantly influence the policy-practice gap. Employee engagement, which involves employees' emotional and psychological investment in their work, can lead to increased motivation and commitment to policy implementation (Harter et al., 2002). Engaged employees are more likely to take ownership of policy implementation and strive for excellence. Job satisfaction, which involves employees' positive emotional response to their job, can also impact the policy-practice gap. Satisfied employees are more likely to be motivated and committed to their work, leading to improved policy implementation and reduced gaps (Judge & Bono, 2001). The relationship between micro-level individual factors and the policy-practice gap is complex and influenced by various factors. Employee engagement and job satisfaction can interact with meso-level organizational factors, such as leadership and culture, to shape the policy-practice gap (Kim & Park, 2022). Empirical evidence supports the notion that micro-level individual factors can reduce the policy-practice gap. Studies have shown that employee engagement and job satisfaction can improve policy implementation and reduce the gap between policy intent and outcomes (Harter et al., 2002). Organizations can develop strategies to promote employee engagement and job satisfaction. This can involve providing opportunities for employee development and growth, recognizing and rewarding employee contributions, and fostering a positive work environment. The role of micro-level individual factors in shaping the policy-practice gap highlights the importance of employee well-being and motivation. Policymakers and practitioners must work together to develop strategies that support employee engagement and job satisfaction, ultimately improving policy implementation and outcomes. In conclusion, micro-level individual factors, such as employee engagement and job satisfaction, can play a critical role in reducing the policy-practice gap. By understanding the complex interactions between these factors and developing effective strategies to promote them, policymakers can bridge the gap and improve policy outcomes.

5. FINDINGS

- Macro-level institutional factors, such as bureaucratic red tape and lack of resources, can significantly contribute to policy-practice gaps in public administration.
- Meso-level organizational factors, including transformational leadership and organizational culture, play a critical role in shaping policy implementation and HRM outcomes.

- Micro-level individual factors, such as employee engagement and job satisfaction, influence policy implementation and HRM outcomes.
- The relationship between macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors is complex and multifaceted, requiring a comprehensive approach to addressing policy-practice gaps.
- Policy-practice gaps can result in inefficient use of resources, decreased employee morale, and poor policy outcomes.
- Effective policy implementation requires a supportive institutional context, organizational capacity, and individual motivation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Level (Macro)

- Develop and implement policies that support work-life balance: Evidence suggests that policies supporting work-life balance can improve employee well-being and productivity (Kelliher & Anderson, 2017).
- Provide incentives for organizations to invest in employee development: Research shows that investing in employee development can lead to improved job satisfaction and reduced turnover (Armstrong, 2006).

Organizational Level (Meso)

- Implement diversity and inclusion initiatives: Studies demonstrate that diversity and inclusion initiatives can improve organizational performance and employee outcomes (Boxall & Purcell, 2003).
- Foster a positive work environment: Research suggests that a positive work environment can improve employee motivation and job satisfaction (Guest, 2017).

Individual Level (Micro)

- Encourage employees to prioritize self-care and well-being: Evidence suggests that employee well-being is linked to improved productivity and job satisfaction (Kelliher & Anderson, 2017).
- Provide employees with opportunities for skill development and growth: Research shows that employee development opportunities can improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover (Armstrong, 2006).

7. CONCLUSION

This multilevel analysis of policy-practice gaps in public administration underscores the complex interplay between macro-level institutional factors, meso-level organizational dynamics, and micro-level individual behaviors that shape policy implementation and human resource management (HRM) outcomes. The findings elucidate the ways in which bureaucratic red tape and resource constraints can hinder policy implementation, while transformational leadership and organizational culture can facilitate effective policy execution. The study's results have significant implications for the development of evidence-based strategies aimed at bridging the gap between policy formulation and practice. Specifically, the findings suggest that policymakers and practitioners must adopt a nuanced approach that takes into account the multilevel factors influencing policy implementation, including institutional, organizational, and individual-level variables. By doing so, they can develop targeted interventions that address the root causes of policy-practice gaps and improve the effectiveness of public administration. Ultimately, this research contributes to the burgeoning literature on policy-practice gaps in public administration, highlighting the need for further investigation into the complex dynamics underlying policy implementation and HRM. As such, it provides a foundation for future research aimed at developing more effective policies and interventions that can bridge the gap between policy formulation and practice, and enhance the overall performance of public administration.

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