

Managing Paradoxes in Talent Management Communication: A Qualitative Study

This study explores how HR professionals navigate between clarity-focused and ambiguity-focused communication approaches in Talent Management (TM). The existing literature has identified positive and negative effects of both approaches on talents, non-talents, and the organization itself, making communication a paradox. To enhance the comprehension of how HR professionals manage and respond to paradoxical tensions in TM communication, adopting a paradox lens is essential. Drawing from 46 interviews in 31 different organizations, the findings of this qualitative interview study demonstrate that there is no common understanding of the term “transparency” among the HR professionals interviewed. In order to understand the concept of transparency in the context of TM, a framework has been developed that divides transparency into different dimensions. These dimensions include transparency regarding the audience (e.g., transparency towards talents or non-talents), outcome (e.g., transparency regarding TM processes or nominations to the talent pool), and intensity (e.g., active or passive communication). Further, previous research has already demonstrated the existence of various paradoxes in TM. However, there are only a limited number of studies that analyze these identified paradoxes in detail. Therefore, this paper aims to address this research gap by focusing specifically on the transparency paradox and demonstrating the different ways in which HR professionals manage and navigate this tension in TM communication.