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HOW TO FOSTER THE WELL-BEING OF POLICE OFFICERS: The role of the employee performance management system

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Highlights

- Whereas previous studies found negative effects on employee well-being by performance planning or evaluation individually, this study indicates the positive effect of the combination of both practices.
- The study finds that performance evaluation should be preceded and combined by performance planning in order to engender employee well-being.
- The relationship between the employee performance management system and well-being is explained by the satisfaction with the system.

This study focuses on employee performance management in policing. We specifically aim to contribute to a better understanding of how the combined effect of performance planning and performance evaluation fosters the well-being of police officers. In the slipstream of public sector reforms many public organizations adopted employee performance management.

Although such system is found to increase performance, it might simultaneously elevate job demands, jeopardizing employees' well-being. Based on data gathered in one of the largest police departments of Belgium, structural equation modeling results demonstrate that the combination of performance planning and evaluation positively affects police officers' well-being. Satisfaction with the system was found to explain this relationship. The findings imply that police forces should ensure that performance evaluations are preceded and combined by performance planning in order to foster well-being.

Keywords – employee performance management, performance planning, performance evaluation, employee performance management satisfaction, job satisfaction, strain, policing

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we focus on the combination of both performance planning and performance evaluation as two important stages of the employee performance management system and examine how it relates to well-being. Based on Human Resource Management (HRM) system theory (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2000; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) and the Job Demand Control model (Karasek, 1979), we develop a conceptual model that explores the relationship between the employee performance management system and the job satisfaction and strain of police officers.

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Public organizations witnessed two main reforms during the past decades. First, New Public Management aimed for the public sector to evolve from bureaucratic organizations towards more accountable, efficient and less centralized ones (Walker, Boyne, & Brewer, 2010). Second, New Public Governance resulted in public organizations with a stronger emphasis on competition and responsibility towards the users of public services (Osborne, 2006). Such reforms significantly altered the HRM policies and inspired performance-based approaches to manage civil servants (Brown, 2004; Leisink & Knies, 2018). In this regard, employee performance management, which refers to several HRM practices to outline, oversee and assess employees' performance throughout a cyclical process from planning to evaluation (Bauwens, Audenaert, Huisman, & Decramer, 2017), became widely used by public organizations (Moynihan, 2008; Walker et al., 2010).

While these reforms target more efficient and effective public organizations, scholars warn that they might simultaneously increase job demands (Diefenbach, 2009). By increasing job demands without considering what is offered in return, many public organizations are prone to create an unbalanced work environment (Audenaert, Decramer, George, Verschuere & Van Waeyenberg, 2016). Such imbalance has long been recognized to increase stress, decreasing employees' well-being (Noblet & Rodwell, 2009; Karasek, 1979). Indeed, several studies indicate that employee performance management increases performance outcomes, such as organizational citizenship behavior (Bauwens, et al., 2017) and innovative behavior (Audenaert et al., 2016), but an equal amount of criticism geared towards a negative effect of employee performance management on civil servants' well-being, such as lower job satisfaction (Pick & Theo, 2017) or frustration towards the system (Coutts & Schneider, 2004). Some scholars even suggest the need for a trade-off between organizational and well-being outcomes when implementing HRM by stating that '*enhanced organizational performance is achieved at the cost of reduced employee well-being*' (Van de Voorde,

Paauwe, & Van Veldhoven, 2012 p. 393). However, impaired well-being is not only problematic for civil servants, but, on the long term, also for the public organization itself (e.g. Giaouque, Anderfuhren-Biget, & Varone, 2013; Gould-Williams, & Davies, 2005; Håkansson & Ahlborg, 2016) as well-being determines employees' work motivation, productivity and work quality (Guest, 2017; Tayler & Westover, 2011; Vermeeren, Kuipers, & Steijn, 2014). Nevertheless, research on how these performance-oriented reforms affect employee well-being remains scarce. Even more, recent research revealed that when employees are accounted on expectations that were not previously determined, negative side-effects of employee performance management are more likely to emerge (Audenaert et al., 2016; Van Waeyenberg & Decramer, 2018).

Reasoning from these emerged negative findings of a single performance management practice and building on the HRM system theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004), we argue that employee performance management as a *system*, i.e. when the performance evaluation is preceded by clear expectations (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013), can avoid these negative side-effects (Butterfield, Edwards, & Woodall, 2007; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Such assumptions are confirmed for performance outcomes, such as civil servants' innovative behavior (Audenaert et al., 2016) and performance (Jung & Lee, 2013), but not yet for well-being outcomes. The current study addresses this lack of knowledge by exploring if employee performance management as a system positively affects employees' well-being. When the combination of performance planning and evaluation would be recognized as a key condition that determines well-being, this may be an eye-opener for public managers that seek to foster performance while not harming their staff's well-being.

In addition to examining the overall system's effect on employee well-being, this study wants to understand *how* this relationship comes to existence. In understanding the

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effects of HRM systems, such as employee performance management, on civil servants' well-being, scholars underscore the importance of employees' attribution to employee performance management (Sharma, Sharma, & Agarwal, 2016; Jose & Mampilly, 2012). Even more, previous research revealed that the mere presence of employee performance management can trigger negative perceptions in public organizations (Decramer et al., 2015) and police forces more specifically (Coutts & Schneider, 2004; Kai-Ting, 2012). Hence, we examine if the implementation of employee performance management as a system will create more satisfaction with employee performance management, consequently fostering police officers well-being.

Hence, this study contributes to our knowledge of employee performance management and its effect on well-being in two important ways. First, we examine how well-being is affected by the combination of both the performance planning and evaluation. Moreover, we focus on how police officers' affectively react towards the system by examining the mediating role of employee performance management satisfaction. Understanding how well-being can be improved rather than undermined by employee performance management, is of practical value to organizations that invest in such systems.

Second, we address these issues in an understudied organization: the police force. Police forces are generally considered late-adopters of performance-management reforms, resulting in less scholarly attention (Barton & Barton, 2011; Butterfield et al., 2007; Dick, 2011). However, police officers constitute a risk group in the study of well-being (Noblet, Rodwell, & Allisey, 2009). Police officers not only face dangerous, high demanding situations (Van Thielen, Decramer, Vanderstraeten & Audenaert, 2018), but are also confronted by ambiguous and sometimes even opposing goals, such as simultaneously keeping peace, enforce the law and assuring fairness towards the citizens (Hrabluik, Latham, & McCarthy, 2012; Vandenabeele, Leisink, & Knies, 2013). Also, police officers are street-

level bureaucrats who go in direct interaction with citizens when performing their job, implying that they are confronted with a continuous dilemma between rigidly following the rules and high levels of discretionary authority (Lipsky, 2010). Such situation yields the need for clear performance objectives and expectations that narrow police officers' scope, but simultaneously turns the implementation of such an effective HRM system to be extra difficult (Lipsky, 2010). Hence, the high-demanding work environment, the ambiguous expectations and the high discretionary room of police officers warrants the study of the employee performance management system, employee performance management satisfaction and well-being in this particular context.

In what follows, we elaborate on the different concepts and theories of our study and present our hypotheses. After explaining the methods employed, the analyses are reported and the results are discussed. Finally, the theoretical and practical implications as well as the limitations of our findings are reported.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The employee performance management system and police officers' well-being

The employee performance management system is a narrowed form of the broader concept of performance management as it solely applies to employees. The employee performance management system implies an HRM system that serves to continuously monitor the performance of employees. As such, it ensures that employees' efforts are aligned with the overall organizational objectives (Aguinis & Pierce, 2008).

Building on HRM strength theory (Bowen & Ostroff, 2004), this study explores how the overall employee performance management system relates to employee well-being. Considering employee performance management as a system implies a cycle in which the different performance management stages are aligned. The goals are set during the

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performance planning stage. Afterwards, the same goals are monitored and, eventually, discussed during the performance evaluation stage (Aguinis, 2013; Walker et al., 2010). Such systems allow police officers to deduce what their organization expects from them and how they should behave in a certain situation (Kehoe & Wright, 2013).

In contrast, when performance planning is not combined by performance evaluation, it sends mixed messages. Such mixed messages are more likely to increase perceptions of job demands, because, without offering them an integrated system, police officers would first have to make sense out of what is expected from them. This is in line with Claes, Van Loon, Vandeveldel and Schalock (2015) suggestion to use an integrated approach when implementing evidence-based practices. Sending mixed messages through a badly integrated employee performance management system can be especially detrimental for police officers. These employees are inherently confronted by a complex and contradicting bundle of job demands (Brunetto, Teo, Shacklock, & Farr-Wharton, 2012) putting their well-being under pressure.

This study focuses on two paramount aspects of police officers' well-being: job satisfaction and strain. Job satisfaction refers to subjective judgments about the work situation. It concerns satisfaction with the job as a whole (Taylor & Westover, 2011). Strain refers to the psychological and physiological response of police officers to experienced stressors, which are the conditions or events creating demands that exceed the individual's adaptive resources (Giauque et al., 2013; Morgan, Semchuk, Stewart, & D'Arcy, 2002).

Based on the Job Demand Control model (Karasek, 1979) and the HRM adaptation of Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), we expect that employee performance management as a *system* is able to increase police officers' well-being. More specifically, the Job Demand Control model (Karasek, 1979) states that having a sense of control in one's job can help to buffer the impact of job demands on well-being. Police

officers, who face high job demands, are likely to experience more stress and less satisfaction, unless they are provided with a sense of control in their job (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Giauque et al., 2013). Employee performance management can provide such a job control mechanism. The employee performance management system can mitigate the problems of having multiple demands as it redirects police officers efforts and attention to the same goals and expectations that are evaluated (Aguinis, Gottfredson, & Joo, 2012; Audenaert et al., 2016). In other words, the clear and congruent expectations that precede police officers' evaluation enable police officers to have a clearer focus on their jobs. Such clear focus will engender more perceived control (Audenaert et al., 2016; Jung & Lee, 2013) and will help police officers to cope with their high job demands, resulting in lower strain and more job satisfaction.

In support of this argument, Coutts and Schneider (2004) observed that police officers who experience performance evaluation in isolation considered performance management to be unhelpful in making sense of their expectations and standards. In contrast, an overall employee performance management system is found to generate affective commitment, suggesting that an overall system makes the performance expectations and how to fulfill them more clear (Van Waeyenberg, Decramer, Desmidt, & Audenaert, 2017). Based on the above rationale and supporting empirical studies, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1: the employee performance management system is (a) positively related to job satisfaction and (b) negatively related to strain.

The mediating role of employee performance management system satisfaction

We expect that police officers' satisfaction with employee performance management, as a value judgement, will explain the relationship between the employee performance management system and well-being. Police officers can react positively or negatively to the presence of employee performance management, where anecdotal evidence from the UK and

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the US suggest that the latter frequently occurs (Barton & Barton, 2011; Hough, 2010). The implementation of such systems are likely to generate these value judgements (Decramer et al., 2013; Van Waeyenberg & Decramer, 2018). Findings from HRM literature suggest that satisfaction with HRM fulfills a key role in connecting HRM processes with outcomes, such as employee well-being (Khilji & Wang, 2007; Kinnie, Hutchinson, Purcell, Rayton, & Swart, 2005). Accordingly, Decramer et al. (2013) argue that in order for employee performance management to positively influence behavior and future development, employees must first experience positive reactions towards the system. Because when clear expectations about what is evaluated are transferred, police officers will experience greater employee performance management satisfaction. Subsequently, such positive perceptions will counter feelings of resistance towards the system and will lower job pressure, ultimately resulting in higher satisfaction and less strain (Van Waeyenberg, Decramer et al., 2017).

In support of this argument, the employee performance management system is found to be related to higher satisfaction with the system by civil servants (Decramer et al., 2013). Others have demonstrated how positive HRM perceptions relate to job satisfaction (Piening, Baluch, & Salge, 2013) and lower intent to leave (Boon, Den Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe, 2011). We hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 2: The relationships between the employee performance management system and (a) job satisfaction and (b) strain, are mediated by the police officer's employee performance management system satisfaction.

Insert figure 1 here

METHOD

Study context

To examine the impact of the employee performance management system on police officers' well-being, a survey was conducted at one of the largest Belgian Local Police Forces.

Studying the topic of employee performance management in the setting of a Belgian Local

Police Force is particularly relevant because they started to use an exemplary employee performance management system under the influence of New Public Management. As formalized in the royal resolution of December 20, 2007, art. 7, each police officer should receive a performance planning that consists of a conversation between the employee and the supervisor to determine the operational and individual goals and competences. After two years, the same aspects should be discussed and evaluated during a performance evaluation stage, which ultimately leads to the establishment of new goals. In between each performance planning and evaluation stage, a follow-up stage is possible, but not formally obligated.

Participants and procedure

After pre-testing, a questionnaire was distributed via e-mail in November and December 2012 to an entire Local Police Department of 1229 police officers. The police officers were individually invited to participate to the research with an introduction mail explaining the purpose of the research, guaranteeing the anonymity when participating and clarifying the method of filling in the questionnaire online. After several reminders by mail, a total of 356 completed questionnaires were obtained. This represents a response rate of 20.8% which is common in organizational research (Baruch & Holtom, 2008; Messersmith, Patel, & Lepak, 2011). Since different HRM systems are used for different job groups (Lepak & Snell, 2002; Decramer et al., 2013; Audenaert, George & Decramer, 2018), we have chosen to keep our sample focused on police officers. Indeed, street-level professionals, such as police officers, are educated, trained and socialized in a different way than other job groups in the police force (Evans, 2010; Hupe & Hill, 2007; Lipsky, 2010). Therefore, we focused our sample on the operational staff and we excluded the supportive staff.

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Measurements

We exclusively used validated scales to measure the dependent and independent variables.

Scales were made by averaging the remaining items. The items and Cronbach's alphas are in the Appendix.

Job satisfaction. was measured with the three-item construct from Cammann, Fichman, Jenkins, and Klesh (1979). An example item is 'On the whole, I like to work at this local police department.' The items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree).

Strain. We assessed strain using items from the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) (Goldberg, 1972; Hu, Stewart-Brown, Twigg, & Weich, 2007). The GHQ-12 is widely used in many settings and languages and is a reliable measure of strain (Hu, Stewart, Brown, Twigg, & Weich, 2007). Because previous studies indicate a conceptual difference between positive and negative mental health (Presseau, Johnston, Johnston, Elovainio, Hrisos, et al. 2014), this study only includes the six negatively worded items from the GHQ-12 (Vilagut, Forero, Pinto-Meza, Harode, Graaf, et al. 2013). An example question is 'In the last month have you been feeling unhappy and depressed?' Answers ranged from 1 ('totally not') to 4 ('much more than usual'). High scores represent a higher level of strain.

Employee performance management system satisfaction. We measured employee performance management system satisfaction using the construct of Decramer et al. (2013). The measurement consists of two questions. An example item is 'how satisfied are you with the way your goals are set?'. The respondents answered on a scale from 1 (totally dissatisfied) to 7 (totally satisfied).

The employee performance management system was measured with the validated scale of Decramer, Smolders, Vanderstraeten and Christiaens (2012). Whereas most studies measure employee performance management by including one practice, i.e. the performance appraisal stage, the current study is interested in employee performance management as a

system. Therefore, we combined the sub-scales of two important stages of the employee performance management cycle according to the performance management system of the Belgium police force: the performance planning stage and the performance evaluation stage. The original scale includes eight items about the content of the planning and eight questions about the content of the evaluation. As the scale consists of two subscales, we preliminary performed exploratory factor analyses (EFA) and examined if factor loadings on the desired factor were above .50 (Osborne and Costello 2004), cross-loadings between factors were below .40 (Bernhard, Knibbe, Von Wolff, Dingoyan, Schultz, & Mike, 2015) and if there was a differential of .20 or bigger between the factors (Van Dyne, Graham, & Dienesch, 1994). The EFA resulted in a combined scale of employee performance management system measuring performance planning with four items and performance evaluation with five items. We additionally controlled for multiple variable collinearity and acceptable reliability estimates for the separated sub-scales as a composite measure can result in over- or underestimated effects (Shaw, Delery, Jenkins, & Gupta., 1998). The value of the variance inflation factor (VIF) ranged between 1.08 and 2.05, the tolerance value caused no reasons for concern either and the Cronbach's alpha for the separate scales surpassed $|.70|$ (Gujarati, 2009). These findings fit into the HRM system approach, assuming that the bundle of HRM practices amounts to more than the sum of the separate parts (Kuvaas, 2008; Vermeeren, 2014). An example item of the performance planning measure is 'During the planning stage, we discuss which competences I should acquire.' An example item concerning the evaluation stage is 'I am evaluated based on my results' (an overview of all items is provided in appendix I). All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). The higher the score of the scale, the more, on average, the police officer perceives that employee performance management is applied as a system.

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Controls. The study included control variables that may affect our outcome variables. For instance, gender has already been associated with different levels of stress in the public sector (Håkansson & Ahlborg, 2016). Age, educational level and job position are found to be related to well-being in government jobs (Decramer et al., 2015; Wang, Tao, Ellenbecker, & Liu, 2012). The age of the respondents (Seniority) was asked and recoded into two categories. The first category ranges from the age of 22 to the age of 34 (Juniors) (coded 0). The second category ranges from the age of 35 to 64 (Seniors) (coded 1). We also controlled for gender (Sex) (male coded 0, female coded 1) and educational level (No higher education coded 0; higher education coded 1). Finally, we also controlled for the function of the police officer (Function) because in Belgium there is a difference in responsibilities between police agents (coded 0) and inspectors (coded 1). For instance, police agents are not allowed to carry firearms.

Common method Bias

This study relies on perceptual data collected through self-reported surveys which may imply common method bias (George & Pandey, 2017). As the study is interested in how perceptions of the applied employee performance management system affect employees' well-being, the study relies on data on perceptions, judgements and feelings to understand the HRM-performance linkages. As self-reported data is the only manner to grasp such aspects, the use of perceptual data collection is justified. However, the need for considerable attention to the possible issue of common method bias remains essential (George & Pandey, 2017; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). Therefore, we applied ex-ante remedies and ex-post statistical analyses to overcome the issue of common method bias. The ex-ante remedies involved using published measures to enhance their validity, developing the survey with clear and noncomplex questions, clearly labelling response options and including a psychological

time lag separating the questions over several pages divided by buffer pages (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Finally, a cover letter stressed the importance of respondents' own opinion and that answers could not be wrong or right. Ex-post statistical analysis includes a single-common-method-factor approach during the confirmatory factor analyses (CFA). We report the results hereafter.

ANALYSES

To test the proposed relationships, we followed the two-step method of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), in which we tested alternative measurement models to establish the convergent and discriminant validity of our latent variables with CFA, and subsequently, alternative structural models with structural equation modelling (SEM) to compare relevant relations between the latent variables. The advantage of SEM as a statistical technique is that it enables to combine factor analysis with regression analyses to test the hypotheses (Kline, 2011). To evaluate our models we used indicative values of the comparative fit index (CFI) above 0.90, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) around 0.06 and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) below 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Furthermore, we applied Satorra-Bentler correction of the X^2 as this method is more robust against violations of non-normality (Kline, 2011). We performed our analyses in Rstudio complemented with the Lavaan package (Rosseel, 2012).

RESULTS

Table 1 describes the sample in greater detail by providing the amount of respondents, the frequencies of the control variables, the means, the standard deviations, the minimum and maximum values of the continuous variables.

Measurement model

We first report the results of the CFA. The hypothesized four factor measurement model demonstrates the best fit with the data ($X^2(183)=456.762$, $CFI=0.890$, $RMSEA=0.09$ and $SRMR=0.064$) compared to alternative models. We summarize these results in table 1. The significant reduction of fit of the one factor model ($\Delta X^2(\Delta df=6)=1,126$, $p<0.001$) suggests that common method bias should not be a concern in our sample. Table 2 provides the descriptive information of our variables. A correlation analysis was conducted on the final constructs of the continuous variables. These results are summarized in table 3.

Insert table 1 about here

Insert table 2 about here

Insert table 3 about here

The structural model

We tested five competing SEM models with the Satorra-Bentler correction as this method is more robust against violations of non-normality. The hypothesized model considered the performance management system to affect job satisfaction and strain through satisfaction with performance management. The (robust) fit indices suggest that this model has an acceptable fit to the collected data ($X^2(\Delta df=259)=442.20$, $CFI=0.897$, $RMSEA=0.072$, $SRMR=0.068$). We compared this model with alternative models, including the control variables' effect on the outcome variables, such as a model including only direct relationships between the performance management system and well-being and satisfaction (alternative model 1: $\Delta X^2(\Delta df=2)=13.36$, $p<0.001$), an alternative model with only indirect relationships (alternative model 2: $\Delta X^2(\Delta df=2)=0.85$, $p>0.1$) and models in which we include a causal relationship between the outcome variables (alternative model 3: causal relationship job satisfaction \rightarrow strain: $\Delta X^2(\Delta df=4)=2.55$, $p>0.1$ and alternative model 4: causal relationship

strain \rightarrow job satisfaction: $\Delta X^2(\Delta df=4)=2.54, p>0.1$). As shown by the ΔX^2 and in Table 4, none of these models demonstrate a significant improved fit compared to the hypothesized model. Hence, we further build on the hypothesized model to test our hypotheses.

Insert Table 4 about here

Hypothesis testing

As proposed in the first hypothesis, we assume that the employee performance management system positively relates to well-being. Table 5 demonstrates (marginal) significant effects between the performance management system such that, on average, when the system increases with a value of one, job satisfaction increases with a value of 0.36 ($p > .00$) and strain decreases with a value of 0.15 ($p = .07$). Hypothesis 1 could be confirmed.

Insert Table 5 about here

Hypothesis 2 predicts that employee performance management satisfaction mediates the relationship between the employee performance management system and the well-being outcomes. Results indicate that when the perceptions of performance management as an overall *system* increases with one value, performance management system satisfaction increases with 0.95 ($p < .000$). When performance management system satisfaction increases with one value, on average, job satisfaction increases with a value of 0.29 ($p < .000$) and strain decreases with a value of 0.17 ($p < .02$). These results support the mediational hypothesis. The performance management system was no longer significantly related to job satisfaction ($b=0.06, p=.56$) and strain ($b=0.03, p=.75$). This insignificance of both direct effects between the performance management system and the well-being outcomes should be primarily understood as indirect effects of performance management on strain and job satisfaction based on the system's effect on the satisfaction with employee performance management. We report

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the unstandardized estimates and the standard errors including direct, indirect and total effects in Table 5.

We also reran the hypothesized model in bootstrapping with 1000 samples in order to control for the robustness of our model, which generated the same significant effects. The direct effect for strain was 0.03, CI [-0.22; 0.24] and job satisfaction was 0.06, CI[-0.16; 0.45]. The indirect effect for strain was -0.17 CI[-0.36; -0.03] and job satisfaction was 0.27 CI[0.13; 0.47]. Finally, we also controlled for multicollinearity in the two final models. The VIF-values and tolerance values raised no reasons for concern (Gujarati, 2009).

Insert figure 2 about here

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As a side-effect of public sector reforms, performance-based approaches of HRM, such as employee performance management (Leisink & Knies, 2018), might decrease well-being due to increased job demands (Diefenbach, 2009). Especially at police forces, where multiple competing job demands are omnipresent (Vandenabeele, Leising, & Knies, 2013), employee performance management can decrease police officers' well-being when employee performance management is badly applied. Based on the HRM system theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Bowen & Ostroff, 2004) and the Job Demand Control model (Karasek, 1979), this study examined employee performance management as a system in relation to police officers' well-being mediated by employee performance management system satisfaction. The findings of these studies let us assume that the presence of every stage of employee performance management is needed in order to generate beneficial effects.

Theoretical implications

From a theoretical point of view, our study endorses the value of the Job Demand Control model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Karasek, 1979) and the system theory (Appelbaum et al.,

2000; Bowen & Ostroff, 2016), as theoretical lenses from organizational psychology and HRM to employee performance management.

A recent review has found that the work intensification from HRM can lead to better performance although it simultaneously may harm employee health (Van de Voorde et al., 2012). The current study is able to contradict the assumed necessity of a trade-off between organizational and employees' well-being outcomes when implementing the HRM system of employee performance management (Godart, 2001; Guest, 2017). The study complements previous scholarship of employee performance management's effect on performance outcomes (Audenaert et al., 2016; Decramer et al., 2015) by demonstrating that police officers' well-being is increased when the line managers implement employee performance management as an overall integrative system. This is also in line with the suggestion of Claes et al. (2015), who advocate the use of an integrative approach when implementing evidence-based practices such as employee performance management. Specifically, we found that employee performance management is beneficial to employee job satisfaction and decreases strain when it is implemented as a system entailing both the planning and the evaluation stage. Our findings thus add to previous research who examined one stage of employee performance management and found negative effects. For instance, when merely the employee performance management planning stage (Decramer et al., 2015) or the performance appraisal stage (Coutts & Schneider, 2004) were addressed.

We also add to previously found unintended effects of employee performance management (Coutts & Schneider, 2004; Decramer et al., 2015), by indicating that it is highly relevant to examine the civil servants' own valuation of employee performance management in order to find explanations for the relationship between the employee performance management system and well-being. More specifically, the findings of this study complement HRM studies that demonstrate a relationship between employee performance management

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satisfaction and performance outcomes (Van Waeyenberg et al., 2017), by demonstrating that employee performance management satisfaction is positively related to employee well-being. This is an important finding as there is a need for more insights into how employee performance management is perceived (Jacobsen & Anderson, 2014). Moreover, by finding that employee performance management satisfaction explains why the employee performance management system fosters well-being, we are able to understand *how* employee performance management relates to well-being. This finding echoes the broad HRM literature that suggest that value judgements of HRM are fulfilling a key role in explaining a relationship between HRM and desirable outcomes (Khilji & Wang, 2007; Kinnie et al., 2005).

Furthermore, our study contributes to the limited research on New Public Management and New Public Governance reforms in police environments (e.g. Barton & Barton, 2011; Butterfield et al., 2007; Dick, 2011) which were only been received with lukewarm welcome within policing (Hough, 2010). Police forces are a subsector of the public sector that is characterized by very demanding jobs, because of the danger they face, but also due to the lack of clear means to end solutions in numerous situations they encounter (Van Thielen et al., 2018). On top of that, police officers are street-level bureaucrats that are hard to manage as they experience high levels of discretionary room (Lipsky, 2010). The study demonstrates that employee performance management can be a management tool that fosters well-being instead of further increasing their job demands. As such, we add to the limited research on which impact the recent management reforms have on police officers and on how these employees can be effectively managed, preventing them to abuse their discretionary authority.

Lessons learned

From a practical point of view, our findings imply the importance of implementing employee performance management as a system. More specifically, our findings let us assume that it is important to create clear expectations that are also evaluated afterwards. We recommend

organizations to implement both a planning stage as well as an evaluation stage to generate positive effects on employee well-being by employee performance management.

One way to guarantee an effective implementation of the whole system of employee performance management, is by well-considering the supervisors who implement employee performance management. The importance of the role of the supervisor for HRM is already recognized in the HRM literature (Den Hartog, Boselie, & Paauwe, 2004; Piening, Baluch, & Salge, 2013) and, given the importance of implementing employee performance management as a system, adequate training and a support system that help supervisors in an effective implementation of employee performance management should be provided.

Limitations and further research

The conceptual model of this study is tested based on findings of a cross-sectional study at one police force. This enabled us to largely exclude the noise of external factors in our theoretical model, no statements about the direction of the relationships, nor the generalizability of our findings, can be made (Pollit, 2005). Performing longitudinal studies or testing these relationships in other organizations can strengthen our findings. Even though we tried to prevent and controlled for common method bias (George & Pandey, 2017), other study designs are better able to exclude such issues as well.

Additionally, apart from focusing on the implementation of employee performance management as a system, employee performance management is characterized by other features that may affect police officers' well-being (Verheijen & Dobrolyubova, 2007), such as two-way communication (Van Thielen et al., 2018) or employee performance management vertical alignment (Decramer et al., 2015). Future research could examine the impact of these features in relation to well-being.

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Also, we would encourage research to explicitly consider the impact of the employee performance management system on well-being and organizational performance simultaneously. This would further strengthen our understanding of both the employee performance management system, performance outcomes and well-being.

In conclusion, our study complements the public management literature on public sector reforms and the employee performance management literature that focused on organizational outcomes. Specifically, we illustrate how the employee performance management system at police forces can engender well-being. Importantly, our study nuances the dominant stereotype of employee performance management as a performance-oriented HRM system creating extra job demands that decreases well-being. Our study suggests that employee performance management as a system generates lower strain and higher job satisfaction, through its beneficial effect on the satisfaction with employee performance management. Hence, when effectively implemented, employee performance management can, apart from performance, increase employees' well-being as well.

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Appendix 1**Variables and items**

Scale	No. Of items	Cronbach's α	Items
Job satisfaction	3	.861	(1) Overall, I am satisfied with my job; (2) In general, I do not like my job; (3) In general, I like working here.
Strain	6	.920	[In the last month] (1) could not overcome difficulties; (2) thinking of self as worthless; (3) losing confidence; (4) feeling unhappy or depressed; (5) under strain; (6) lost much sleep.
Employee performance management system	9	.906	[During my planning stage, we discuss] (1) the expected behavior when performing my job; (2) my competences I need to attain; (3) the results I need to obtain, without specific targets; (4) the tasks I need to accomplish. [During my evaluation, we discuss] (1) my behavior; (2) my competences; (3) my results; (4) my individual objectives; (5) my tasks.
Employee performance management system satisfaction	2	.861	(1) satisfaction with the goalsetting; (2) satisfaction with the evaluation

Table 1. Measurement models and fit indices

	$X^2(df)$	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
1 factor (CMB)	1582.734(189)	0.439	0.200	0.184
2 factor model (system and outcomes)	873.637(188)	0.724	0.141	0.110
3 factor model (system, system satisfaction, outcomes)	2692.959(210)	0.818	0.115	0.098
4 factor model (system, system satisfaction, job satisfaction, strain)	1099.051(344)	0.795	0.109	0.077
Alternative 4 factor model (based on EFA)	456.762(183)	0.890	0.09	0.064

Table 2. Descriptive findings

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>		
<u>Seniority:</u>				
Juniors (22 to 34 years)	73 respondents	39.7%		
Seniors (35 to 64 years)	110 respondents	60.1%		
<u>Sex:</u>				
Male	57 respondents	31.1%		
Female	126 respondents	68.9%		
<u>Higher education:</u>				
No Higher education	121 respondents	65.8%		
Higher education	58 respondents	31.5%		
<u>Function:</u>				
Police agent	20 respondents	10.9%		
Inspector	164 respondents	89.1%		
<i>Continuous variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean(SD)</i>
Employee performance management system	184 respondents	1	7	5.07(0.97)
Employee performance management system satisfaction	184 respondents	1	7	4.37(1.41)
Strain	184 respondents	1.25	3.42	1.94(0.43)
Job satisfaction	184 respondents	2.67	7	5.87(0.99)

Table 3. Correlation Table of the Continuous Variables

	1	2	3	4
1. Employee performance management system	1			
2. Employee performance management system satisfaction	.621**	1		
3. Job satisfaction	.260**	.400**	1	
4. Strain	-.144†	-.248**	-.416**	1

Note: p-value: †p < .1; *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Table 4. The Hypothesized Model and Alternative Models and Fit Indices

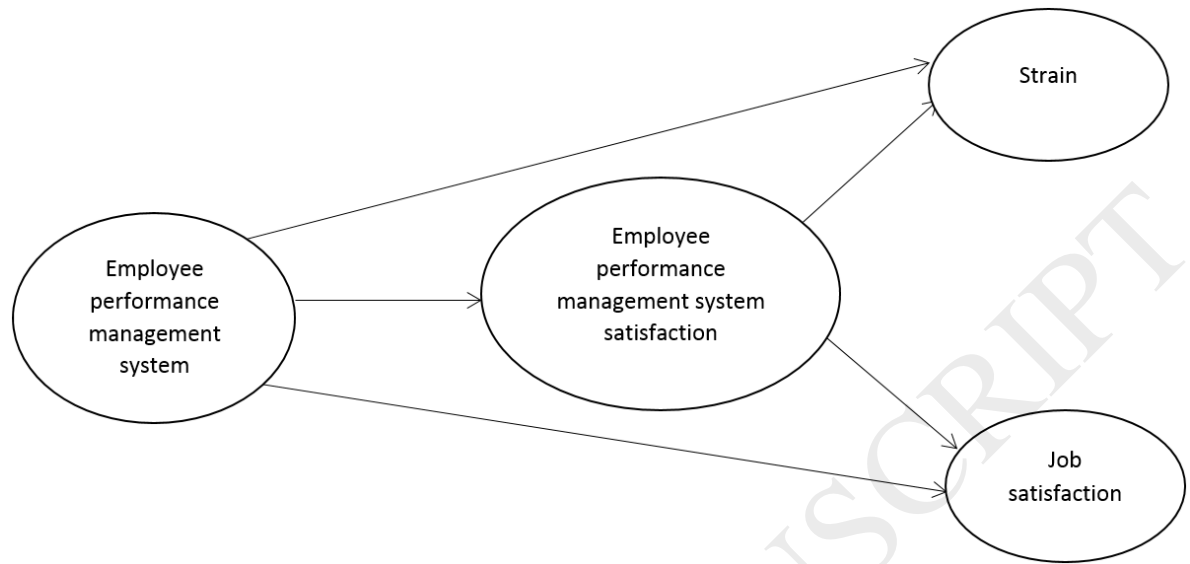
	X ² (df)	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Hypothesized model (direct + indirect effects)	442.20(259)	0.897	0.072	0.068
Alternative model 1 (direct effects only)	455.52(261)	0.890	0.074	0.077
Alternative model 2 (indirect effects only)	443.61(261)	0.897	0.072	0.067
Alternative model 3 (causal effect job satisfaction → strain)	445.34(263)	0.898	0.071	0.068
Alternative model 4 (causal effect strain → job satisfaction)	447.28(261)	0.896	0.072	0.075

Table 5. Results for Structural Equation Modeling

	Employee performance management system satisfaction b(SE)		Strain b(SE)	Job satisfaction b(SE)	
Seniority	-0.06(.15)	0.27(.11)	0.26(.10)	-0.14(.11)	-0.12(.11)*
Sex	0.14(.15)	-0.06(.12)	-0.04(.12)	-0.06(.12)	-0.07(.14)
Higher education	0.18(.15)	-0.06(.12)	-0.04(.12)	-0.09(.12)	-0.12(.12)
Function	0.21(.28)	-0.21(.25)	-0.18(.24)	0.11(.23)	0.06(.24)
Employee performance management system	0.95(.17)***	-0.15(.08)†	0.03(.09)	0.36(.11)**	0.06(.11)
Employee performance management system satisfaction			-0.17(.07)*		0.29(.08)***
Direct effect			0.03(.09)		0.06(.11)
Indirect effect			-0.17(.08)*		0.27(.08)***
Total effect			-0.14(.08)†		0.34(.10)***

Note: we report the unstandardized coefficient with the standard errors in parentheses.

p-value: † p<.1; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

Figure I: Conceptual Framework**Figure II: Final structural Model (unstandardized estimates)**

Note: N=184. Significant relations are shown in bold, nonsignificant relationships in dashes. The impact of control variables is not depicted in the figure, but is mentioned in table 5. p-value: † p < .1; *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001

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