

**INVESTIGATING EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES BY LINE MANAGERS
IN COMMERCIAL BANKS IN MALAWI**

**MA (HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS) THESIS**

By

**ANNETTE NGASIMENYE KAONGA
BA (Human Resources Management) –University of Malawi**

Submitted to the Faculty of Social Sciences in the Department of Political and
Administrative Studies (PAS) in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations)

**UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
CHANCELLOR COLLEGE**

MAY, 2017

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned hereby declare that this thesis/dissertation is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for similar purposes. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Bakuwa, R.C., PhD (Associate Professor)

Main Supervisor

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Chiweza, A., PhD (Associate Professor)

Co-Supervisor

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my Father Steven Mbalilwe Nthakomwa and mother Annette Erica Nthakomwa for raising me with an attitude to aim high in life by working hard. I furthermore dedicate my work to my Husband Duncan Kaonga and my children Vanessa, Erica and Bond for the moral, financial support and understanding as I went through my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank the almighty father in heaven for granting me grace and strength to complete my study. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to all of the respondents from the banks for giving their time, sharing their perceptions and knowledge about the study topic. This dissertation has been made possible because they accepted to provide information concerning the delivery of HRM responsibilities by line managers.

I would also like to offer my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. R. Bakuwa, who gave me the support and necessary guidance to complete this research without her it would have not been possible for me to finish my study. I further extend my thanks to Professor L. Dzimbiri, our course coordinator, who was always willing to assist each and everyone in our class. My sincerest appreciation is extended to my second supervisor Dr. A. Chiweza, Mrs. Beth Nkhonjera, Mrs. Tadala Mlelemba for their splendid support. This research would not have been completed without the emotional support and encouragement from my husband, Duncan Kaonga, my children Vanessa, Erica and Bond my mother Annette Francis Nthakomwa and my brothers and sisters. They encouraged and supported me and made me believe that I would complete this dissertation. I thank them for understanding and sacrificing the time we were meant to be together so that I could finish my dissertation. I will always cherish their support and encouragement. To my fellow HRM masters class, you were a lovely class, I will miss and cherish all the moments we had together. Thank you for the advice, support and tips which made it possible to accomplish this dissertation.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated effective delivery of Human Resource Management (HRM) responsibilities by line managers in commercial banks in Malawi. The following five objectives were employed in order to understand line managers' effective delivery of HRM responsibilities; (1) identification of Human Resource Management responsibilities delivered by line managers, (2) establishment of the extent to which HRM responsibilities are effectively delivered by line managers, (3) examination of the benefits that emanate from line managers effective delivery of HRM responsibilities, (4) identification of the challenges line managers encounter as they handle HRM responsibilities and (5) the support line managers receive to deliver effectively the HRM responsibilities. The study employed a descriptive research design and a quantitative correlation research. Here a semi structured questionnaire was administered to 110 respondents in 11 Commercial Banks in Malawi and achieved a response rate of 72.7%. SPSS was used to analyze the data. The results revealed that line managers are indeed involved in various HRM responsibilities such as; performance appraisal, induction, recruitment and selection and training and development and that they effectively deliver these HRM responsibilities. In spite of the challenges line managers encounter in delivering HRM responsibilities, they are supported by HR experts and Management through their advice and guidance and decision making. Also, line managers have tools which they use to deliver the responsibilities. The study concluded that line managers and HR experts should work hand in hand and be provided with enough training to ensure effective delivery of the HRM responsibilities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| ABSTRACT..... | vi |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | vii |
| LIST OF TABLES..... | xii |
| LIST OF APPENDICES..... | xiii |
| ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS..... | xiv |
| CHAPTER ONE..... | 1 |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.0 Definition of Terms..... | 2 |
| 1.1 Background to the Study..... | 3 |
| 1.2 Problem Statement..... | 5 |
| 1.3 Research Questions..... | 7 |
| 1.4 Objectives of the Study..... | 7 |
| 1.4.1 General Objective..... | 7 |
| 1.4.2 Specific Objectives..... | 7 |
| 1.5 Significance of the Report..... | 8 |
| 1.6 Outline of the Study..... | 8 |
| CHAPTER TWO..... | 10 |
| LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK..... | 10 |
| 2.0 Introduction..... | 10 |
| 2.1 Importance of Human Resource Management..... | 10 |
| 2.2 HRM Responsibilities..... | 12 |

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 2.3 | Devolvement of HRM to Line Management | 13 |
| 2.4 | Line Managers Implementation of HRM..... | 15 |
| 2.5 | Benefits of devolving HRM responsibilities to line managers | 18 |
| 2.5.1 | Partnership Relationship | 18 |
| 2.5.2 | Integrating HR Strategy into the Company’s real work | 19 |
| 2.5.3 | Speed in Decision Making | 19 |
| 2.6 | Challenges encountered by line managers in delivering HRM responsibilities | 19 |
| 2.6.1 | More Workload | 20 |
| 2.6.2 | Lack Specialist Knowledge and Skills..... | 21 |
| 2.6.3 | Not willing to take up HR Responsibilities | 21 |
| 2.6.4 | Not Well Supported by the HR Managers | 22 |
| 2.6.5 | Lack of Confidence..... | 22 |
| 2.6.6 | Difficulties to Cope with HRM issues | 23 |
| 2.7 | Support required for Line Managers to effectively deliver HRM | |
| | responsibilities..... | 23 |
| 2.7.1 | Support in Training | 24 |
| 2.7.2 | Guidance in Decision Making | 24 |
| 2.7.3 | Support in Disciplinary Handling | 25 |
| 2.7.4 | Support of the HR Department and Management..... | 25 |
| 2.8 | Theoretical Framework..... | 26 |
| 2.8.1 | HRM is too important to be left to personnel specialists alone | 26 |
| 2.8.2 | Line managers need to be closely involved as deliverers and drivers of HRM. | 27 |
| 2.8.3 | Managing the managers in the organization is critically important..... | 27 |
| 2.9 | Conceptual Framework..... | 28 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.10 Chapter Summary | 29 |
| CHAPTER THREE | 30 |
| RESEARCH METHODOLOGY..... | 30 |
| 3.0 Introduction..... | 30 |
| 3.1 Study Design..... | 30 |
| 3.1.1 Research Philosophy | 30 |
| 3.1.2 Research Approach | 31 |
| 3.1.3 Research Strategy..... | 31 |
| 3.1.5 Type of Data and Sources of Data | 31 |
| 3.2 Population Size and Sample Size..... | 32 |
| 3.2.1 Population Size | 32 |
| 3.2.2 Sample size | 32 |
| 3.2.3 Sampling Techniques..... | 33 |
| 3.3 Data Collection Methods | 33 |
| 3.4 Data Analysis | 34 |
| 3.5 Validity | 34 |
| 3.6 Reliability..... | 34 |
| 3.7 Chapter Summary | 35 |
| CHAPTER FOUR..... | 36 |
| FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION..... | 36 |
| 4.0 Introduction..... | 36 |
| 4.1 Response Rate..... | 36 |
| 4.2 Characteristics of Study Respondents..... | 37 |
| 4.3 Involvement and Effective Delivery of HRM Responsibilities by Line Managers | 38 |

| | |
|---|----|
| 4.3.1 Performance Appraisal..... | 41 |
| 4.3.2 Induction | 42 |
| 4.3.3 Training and Development | 43 |
| 4.3.4 Recruitment and Selection | 44 |
| 4.3.5 Handling Pension | 45 |
| 4.3.6 Payroll Handling | 46 |
| 4.4 Benefits of line managers’ involvement in HRM Responsibilities | 48 |
| 4.4.1 HRM Problems are Solved at Source | 49 |
| 4.4.2 Shorter Line of Communication | 50 |
| 4.4.3 Ownership and Awareness of HR Issues | 51 |
| 4.4.4 Speed in Decision Making | 52 |
| 4.5 Challenges encountered by Line Managers’ in delivering HRM Responsibilities | 54 |
| 4.5.1 More Workload..... | 54 |
| 4.5.2 Lack of Adequate HRM Skills..... | 55 |
| 4.5.3 Not Considering themselves experts in HRM Matters | 56 |
| 4.5.4 Lack of HRM Support | 57 |
| 4.6 HRM Support and Tools For Line Managers | 59 |
| 4.6.1 Advice and Guidance | 60 |
| 4.6.2 Support from HR Unit | 61 |
| 4.6.3 Help in Decision Making | 63 |
| 4.6.4 Clear Policies, rules and guidance on people management | 64 |
| 4.6.5 Training from HRM Unit..... | 65 |
| 4.7 Correlation Between The Top Support Provided to Line Managers and the Top Effectively delivered HRM Responsibility | 66 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 4.8 Chapter Summary | 68 |
| CHAPTER FIVE | 69 |
| CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS | 69 |
| 5.0 Introduction..... | 69 |
| 5.1 Summary of Key findings..... | 69 |
| 5.2 Conclusion | 70 |
| 5.3 Recommendations..... | 72 |
| 5.4 Direction for future research..... | 73 |
| REFERENCES | 74 |
| APPENDICES | 81 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 4.1: Response Rate..... | 36 |
| Table 4.2: Characteristics of Study Respondents | 37 |
| Table 4.3: Line Managers' Involvement in HRM Responsibilities..... | 39 |
| Table 4.4: Line Managers' Effective HRM Delivery | 40 |
| Table 4.5 Benefits of Line managers' involvement in HRM Responsibilities | 48 |
| Table 4.6 HRM Challenges for Line Managers..... | 54 |
| Table 4.7: HRM Support For Line Managers..... | 59 |
| Table 4.8: HRM Tools For Line Managers | 60 |
| Table 4.9 Correlation Between Performance Appraisal and Advice and Guidance.... | 67 |

LIST OF APPENDICES

| | |
|--|----|
| Appendix 1: Research Questionnaire | 81 |
| Appendix 2: In-Depth Interview Questions | 86 |

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

| | |
|-----|---------------------------|
| HRM | Human Resource Management |
| HR | Human Resource |
| NBM | National Bank of Malawi |
| STD | Standard Bank of Malawi |
| ECO | EcoBank |
| IND | IndeBank |
| FDH | First Discount House |
| NBS | New Building Society |
| IND | IndeBank of Malawi |
| NED | NedBank |
| OPP | Opportunity Bank |
| CDH | CDH Investment Bank |
| MSB | Malawi Savings Bank |

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management (HRM) is the management of employees in the organization. The employees are very critical resources towards the attainment of organizational goals. The Human Resource are most important asset of an organization because without them the business functions such as; managing cash flow, making business transactions, communicating through all forms of media and dealing with customers cannot be completed (Haslinda, 2009). HRM ensures that employees provide high performance to the organization in order to achieve competitive advantage.

This is done through various responsibilities such as; recruitment and selection, training and development, placement, job analysis, staffing, HR Planning, employee development, employee relations, employee maintenance (Armstrong, 2006), as a result organizations produce high performance. This therefore makes HR a key resource which needs to be handled strategically in order to achieve efficacy.

Guest (1987) and Hall and Torrington (1998) cited in Hunter & Renwick (2008) also noted that HRM is too important to be left to Personnel Specialists only and that responsibilities for people management should lie with line managers. Torrington (1998) and Armstrong (2006) further observed devolution of HRM responsibilities

from specialists to line managers in many organizations. Basically, line managers have different line of responsibilities, such as Marketing managers, Production manager, Sales managers, Human Resource managers, and Finance managers among others. The Marketing manager is responsible for marketing the products and services in the organization in order to invite more clients. The Production manager is responsible for products in the organization and Sales managers are responsible for selling the products and services in the organization hence these line managers have different kinds of expertise.

Similarly, the line managers at the banks have different kinds of jobs which they perform. For instance there are Finance managers who are responsible for handling finances for the bank, the human resource managers are responsible for handling human resources, Administration managers are responsible for fleet, fuel, houses, banks cleanliness amongst others, and Procurement managers are responsible for purchases in the banks. However, these line managers are also involved in handling of the human resource responsibilities in the banks such as performance appraisal, recruitment and selection, induction, grievance and dispute handling among other activities. Thus, how are HR responsibilities being handled by line managers since they have other more responsibilities and they lack the HR skills?

1.0 Definition of Terms

Human Resource Management

Armstrong (2006) defines HRM as a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets - the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives.

Line Managers

Legge (1995) define line managers as middle and junior level managers that undertake general management work for the organization and are not specialists in any functional area. In agreement, CIPD (2014) define line managers as managers that have responsibility for directly managing individual employees or teams. Therefore, this study will adopt the CIPD's (2014) definition.

Devolution of Human Resource Management Responsibilities

Brewster and Larsen (1992) state that devolution is the degree to which HRM practices involve and give responsibility to line managers rather than personnel specialists. Similarly, the consensus in management literature over the last two decades has viewed devolution as a process of involving and giving responsibility for the discharge of HRM activities to line managers (Krulis-Randa 1990, Brewster and Siderstrom 1994, Renwick 2000, Holt Larsen and Brewster 2003). Likewise, Torrington and Hall (1996) identify devolution by a co-determination of HR practice with line management, enabling HR activities to become closer aligned with the general business strategy.

1.1 Background to the Study

At the time of this study Malawi consisted of eleven Commercial Banks namely; National Bank of Malawi, Standard Bank, NBS, FDH, CDH, FMB, EcoBank, NedBank, Opportunity Bank, MSB and IndeBank. In Malawi, the banking system's composition has risen. The number of banks has for a long time been predominantly monopolized by the two Commercial Banks; National Bank of Malawi and Standard Bank of Malawi previously known as Commercial Bank of Malawi (Mzama, 2011). The banks followed the Act which was enacted that made the country witness entry of

other banks which are local and foreign owned in the banking system (Mzama, 2011). Besides this number of increased banks in Malawi, each bank has a number of branches throughout the country from North to South. However, there have been changes in the banks in terms of products and services which they are offering.

The banks in Malawi play a major role in social economic development. The Commercial Banks in Malawi provide banking services to the public. They provide a wide range of services to customers and hence are very useful to business people (Black, 2006 in Mzama, 2011). The Commercial Banks are financial institutions that accept demand deposits and make commercial loans to the government and private individuals. The general idea behind Commercial Banks is that, they are private, profit seeking depositor institutions serving business and non-business customers with deposits, current account and credits (Roase, 1993 in Kahuha, 2011). Therefore companies would expect high performance from their employees. The existence of banks has provided employment to more Malawians and a lot more services which enable the Malawians to handle their services easily. The banks have also provided development through providing various services such as; electronic banking, ATM and mobile banking which has provided easy life to Malawians.

Therefore, performance in such Commercial Banks matters because if the banks do not provide good services and products they may lose customers hence this will have a negative impact to the banks' profit which will end in redundancies of the employees that will lead to unemployment. Furthermore, if there is no good performance at the banks they may close up the other services they provide to people which can also affect the country's economy.

1.2 Problem Statement

The devolution of HRM responsibilities to line managers has brought a lot of debate and much has been written about how line managers are the right people to do HRM roles yet have limitations. Guest, 1987; Legge, 1995; Storey, 1992 in Renwick, 2002 explain how line manager's involvement in HRM has always been noted in literature and finds that significant organizational benefits and costs exist from involving the line managers in HRM work. It means there are advantages and disadvantages in involving line managers in performing HRM responsibilities. The study further explains that participation of both line managers and HR managers in HRM needs to be re-assessed, as line managers involvement in HRM is a problematic initiative for organizations to adopt. Besides not having the expertise of HRM, it becomes a question of how they manage the HRM responsibilities they are being involved.

However, different researchers have done studies on line managers taking responsibilities of HRM and have come up with various limitations. For instance, (Renwick, 2002; McGovern et. al., 1999; Cunningham & Hyman, 1995; Brewster & Larson, 2000) suggests a number of limitations that explain the reluctance of line managers in implementing HRM responsibilities, which are expected to decrease the effective implementation of HRM responsibilities. Similarly, Terhalle (2009) states how research has indicated that line managers find implementing HR responsibilities difficult because of several limitations they experience.

Equally, Marchington and Wilkinson (2002) narrated a research conducted by IRS in 2000 that found that about 60 percent of its respondent organizations had experienced problems with the devolution of human resource to line managers. Adding on,

Gennard and Kelly (1997) also did a study on 28 organizations and they suggested that line managers are unlikely to acquire sufficient skills in the human resource area without continuing support from human resource specialists. Yet again, Thornhill and Sanders (1998 in Othman 2008) found that there was a failure to achieve HRM effectiveness in an organization where the specialist HR function was completely devolved to line managers.

The researchers also came up with different positive aspects of involving line managers in HRM responsibilities such as; more problems being solved at a lower level; better change management; more responsible line managers; improved efficiency of employees and greater freedom for HR specialists to move away from routine activities (Budhwar 2000; Budhwar and Sparrow 1997; Heraty and Morley 1995; Renwick 2000 (in Othman 2008).

Therefore, it seems there is a mixture of findings whilst some researchers found that devolving HRM responsibilities to line managers has a positive impact others found that it has negative effects. However, there are two schools of thoughts about the devolvement of HRM responsibilities to line managers. Despite having done much systematic research about the same study, it has been noted that no studies on the same has been done in Malawi.

However, the extent of line managers' effective delivery of HRM responsibilities is another question. It is then expected that profit driven companies such as commercial banks would expect nothing less from their employees (Roase, 1993 in Kahuha,

2011). Therefore, this study seeks to address the gap in literature here in Malawi on line managers' effective delivery of HRM responsibilities by line managers.

1.3 Research Questions

The study addressed the following research questions:

- a. What HRM responsibilities are delivered by line managers in the Commercial Banks in Malawi?
- b. To what extent are the line managers effectively delivering the different HRM responsibilities at the Commercial Banks in Malawi?
- c. What are the benefits of involving line managers in the delivery of HRM responsibilities in the Commercial Banks in Malawi?
- d. What are the challenges encountered after involving line managers in delivery of HRM responsibilities in Commercial Banks in Malawi?
- e. What support do line managers receive to ensure effective delivery of HRM responsibilities in the Commercial Banks in Malawi?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The study seeks to investigate effective delivery of HRM responsibilities by line managers in the Commercial Banks in Malawi.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The following are the specific objectives for the study:

- a. To identify HRM responsibilities delivered by line managers in the Commercial Banks in Malawi.

- b. To establish the extent to which line managers deliver effectively the different HRM responsibilities at the Commercial Banks in Malawi.
- c. To examine the benefits of involving line managers in the delivery of HRM responsibilities in the Commercial Banks in Malawi.
- d. To examine the challenges encountered after involving line managers in delivery of HRM responsibilities in the Commercial Banks of Malawi.
- e. To find out the support line managers receive to ensure effective delivery of HRM responsibilities in the Commercial Banks in Malawi.

1.5 Significance of the Report

The report provided an insight on the delivery of HRM responsibilities by line managers in Commercial Banks in Malawi. This helped the commercial banks to re-strategize on the involvement of line managers in the delivery of HRM responsibilities in order to yield the intended results. In the long run, the move will help the commercial banks to achieve high performance resulting in the attainment of their goals. On the academic arena, the study added new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge on the delivery of HRM responsibilities by line managers. This will be of value to the academicians, researchers and future students who will be interested in issues of delivery of HRM responsibilities by line managers.

1.6 Outline of the Study

The report has been presented in five chapters. The first Chapter provides an introduction to HRM and how HR is an important asset for the organization. It also explains about line managers and their devolvement to HRM responsibilities. The chapter also presents a background of the study and how the banks provide social

economy to the country. Then the problem statement is narrated, the research questions, objectives of the study, specific objectives and the significance of the study are also presented. The second chapter presents the literature review, the theoretical framework and conceptual framework of the study. The third chapter provides the research methodology. Further, the fourth chapter presents the findings and discussion of the results. Finally, chapter five draws the conclusion and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature on line managers' effective delivery of HRM responsibilities. This provides a firm foundation for the study. The study is based on Storey's (1992) Strategic HRM Model. The chapter discusses HRM and its importance, how HRM responsibilities are devolved to line managers, how the line managers are implementing HRM responsibilities, the benefits of involving line managers in delivering HRM responsibilities and the challenges they encounter after being involved in delivery of HRM responsibilities and support they receive to ensure effective delivery of these responsibilities.

2.1 Importance of Human Resource Management

Human Resource is an important resource in the organization because of its contribution to the success of the organization. Armstrong and Baron (2002) cited in Bakuwa (2013) state that people and their collective skills, abilities and experience, are now regarded as making a significant contribution to organizational success and as constituting a major source of competitive advantage. Consequently, people need to be well managed and nurtured in order to achieve high success. HRM is an important process that has influence that can lead to high or low production of goods and services of the organization since people are key resources to the organization. If not well

handled they can negatively affect production and services of the organization. The extent of line managers in delivering HR responsibilities therefore depends largely on their capacity to handle these responsibilities.

Essentially, effective HRM can help an organization achieve a competitive advantage and so improve its performance (Lado and Wilson 1994, Huselid 1995, Pfeffer 1995, Becker and Gerhart 1996, cited in Nehles 2006). Gratton and Truss (2003) state two aspects which are critical for HRM to be successful: the presence of HRM practices and the success of HRM implementation. Similarly, Terhalle (2009) agrees on how the presence of a well-developed HRM practice is important for the organization's performance and argues that it is not enough to be competitive; equally important is the way these HRM practices are implemented. Consequently, HRM implementation is certainly an important aspect of HRM effectiveness, because even bad HRM practices can be implemented in such a way that they are perceived by employees as effective (Terhalle 2009). According to Gratton and Truss (2003) many researchers advocate that for HRM to be successful, it should be embedded in the strategic needs of the firm. This means that there has to be a vertical alignment between the HRM strategy and the business goals.

Furthermore, formal written policies and procedures to guide line managers in HRM can be useful to them when they are taking on HR responsibilities (Hunter and Renwick 2008:399). These HRM policies provide a guide line to managers on all the organization's undertaking which makes their work easy and also the employees are aware of their obligations. HR is therefore a critical factor in cost and efficiency of delivery of services and their decisions often have to be made literally in front of the

customers (Terhalle 2009). The HR professionals are responsible for the design and development of HRM practices in an organization while line managers are responsible for the implementation of these responsibilities on the operational work floor (Terhalle 2009:11). The way HRM responsibilities are designed by HR professionals and implemented by line managers has become an important determinant of success or failure of those responsibilities (Terhalle, 2009). Further, the HRM fit with business strategy followed by consistency in HR choices was argued to be the initial purpose of HRM (Boxall and Purcell 2008). HRM is thus an aspect of all management jobs because it is an essential organizational process. Through good HR processes the organization can achieve retention and engaged employees.

There is need for organizations to have proper personnel to handle the HR responsibilities. Storey's (1992) explains that line managers should be more involved in HR responsibilities to ensure effective implementation and they should be deliverers and drivers of these responsibilities. Nevertheless, effective implementation of these responsibilities will depend on individual manager's capabilities.

2.2 HRM Responsibilities

HRM practices play an important role in achieving organizational goals. Appelbaum (2001) defines HRM practice as the management of people within the internal environment of organizations. He further explains that HRM practices comprise the activities and policies involved in planning, obtaining, developing, utilizing, evaluating, maintaining, and retaining the appropriate numbers and skills of employees to achieve the organization's objectives. Similarly, Schuler and Jackson (1987) states that HRM practices refer to organizational activities directed at managing the pool of human

resource and ensuring that the resources are channeled towards the fulfillment of organizational goals.

However, line managers need HR practices as direction to attain organizational goals. Through high competitions which organizations are facing, there is high demand for HRM practices that will help the environment to maintain a pool of employees with competency and skills to achieve the organizational goals. Bogdanova et al (2008) state that HRM practices try to develop and allocate human capital in the best possible ways in order to achieve long-term goals; the practices provide the organization with many benefits that would boost employee's motivation, job satisfaction, and increase their performance.

The HRM practices will be of benefit to the organization depending on how they are being implemented. The question is how line managers are handling the HRM responsibilities?

2.3 Devolvement of HRM to Line Management

Devolution is a management system considered as one of the main factors contributing to the success of Japanese companies in improving productivity and quality of goods and services, (Othman, 2008). Storey (1992), Ulrich (1997), Caldwell (2003) cited in Nehles (2006), state that devolving HR responsibility to the operational line level implies a change in the roles taken on by the HR function. Storey's (1992) model further narrates that it is ideal for the HRM responsibilities not be left to personnel specialists alone, the line managers need to be closely involved in the HR responsibilities and they have to be deliverers and drivers of the HR responsibilities.

This entails that the devolution is a management strategy to achieve goals of the organization through the new system. The IRS (2006) survey provides evidence on employers' survey of fifty-eight UK organizations on the extent of devolving HR responsibilities to line management. This is either as the sole provider or forming part of a partnership with HR. In more than sixty percent of organizations in IRS research, line management had assumed an increased responsibility.

Furthermore the IRS (2006) research confirms earlier findings by McConville and Holden (1999) that line managers were identified as having significant involvement in the transactional delivery and running of HRM responsibility. In addition it has been found that the main reason for devolving HRM responsibilities to line managers was as a quicker and timely response for HRM issues, reducing HRM related costs, increasing participation in HRM issues, taking HR services closer to the people, solving more HR related problems at lower levels and improving efficiency and effectiveness (Cheruiyot and Kwasira, 2013). Therefore, devolvement of HRM responsibilities to line managers has more advantages which if well implemented can have a huge impact on organizations.

Perry and Kulik (2008) advise that organizations that adopt a devolution strategy are taking a big risk because they are placing responsibility for the care and feeding of their most important assets in the hand of managers who may have received little or no formal training. However, even though devolvement has been done the questions is how line managers are delivering these responsibilities?

Devolution of HRM responsibilities to line managers is also happening in the African continent. According to Ruziwa and Martens (2015) in Zimbabwean organizations devolution of HRM responsibilities is also a big debate. A research conducted by Ruziwa et. al (2013) found that most of the major HR programmes were being implemented by line managers, who in no doubt are influencing direction in HR policies. There has been reluctance among line managers to take on HRM responsibilities devolved to them. In Zimbabwe according to Ruziwa and Martens, it has been often reported that line managers are a source of labour relations problems. The line managers are already under pressure with their normal responsibilities therefore, taking time for additional responsibilities can seem irksome. It is also noted that HR professionals are still reluctant to devolve responsibility to the line managers since this can seem like a loss of professionalism (Ruziwa & Martens, 2015). However, are the line managers delivering HRM responsibilities without the support from the HR experts?

2.4 Line Managers Implementation of HRM

According to Gibb (2000), with the rising costs, the increase in competition and the subsequent pressures on cost containment, organizations have been challenged to seek new strategies and management techniques to enable all levels within the organization to operate more effectively. Thus, HRM devolvement to line managers is one of the strategies organizations employ to bring change. Hutchinson and Purcell (2003) state how line managers play a critical role in influencing employee attitudes and behavior by the way in which they translate the designed HRM practices and can be vital in making the difference between low performing and high performing organizations. On the other hand, Brewster and Larsen (2000) narrate how the role of line managers

has changed over the last twenty years. There is a wide spread drive to give line managers more responsibilities for the management of their staff and to reduce the extent to which HR department control or restrict line management autonomy in this area. This is because line managers' decisions often have to be made in front of the customers.

In agreement, a research examining the link between people management and performance done by (Purcell et al. 2003, Hutchinson and Purcell 2003, Purcell and Hutchinson 2007) show that the way these managers implement and enact HR policies and show leadership plays a major part in influencing employee attitudes towards the organization and their jobs. Yet, Renwick (2002), McGovern et al (1997), Whittaker and Marchington (2003) Hall and Torrington (1998), and Gennard and Kelly (1997) explain that line managers' involvement in HRM is not without its difficulties. For instance, line managers express reluctance to accept new responsibilities pushed upon them (Kulik and Bainbridge 2006, Whittaker and Marchington 2003). These line managers have other responsibilities on top of the HRM responsibilities which stand as a barrier in implementing the new responsibility.

Several researchers suggest limitations that explain reluctance of line managers in implementing HRM which decrease effective implementation of HRM practices (Renwick 2002, McGovern et al 1999, Cunningham and Hyman 1995, and Brewster and Larson 2000). On the other hand, Harris et al (2002:224) in UK public sector research noted that the line managers felt uncomfortable with being the focal point of HR and under prepared to exercise their own managerial discretion with respect to people management responsibilities. Likewise, the IRS (2006) employer's survey

found that fewer than half of line managers were enthusiastic with assuming people management responsibilities. Nehles et al, (2006) explain that in assuming an HR responsibility, line managers undergo various levels and degrees of preparation and the level of preparation undoubtedly impacts on line management's capacity to perform HRM. Furthermore, the pressure of combining the traditional managerial role with additional HRM responsibilities is an increasingly prominent theme in the devolvement literature (McConville, 2006 and Nehles et al. 2006).

Nevertheless, it has been found that majority of line management have welcomed their new HRM role, although this may be conditional on being sufficiently prepared (Renwick, 2003 and Whittaker and Marchington, 2003). Renwick's (2000) research found that conflictual relations regarding preparation levels were evident, which frequently resulted in confusion over accountability and responsibility for both HR and line managers and also with regards to undergoing training and development in the area. There is need for recognition of each other's contribution to the relationship. This means the line managers need to get prepared to handle this role and the HR need to provide all the support to line managers.

Given the time pressures and constraints which exist for line managers to undertake HR tasks, the HRM literature suggests that line managers need significant preparation and development in HRM, and support from the organization to do it well (Purcell and Hutchinson 2007). Nevertheless, line managers are not necessarily satisfied with the amount of training they receive before taking on new roles in HRM and moreover some of the line managers do not seem to be fully committed to becoming more highly trained or skilled in HRM (Cunningham and Hyman 1995). Hutchinson and

Purcell (2003) find that the transfer of HR work to the line managers has occurred without them relinquishing former roles, thus increasing their workload. Therefore, although the HR responsibilities were transferred to the line managers there are limitations that occur in their implementation of the HR responsibilities. However, there is need to find out if the line managers are effectively delivering the HR responsibilities.

2.5 Benefits of devolving HRM responsibilities to line managers

Literature has provided a list of strengths for the involvement of line managers in delivering HRM responsibilities.

2.5.1 Partnership Relationship

Through work relations between the line managers and the HR managers there will be formation of work relation. The line managers need to create a good relationship with HR managers because for HR responsibilities to be implemented effectively there is need for the line managers and HR managers to work hand in hand. It means that the line managers will need to get support and training from the HR managers hence if there is no good relationship this may not work. Renwick (2003) UK based research on line management involvement in HRM, illustrates that there is scope for improving the partnership relationship.

2.5.2 Integrating HR Strategy into the Company's real work

Ulrich (1997) suggests that line management can lead the way in integrating HR strategy into the company's real work within the departments and staff whom they manage which ultimately presents the rationale for their involvement in HR delivery. Through direct work relations with the employees' line managers have the capabilities to drive the employees towards achieving the attainment of the organizational goals.

2.5.3 Speed in Decision Making

The decision to devolve HRM to line management may increase the speed of decision-making on HRM issues as evidenced in the findings of Renwick (2000) and Holt Larsen and Brewster (2003). The speed in decision making will be made through direct work relations of the line managers and the employees. Since production and services are handled by the line managers and the moment any conspiracy arises they will be able to decide and provide feedback to implement as they are working hand in hand which will fasten the production and services of the organization.

These benefits will depend on the creativity of the line managers as the line managers lack HR skills.

2.6 Challenges encountered by line managers in delivering HRM responsibilities

The implementation of HRM responsibilities by line managers is not without challenges. Various researchers have done studies on line managers taking responsibilities of HRM and have come up with various limitations. For instance, (Renwick 2002, McGovern et. al. 1999, Cunningham and Hyman 1995, Brewster and

Larsen 2000) suggest a number of limitations that explain the reluctance of line managers in implementing HR responsibilities, which are expected to decrease the effective implementation of HRM responsibilities.

2.6.1 More Workload

Lopez Cotarelo (2011) explains that line managers encounter various challenges in delivering HRM responsibilities such as; more workload since they have other responsibilities which they handle in their departments. HRM responsibilities are delivered by the line managers who also have their own technical responsibilities such as; Finance, Marketing, Production, amongst other. However, line managers were given more responsibilities without reducing the other duties which they have.

According to Brewster and Larsen (2000) HR tasks are generally devolved to line managers without reducing their other duties. However, it may be difficult for line managers to be able to devote enough time to HRM responsibilities, especially when short term operational pressures dominate (Gratton et. al 1999, Renwick 2000 cited in Nehles 2006). This may have a negative impact to the organisation as the line managers may not be able to finish all the tasks which they have or they may not implement the responsibilities effectively hence affecting the performance of the organization. Cheruiyot and Kwasira (2013) also narrate the challenges faced by devolution of HRM responsibilities to line managers as inadequate resources to support HR function, inconsistencies in HR service delivery, lack of HR skills among country managers and increased workloads. Equally, Marchington and Wilkinson (2002) asserted in a research conducted by IRS in 2000 that found that about 60

percent of its respondent organizations had experienced problems with the devolution of human resource to line managers.

2.6.2 Lack Specialist Knowledge and Skills

Line managers encounter challenges such as lack of skills in HRM since it is not their field of expertise (Lopez Cotarelo, 2011). The line managers lack specialist knowledge and skills (Lowe 1992, Gennard and Kelly 1997, Hall and Torrington 1998, Harris et al. 2002 in Nehles 2006) which may pose as a problem to their effective implementation of this role. The line managers have insufficient competency to apply HR practices (Nehles 2006). The line managers are technical managers with added responsibilities of HR hence they do not have deep knowledge of the HR policies, procedures, rules and regulations, practices which may be unhealthy for the organization. These line managers direct and guide the employees on issues concerning HR thus they may guide or direct them inappropriately.

2.6.3 Not willing to take up HR Responsibilities

According to Nehles (2006) line managers may not be willing to perform HR responsibilities and they may not have spare time to spend on their additional responsibility. There are various reasons why line managers may not be willing to take up HR responsibilities. Some line managers are reluctant to take on HRM responsibilities. As the line managers lack HR skills, they may not be confident to deliver the HR responsibilities for fear to implement inappropriately. In addition, the line managers may be lazy to learn and acquire new knowledge of managing the employees hence will not be willing to take up these responsibilities.

2.6.4 Not Well Supported by the HR Managers

The line managers are not well supported by HR Managers or are not provided with clear policy and procedures for performing the additional HR tasks (Nehles 2006). More of HR responsibilities have devolved to line managers and HR managers are fear losing the HR jobs completely hence they may not be willing to support the line managers. The HR experts may not be willing to support the line managers in handling HR responsibilities because of the sour relations between the two offices. There is need for good relations between the line managers and the HR managers in order for the line managers to be assisted adequately. It is worthy noting that according to authors such as McGovern et al (1999), Cunningham and Hyman (1995), line managers encounter limitations such as reluctance to implement HRM responsibilities which would decrease effective implementation of the HRM responsibilities. Further, Gennard and Kelly's study of 1995 suggest that line managers are unlikely to acquire sufficient skills in the HRM areas without continuing support from HR specialists.

2.6.5 Lack of Confidence

Line managers undergo various levels and degrees of preparation and the level of preparation undoubtedly impacts on line management's capacity to perform HRM (Nehles et al. 2006). 8. There is some evidence that line managers may lack confidence in their abilities to complete an HR responsibility, as many line managers have a strong preference to have an actual person to consult with face-to-face and seek advice from when they wish to take action in HRM (Hunter and Renwick 2008). Indeed the line managers may lack confidence if they do not have the skills to handle the HR responsibilities. It will also be difficult for the line managers to gain

confidence if they do not build a good relation with the HR manager who will impart knowledge and skills of HR responsibilities to them.

2.6.6 Difficulties to Cope with HRM issues

The line managers find it difficult to cope with HRM issues and give them low priority in the context of their own managerial workloads (Cunningham and Hyman 1995, Cunningham et al. 2004, Keep and Rainbird 2000 cited in Hunter and Renwick 2008). Similarly, Terhalle (2009) state how research has indicated that line managers find implementing HR responsibilities difficult because of several limitations they experience. Subsequently, Gennard and Kelly (1997) also did a study on 28 organizations and they suggested that line managers are unlikely to acquire sufficient skills in the human resource area without continuing support from human resource specialists. Yet again, Thornhill and Sanders (1998) cited in Othman (2008) found that there was a failure to achieve HRM effectiveness in an organization where the specialist HR function was completely devolved to line managers. It shows that line managers are lacking HR skills and confidence to deliver HR responsibilities. How then are these line managers assisted to manage deliver the HR responsibilities.

2.7 Support required for Line Managers to effectively deliver HRM responsibilities

Since HRM responsibilities have been devolved to line managers, there is need for the line managers to be provided with all the support needed to achieve organizational goals through the HRM responsibilities. However, some HR managers are either unable to provide line managers with the support they need or are reluctant to abandon their HR responsibilities and play a new organizational role in supporting

line managers (Gennard and Kelly 1997, Hall and Torrington 1998 cited in Nehles 2006).

2.7.1 Support in Training

The line managers do not have much knowledge and skills of HR responsibilities thus HR managers and management need to provide support of various areas of HR matters to the line managers. Hyman (1995) state that line managers are not necessarily satisfied with the amount of training they receive before taking on new responsibilities of HRM. As such, this can be a cause of their ineffectiveness in performing their role in HRM. Human Resource Managers need to understand that HR responsibilities are critical to the performance of the planned goals in the organization thus there is need for them to give more support to the line managers for the betterment of the organization.

2.7.2 Guidance in Decision Making

Where there is no support for line managers in HRM, there has been some inconsistency in decision making by line managers in employee relations (Cunningham and Hyman 1995, IRS 1996). The HR function has various procedures, rules and regulations which need to be followed. For instance the Employment Act and Labour Relation Acts need to be implemented in order to avoid unnecessary costs and penalties. Therefore, HR managers are experts in the handling HR procedures and providing guidelines, hence they need to guide the line managers towards the decisions they make for the organization.

2.7.3 Support in Disciplinary Handling

The HR specialists are greatly valued by line managers for their contribution to handling disciplinary issues. Having the opportunity to talk to someone from HR is seen as essential for line managers, especially to guide them regarding specific problems with staff (Whittaker and Marchington, 2003). Having no expertise to the new responsibility, the line managers may be reluctant to do HRM responsibilities. HR managers should give enough support to line managers in order for the line managers to be interested in the new responsibility and achieve high performance.

It is clear from the literature that HRM is very important because all activities done in the organization are done by the human resources. However, it is important for HR managers to provide guidance and direction to the line managers to handle the disciplinary issues effectively. Non effective handling of disciplinary issues has an impact on costs and time which affects the performance as well as finances of the organization.

2.7.4 Support of the HR Department and Management

Furthermore, for the line managers to deliver these HRM responsibilities they need to be supported by HR department and management. Thus, if there is no support it means delivery of HRM responsibilities will not be done effectively. Therefore, this entails that for the line managers to deliver HRM responsibilities effectively they need to be supported, they need to dedicate themselves to manage their own responsibilities as well as the HR responsibilities. Nevertheless, it has been found by authors that some HR personnel are reluctant to provide support to the line managers and also line managers are not interested to do HR responsibilities hence this becomes a problem.

Literature shows that line managers cannot deliver HR responsibilities on their own but they need to be supported by the HR specialists and management. Hence, line managers should be provided with support in order to achieve the goals of the organization.

2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on Storey's (1992) Strategic HRM model which identified the role of line managers in the delivery of HRM responsibilities. Storey's model explained the three critical roles of line managers in HRM. The theory states that line managers play a very important role in the delivery of HR responsibilities which necessitates the attainment of organizational goals and outputs regardless of the challenges they experience. This can only happen if these line managers are fully involved in HR responsibilities and also being provided with the necessary and appropriate HR support and work closely with the HR managers.

2.8.1 HRM is too important to be left to personnel specialists alone

The model shows that line managers have a very important role to play in people management. The Storey's model elaborately explains the important role that line manager's play in the delivery of HR responsibilities. Line managers work close with employees thus they have a big influence on attainment of the strategic goals of the organization. This model to a great extent explains the significance of the role played by line managers in delivering HRM responsibilities. In agreement with the model Budhwar (2000), Budhwar and Sparrow (1997), Heraty and Morley (1995) cited in Othman (2000) explain that different positive aspects occur when line managers are

involved in delivering HRM responsibilities. Thus, line managers' involvement in delivering HRM responsibilities is very important in achieving organizational goals.

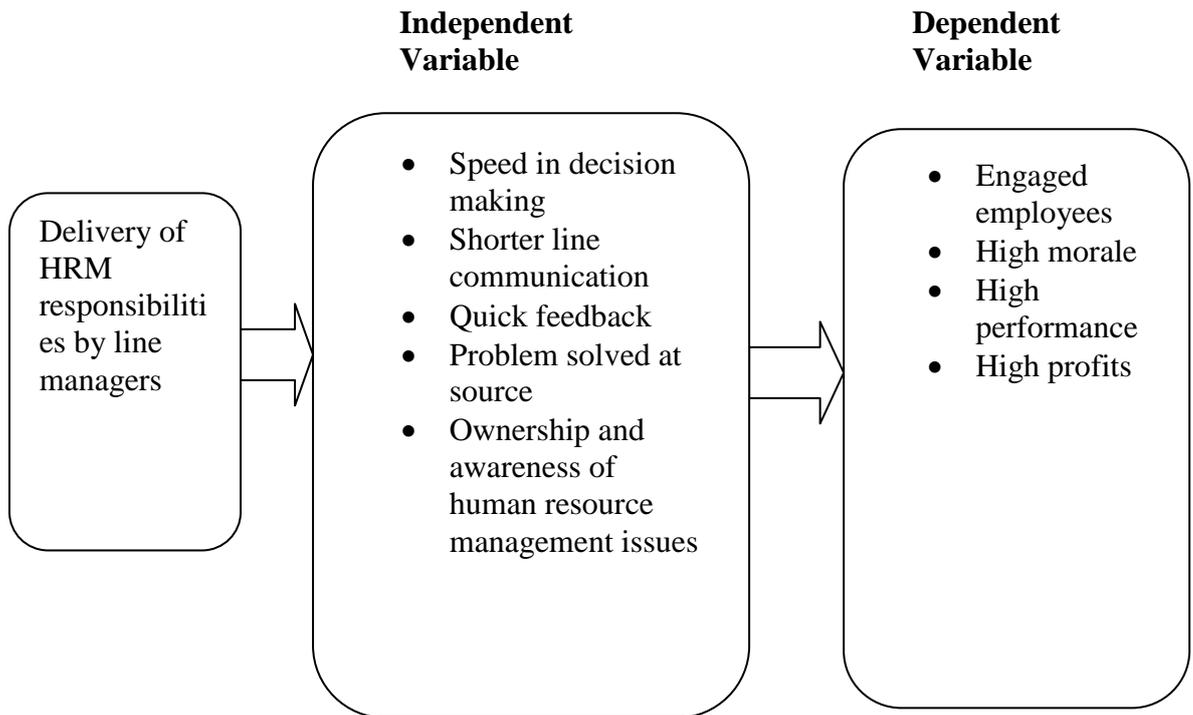
2.8.2 Line managers need to be closely involved as deliverers and drivers of HRM

As line managers' work directly with the employees it is important that they should be involved in delivering HRM responsibilities. The policies and systems which are implemented through the line managers will be effective because of the direct relationship they have with the employees. Furthermore, the line managers' close involvement in delivering HRM responsibilities is important because they know employees strength and weaknesses hence the line manager will be able to place and use the employees appropriately.

2.8.3 Managing the managers in the organization is critically important

Since the line managers are important for achievement of goals, the managers need to be well trained and equipped with techniques on handling the human resources. The managers need support from the HR managers and the whole organization for effective and efficient achievement of goals. If the line managers are not provided with support to deliver HRM responsibilities they cannot deliver well the responsibilities. As such, this can be a cause of their ineffectiveness in performing their role of HRM. Thus, where there is no support for line managers in HRM, there has been some inconsistency in relation to decision making by line managers regarding employee relations Cunningham and Hyman (1995). The HR unit together with senior managers provide tools and techniques to the line managers to ensure effective delivery of the HR responsibilities.

2.9 Conceptual Framework



Source: The researcher

Line manager's delivery of HR responsibilities provides high performance of individuals as well as organization. Storey's (1992) model is the basis of this study. The model narrates how the line manager's involvement in HR responsibilities will benefit the organization. The line managers play a very important role in delivering HR responsibilities because of their direct work relation with the employees and their daily working with the employees. It is only when the line managers work closely with the HR specialists that they can be able to deliver the HR responsibilities. The line managers will also deliver well the HR responsibilities when they are given the platform to act as deliverers and drivers of the HR responsibilities. The line managers need to be on the forefront in handling these

responsibilities because they are the ones who work with the employees and are in a better position to make decisions concerning them.

Furthermore, management of managers is very important in order to add skills and competences of HR skills to the line managers. Through training and providing support such as guidance and direction, providing them with the required tools the line managers would be able to deliver the HR responsibilities adequately. The line managers need HR support that will help them attain individual outputs such as high performance, motivation and satisfied and engaged employees. However, in the delivery of their HR responsibilities, line managers would also experience some challenges such as more workload, lack of HR expertise. Such challenges will not be addressed if there is not training and support provided to the line managers. In addition, the line managers and HR specialists need to build good relations for the betterment of the organization. The HR specialists provide support to the line managers thus if they do not build good relations it will be difficult for the HR specialists to provide support to the line managers.

2.10 Chapter Summary

It is noted that devolvement of HRM responsibilities to line managers was done because of several reasons among others, to reduce costs and to speed up the disciplinary action and communication of workers. However, research findings on this devolvement show that line managers have problems in performing these HRM responsibilities. Furthermore, some studies view the involvement of line managers in HRM responsibilities as imperative since they work close to the employees hence they will have a huge impact to the organization.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the research methodology used to collect and analyze data in order to obtain valid information about line managers' involvement in effective delivering of HRM responsibilities in Commercial Banks in Malawi. The researcher highlighted on the research design, research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, research type of data and sources of data, population size, research instruments, data collection methods that will be used, data analysis and validity and reliability of data.

3.1 Study Design

3.1.1 Research Philosophy

There are two main types of philosophies according to Saunders et al (2009) which are Positivism and Interpretivism. The philosophy of interpretivism understands differences between humans as social actors while the positivism philosophy works in the tradition of the natural scientist (Saunders et. al 2006). This study follows the Positivism approach because the study already had a theory from which key issues related to line manager's involvement in HRM responsibilities were identified.

3.1.2 Research Approach

Two research approaches were at the disposal of the researcher: deductive and inductive. Inductive approach research is concerned with the generation of new theory emerging from the data while deductive approach research is aimed at testing theory and it usually begins with a hypothesis. (Gabriel, 2013). This study followed a deductive approach because the study concerns information that is already known through other authors. That means both approaches of quantitative and qualitative were employed.

3.1.3 Research Strategy

The study employed a descriptive research design in order to provide systematic description that is factual and accurate about the effective delivery of HRM responsibilities by line managers in commercial banks of Malawi. The study used figures which were got from the filled in questionnaires from the banks. A content analysis was used on the results from the questionnaire which were applied for a systematic description.

3.1.5 Type of Data and Sources of Data

The research collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data refers to all non-numerical data or data that has not been quantified and can be a product of all research strategies (Saunders et. al., 2009). Quantitative data is data that is numerical in form. Regarding sources of data, primary and secondary data was used. Primary data was collected from the banks through the use of a structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews. The secondary data was collected through books and journals. The questionnaire was appropriate because it gave more time for respondents to

answer the questionnaire and it did not take much of their time because it required them just to tick where they thought there was an appropriate answer. On the other side, the in-depth interviews were appropriate because they were used to obtain detailed insights and personal thoughts.

3.2 Population Size and Sample Size

3.2.1 Population Size

The study was conducted in 11 Commercial Banks in Blantyre, Malawi namely; National Bank of Malawi, ECObank, Nedbank, Standard Bank of Malawi, and FDH Bank, MSB, Opportunity Bank, Indebank, CDH Bank, NBS Bank, FMB in Blantyre. These Banks were chosen because I wanted to do my research in one industry. Blantyre was chosen because it is the Commercial City hence there is a lot of business.

The population of this study was about 1500 employees from the 11 banks. According to Dooley in Odiya (2009) a population is a collection of all the individual units or respondents to whom the results of a survey are to be generalized.

3.2.2 Sample size

This study settled for a sample size of 10 respondents identified from each bank. The sample from each Bank consists of 1 HR manager, 3 line managers, and 6 employees (2 under each line manager). Thus, the sample size of this study was 110 representing 11 commercial banks.

3.2.3 Sampling Techniques

The respondents were chosen using purposive sampling which is non- probability sampling techniques. Sekaran and Bougie (2009) explains that the technique involves the choice of subjects who are most advantageously placed or in the best position to provide the information required. This technique was adopted due to the nature of the study. According to Saunders et. al., (2009), this technique is used because it satisfactorily meets the sampling objectives. The respondents were chosen based on positions, knowledge and experience of HRM responsibilities in order to get relevant information apart from saving on cost and time.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

Data for this research was collected using a questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Odiya (2009) defines a questionnaire as a device used for gathering facts, opinions, perceptions, attitudes and beliefs. The questionnaire contained closed ended questions in order to acquire valid and factual data regarding line managers' involvement in the delivery of HRM responsibilities. The questionnaire format encompassed likert rating scale.

In-depth interviews were used as a follow up technique on certain issues requiring more information. The in-depth interviews provided an opportunity to get a deeper understanding on various key issues that emerged from the study. There were 3 respondents who were interviewed to get more information about the survey results which were provided. There was 1 HR manager and 2 line managers.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis usually involves reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, develop summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques (Cooper and Schindler, 2001:87). The statistical frequency or grading was used for quantitative data. The data was coded then entered into the computer using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Then tables were prepared which indicated those who strongly agreed, strongly disagreed and who were not sure. A quantitative correlational research was done to systematically and to explain the nature of relationships between variables. The variables which measured the relationship were the top support provided to line managers and the effectively delivered HRM responsibility.

3.5 Validity

Validity of an instrument refers to the ability of the instrument to collect justifiable and truthful data (Odiya, 2009:198). The instrument provided enough information required to be answered by the respondent. It further, was able to collect data truthful and in line with the theory the study is based on.

3.6 Reliability

Reliability is dependability or trustworthiness and in the context of a measuring instrument (Amin 2005). The questionnaire was a reliable because it was able to collect information that was easy to interpret.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the methodology which the study used to collect data for the study. The study design consisted of the research philosophy of positivism because the study already had a theory. The design also used a deductive research approach because the information of the study is already known and the research strategy of a survey because the survey is good in describing characteristics of large populations.

In addition the study employed a qualitative and quantitative research design. The population size of the study was 1500 employees which consisted of 1 HR manager from each bank, 2 line managers and 2 supervisors under each line manager. The study was conducted in 11 Banks namely; NBM, Standard Bank, EcoBank, NedBank, FDH, MSB, Opportunity Bank, IndeBank, CHD, NBS, and FMB. The sample size of the study was 10 respondents from each Bank and it used a non-probability sampling technique.

Furthermore, data was collected using a questionnaire with a format of likert rating scale which consisted questions which were in line with the study objectives. In addition, a face to face interview method was also used on following up the questionnaire in order to understand more about the responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings in comparison with what other researchers have presented on the delivery of HRM responsibilities by line managers. The chapter discusses involvement of line managers in HRM responsibilities, effective delivery of HRM responsibilities, the HRM tools and the HRM support, benefits and challenges of involving line managers in delivering HRM responsibilities.

4.1 Response Rate

The study targeted a total of 110 respondents from 11 Commercial Banks in Malawi comprising 1 Human Resource Manager, 3 line managers and 6 supervisors from each bank. 80 questionnaires were received with all the questions answered representing a response rate of 72.7%.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

| Questionnaires Administered | Questionnaires Received | Response Rate (%) |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 110 | 80 | 72.7 |

Table 4.2: Characteristics of Study Respondents

| Characteristics | Category | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------------|---|-----------|-------------|
| Respondents | Human Resource Manager | 8 | 10% |
| | Line Manager (Finance Manager, Operations manager, Credit and Risk manager) | 30 | 37.5% |
| | Supervisors (Finance Officer, Administration Officer, Procurement Officer, Risk Officer, Operations Officer and Employee Relations Officer) | 42 | 52.5% |
| | Total | 80 | 100% |
| Qualification | Masters Degree | 23 | 28.8% |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 36 | 45% |
| | Postgraduate Diploma | 2 | 2.5% |
| | Diploma | 9 | 11.2% |
| | Certificate | 10 | 12.5% |
| | Total | 80 | 100% |
| Experience (in years) | Less than a year | 7 | 8.8% |
| | 1 – 5 | 40 | 50% |
| | 6 – 10 | 14 | 17.5% |
| | 11 – 14 | 12 | 15% |
| | 15 – 19 | 6 | 7.5% |
| | 20 and above | 7 | 8.8% |
| | Total | 80 | 100% |

4.2 Characteristics of Study Respondents

As shown in table 4.2, the characteristics of the respondents in terms of management levels were as follows: 10% of the respondents were human resource managers, 37.5% of the respondents were line managers and 52.5% of the respondents were supervisors. Regarding their qualifications, 28.8% of the respondents had a master's degree, 45% had a first degree, 2.5% had a post graduate diploma, 11.2% had a diploma and 12.5% had a certificate. In terms of work experience, 8.8% of the respondents had less than one year of work experience, 50% had one to five years of work experience, 17.5% had six to ten years of work experience, 15% had a 11-14 of

work experience, another 7.5% had 15-19 years of work experience while 8.8% had 20 and above years of work experience. Taking from the respondents work experiences, it shows that most of the respondents have more experience in working in the organizations under study and in HRM responsibilities as they have worked in their positions for over 1 year.

4.3 Involvement and Effective Delivery of HRM Responsibilities by Line Managers

The study looked at 12 responsibilities that line managers are involved in at the Commercial Banks of Malawi and whether the line managers are effectively delivering these responsibilities. Tables 4.3 and 4.4 reveal that line managers are indeed involved in HRM responsibilities at the Malawi Commercial Banks and are effectively delivering these responsibilities.

Table 4.3: Line Managers' Involvement in HRM Responsibilities

| HRM RESPONSIBILITIES | STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE | NOT SURE | STRONGLY DISAGREE/DI SAGREE | MEAN SCORE |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Performance Appraisal | 98.8% | 1.3% | 0% | 4.63 |
| Induction | 92.5% | 3.8% | 3.8% | 4.31 |
| Training and Development | 88.8% | 3.8% | 7.5% | 4.15 |
| Recruitment and Selection | 88.8% | 3.8% | 7.6% | 4.25 |
| Disciplinary and Grievances | 85.1% | 10.0% | 5.1% | 4.10 |
| Ensure HR processes are maintained | 78.8% | 13.8% | 7.6% | 3.95 |
| Health and Safety | 63.8% | 21.3% | 15.1% | 3.65 |
| Dismissal issues | 63.8% | 18.8% | 17.5% | 3.63 |
| Managing flexible work conditions | 62.5% | 20.0% | 17.5% | 3.50 |
| Rewards and Benefits | 61.3% | 12.5% | 26.3% | 3.50 |
| Payroll Handling | 31.3% | 13.8% | 55.1% | 2.70 |
| Handling Pension | 22.5% | 15.02 % | 62.6% | 2.39 |

N = 80

Table 4.4: Line Managers' Effective HRM Delivery

| LINE MANAGERS' EFFECTIVE DELIVERY | STRONGLY AGREE/ AGREE | NOT SURE | STRONGLY DISAGREE/ DISAGREE | MEAN SCORE |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Performance Appraisal | 93.8% | 2.5% | 3.8% | 4.29 |
| Induction | 85.1% | 7.5% | 7.5% | 4.06 |
| Training and Development | 81.3% | 7.5% | 11.3% | 3.89 |
| Recruitment and Selection | 77.6% | 5.0% | 17.6% | 3.85 |
| Ensure HRM processes | 71.3% | 15.0% | 13.8% | 3.74 |
| Disciplinary and Grievance | 70.0% | 16.3% | 13.8% | 3.69 |
| Health and Safety | 58.8% | 18.8% | 22.6% | 3.50 |
| Managing flexible work | 56.3% | 23.8% | 20.1% | 2.38 |
| Dismissal | 52.5% | 22.5% | 25.1% | 3.34 |
| Rewards and Benefits | 48.8% | 11.3% | 40.1% | 3.13 |
| Payroll | 26.3% | 21.3% | 52.6% | 2.66 |
| Handling Pension | 23.8% | 20.0% | 56.3% | 2.55 |

N = 80

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show the top four responsibilities performed by line managers and the top four effectively delivered HRM responsibilities by line managers at the commercial banks of Malawi. The key HRM responsibilities which line managers are involved and effectively deliver include performance appraisal, induction, training and development and recruitment and selection. The least two HRM responsibilities line managers are involved and deliver effectively are pension and payroll handling.

4.3.1 Performance Appraisal

Performance Appraisal is a system put in place to assess and measure employee's performance. Roe (2012) and Qadeer et al (2010) consider performance appraisal as a vital tool to measure the frameworks set by any organization to its employees. From the findings it shows that 98.8 % of line managers are involved in performance appraisal and 93.8% were convinced that the appraisal system is delivered effectively.

The management of the bank is therefore able to monitor and measure performance of employees through the line manager's involvement as quoted by a respondent from one of the banks who states that:

“performance appraisal is done at branch level firstly by the immediate supervisor, then the line managers. The line managers try to make sense of the report of the appraised employee and have the opportunity to defend or contest the results.”

This means that the involvement of the line managers in HR responsibilities plays a central part in the achievement of the organization's goals. This is in line with the conventional practice that dictates that the superiors who are usually the immediate boss should be given the responsibility of evaluating performance of their subordinates (Joseph, 2014). Performance appraisal then has the potential to motivate the employees who are high performers and encourage low performers as it has the ability to identify strength and weakness. As a result promotion goes to the most deserving candidate. In a way it encourages the system to be more transparent and predictable. Additionally, in identifying the weaknesses the organizations are able to appropriately plan for further training of their employees so as to enhance capacity.

However, the extent to which the performance is appraised is another question. It would definitely vary according to the capacity of the line manager. This therefore invites the need to train and develop the ability of line managers in appraising employees.

4.3.2 Induction

Induction is a process that helps an employee to understand the culture of the institution. Daskalaki (2000) states that induction programs were initially employed in order to improve the experience of organizational entry for new starters. The results of the study show that 92.5% of the respondents are involved in induction process and 85.1% agreed that induction is effectively delivered.

The results agree with Storey's (1992) model which narrates that line managers should be deliverers and drivers of HR responsibilities. At the banks line managers are involved in inducting the employees and effectively. Despite being highly educated, skilled and experienced employees need to learn the culture of the new organization in order to be productive. The employees work under line managers hence they have their way of doing things which they need to communicate to the new employees in order to achieve effectiveness. The induction process leads to staff retention, motivation amongst others if managed adequately. Thus the involvement of line managers in this process is significant since they are closely working with the subordinates and have a big impact on their induction process. This shows that at the level of induction devolution is sufficiently done by the commercial banks.

The involvement of line managers in the induction process has no questions as line managers are handling and supervising these technical jobs each and every day thus have expertise in the induction process.

4.3.3 Training and Development

Training and development is another activity which is very important because it helps employees acquire new skills and it is also a motivator to employees. According to CIPD's learning and development survey done in 2007, training and development is a key activity for line managers. Greg Mangham (1995) (cited in Renwick, 2003) states that training of people is fundamental to efficiency and progress, with responsibility for this being with both line managers and members of staff.

In addition, Gibb (2002) suggests that greater line management involvement in learning and development promotes the notion of lifelong learning and can improve the quality of these activities since line managers are best placed to understand both the organizational needs and individual needs. Agreeing with the researchers, the study results indicate that 88.8% are involved in training and development of the employees at the banks and 81.3% are effectively delivering the induction process.

This shows that the banks line managers are taking part in career development of the employees which leads to high performance as they acquire new skills and knowledge and are able to attain their individual as well as organizational goals. The line managers are the right people to conduct training and development since they are well placed to know the gaps of the employees in their sections.

Therefore the question is how the line managers manage to identify the right employees for the right training according to the banks needs. This will depend on the knowledge line managers have about the performance appraisal. Hence, line managers need to be trained on how they can identify gaps in order to send the right employees for the right training and development.

4.3.4 Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and Selection is an important responsibility in the organization as it is a process that assist management to hire competent staff. It also helps to place people in right positions according to their skills. According to Montana and Charnov (2000) in (Omolo et. al 2012), recruitment includes sourcing candidates by advertising or other methods, screening potential candidates using tests and interviews and selecting candidates based on the results. 88.8% of the respondents agreed that line managers are involved in recruitment and selection at the Banks and 77.6% effectively deliver recruitment and selection.

This shows that the banks are hiring competent and reliable staff in order to achieve their goals. Through this process the banks hire potential candidates who are well experienced and have the required skills. The line managers know exactly what kind of experience, skills and attributes they need to hire hence their involvement is significant. This responsibility is also important because biasness is avoided as during the recruitment and selection process there are a number of procedures which are followed. The banks cannot achieve their goals if they do not place people in the right positions or if they do not recruit competent qualified and experienced staff.

Do line managers have the capabilities to conduct the whole process of hiring and selecting competent and experienced staff? There is need for support from the HR experts in conducting this process to ensure that the line managers are recruiting and selecting the right candidates as per the needs of the banks.

4.3.5 Handling Pension

A pension system is understood as superannuation or retirement system and it may be set up by the state, employers, insurance companies, employer associations or employee associations such as trade unions (Keller-Krawczyk 2011). This means that pensions are contributory hence there is need for records to show how much each and every employee contributes thus the system involves calculations of money from the day an employee joined the organization to the date of retirement. However, this is a very involving responsibility to be handled. 22.5% of the respondents agreed that line managers in the Commercial Banks of Malawi are involved in handling pension and 23.8% agree that it is delivered effectively. Thus a larger percentage 62.6% of the respondents strongly disagreed that line managers are involved in pension handling.

A respondent from one of the banks explained about pension in the following quotation:

“the pension system is centralized to HR and Finance. It does not relate to the line managers’ job because of the systems put in place”.

This shows that pension system at the bank is done by the HR and Finance section. For an employee to receive his or her pension it involves a lot of procedures and looking at the line managers’ responsibilities of HRM as well as operational

responsibilities it would be a lot of work for them to calculate the right figures for the employees.

Other studies show that line managers are involved in pension handling such as the one by Flynn (2010). It found that it is ultimately line managers rather than senior managers or senior human resource specialists, who make decisions about retirement options. However, this is not the case with the results of this study. This exercise involves a lot of processes which requires ample time and also employee records which are kept in the HR section. The process required going through the employee's file which indicates the days the employee was promoted, given a raise in pay and other benefits which need to be calculated. Thus, line managers with their combined responsibilities would be challenged to handle the induction responsibility. Therefore, it is sensible that line managers are not involved because pension system is handled by the HR experts.

4.3.6 Payroll Handling

The Payroll system involves employee remunerations hence it concerns employee records and calculations and checking of employee payments and deductions to ensure that each and every employee is receiving the right salary each and every month. Barker and Hadi (2010) state that the role of the line managers in issues such as salary decisions, incentive payments and employee benefits is not significant. The effective monitoring and review of the payroll provides the organization with assurance that payroll controls are operating, transacting and are being appropriately processed and standards of service are being maintained (Sedibeng, 2014).

However, line managers are delivering the HR responsibilities as an added responsibility hence such an activity will be more involving and it will require more time. 31.3% of the respondents agreed that line managers are involved in payroll handling whilst 26.3% agreed that line managers deliver the payroll effectively. However, 55.1% strongly disagreed that line managers are involved in the payroll system and 52.6% disagreed that it is effectively delivered. Thus, the results indicate that less line managers at the banks are not involved in handling the payroll.

Payroll is one of the motivators at work because people work to earn a salary amongst other benefits hence it is a very serious exercise which needs to be handled with care. The HR section is responsible for keeping employee records and is the right section to handle the payroll system. When the employee calculations are done well and the employee receives the right pay it boosts the employee's morale to perform well which can lead to employee's high performance. Indeed line managers should not be involved in payroll because it is purely an HR expert's responsibility.

In summary the study shows that line managers are largely involved and effectively deliver performance appraisal, induction, recruitment and selection and training and development. These responsibilities are unique because they provide entry of competent staff, grant them with the culture of the organization and provide them with morale and more skills which would add value to the organization. This is in line with Story's (1992) model which states the need for line managers to be deliverers and drivers of HR responsibilities which they are doing at the bank. Furthermore, the study shows that the line managers are delivering effectively these responsibilities agreeing with Storey that management of the managers is important hence it shows

that these line managers are being managed by providing them with HR skills which will provide benefits to the bank.

However, line managers are least involved in pension and payroll handling which are typical HR responsibilities. This is probably why the respondents felt that the line managers do not effectively deliver these two HRM responsibilities.

4.4 Benefits of line managers' involvement in HRM Responsibilities

Table 4.5 shows the benefits of line managers' involvement in delivering HRM responsibilities.

Table 4.5 Benefits of Line managers' involvement in HRM Responsibilities

| BENEFITS | STRONGLY AGREE/AGREE | NOT SURE | STRONGLY DISAGREE/DISAGREE | MEAN SCORE |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| HRM problems are solved at source | 70.0% | 15.0% | 15.0% | 3.63 |
| Shorter line of communication | 67.6% | 16.3% | 16.3% | 3.60 |
| Own HRM issues and aware of them | 65.1% | 15.0% | 20.0% | 3.51 |
| Speed in decision making | 65.1% | 13.8% | 21.3% | 3.53 |
| Likely committed to own HRM decisions | 60.1% | 25.0% | 15.0% | 3.51 |
| Better change management achieved | 60.1% | 23.8% | 16.3% | 3.50 |
| Low costs | 58.8% | 30.0% | 11.3% | 3.53 |

N = 80

Table 4.5 shows that the top 4 benefits of involving line managers in HRM responsibilities are HRM problems are solved at source, there is shorter line of

communication, the line managers own and are aware of HRM matters and there is speed in decision making.

4.4.1 HRM Problems are Solved at Source

Line managers operate at the workplace alongside the people they manage. Consequently, their reactions can be more immediate and appropriate. Rather than waiting for an answer from the personnel department, issues can be resolved instantly (Marchington and Wilkinson, 2002:257). Involvement of line managers in HR responsibilities provides efficiency and effectiveness as issues are solved instantly. 70.0% of the respondents agreed that HRM problems are being solved at source.

This study shows that the banks are benefiting through involving line managers in delivering HRM responsibilities. It shows that instead of going through a number of channels to provide a complaint or feedback communication is direct as the supervisor works directly with the subordinates and he has the discretion to discipline, provide feedback amongst others. The involvement of line managers in HRM responsibilities helps decisions and problems to be addressed so fast and easily. Therefore, non involvement of line managers in HRM responsibilities will mean decisions will go through various channels which will delay services that need to be handled quickly. Through direct communication with employees line managers' decisions are made easily and advice is also immediate which will give instant results and benefit the organisation.

The HRM problems will be solved at source depending on the level of capability of the line manager. Line managers need to be provided with support to ensure effective decision making and implementation of HR issues to provide good results.

4.4.2 Shorter Line of Communication

Communication is a process of sharing information from one person to another. Through shorter line of communication, a lot of benefits emanate such as; quick decisions, quick implementation of production and services amongst others. Sims (2008) explains that innovations in communications and telecommunication revolutions will accelerate the pace of change and as a result lead to many innovations in HRM. Thus, communication is very significant to the achievement of goals in the organisation. In this study 67.6% of the respondents are of the view that line managers involvement in HRM responsibilities provide benefits of Shorter line of communication to the bank. .

The results show that the banks are experiencing benefits such as shorter line of communication because of line managers involvement in HR responsibilities. Essentially, communication that goes through a number of channels delays operations and it is expensive since the communication takes time to be handled and feedback also delays. For example, in a situation where a customer request for some information about a product but it takes some days for feedback to be provided, the customer may definitely change his/her mind on the business. The strategy of involving line managers in HRM responsibilities pose as one way of reducing centralised systems in the banks. Through direct communication of line managers and subordinates decisions are made easily, advice is given immediately hence it provides

instant results. Thus, communication that is fast is very beneficial to the organisation because it provides fast operations in the organisation and results which have impact to the outcome of the organisation.

This is appropriate where the line managers have communication skills. There are other managers that do not communicate issues directly. Hence, there is need for training line managers to be able to communicate on issues concerning the banks.

4.4.3 Ownership and Awareness of HR Issues

Line managers discretionary behaviour in applying HRM is said to be critical for improving employee satisfaction, commitment and subsequently extra-role behaviour (Harney and Jordan, 2008). It is important for the line managers to be well abreast with the HRM responsibilities and own them for the betterment of the Banks. The findings of this study show that 65.1 of the respondents agreed that line managers involvement into the HRM responsibilities at the Commercial Banks of Malawi provide the benefit of line managers owning HRM issues and being aware of them.

The results of the study show that through handling the HRM issues each and every day line managers become familiar with the issues and they become motivated to implement these responsibilities. It is not interesting to handle issues which you are not familiar with because you are not sure if you are doing the right thing. HRM issues are very crucial because the employees implement all the activities in the organisation and they need to be handled with care. The HRM issues are well handled with the line managers who direct these issues to the employees who implement the operations in the organisation. Through line managers handling these issues they have

proper guidance and advice to give the employees. There will be reduction of disciplinary cases since they will provide valid direction. All in all, the organisation will achieve its goals through line managers' being aware and owning HR issues.

However, it is not known if all line managers own HR issues and are aware of them because this depends on the interest of the manager. It is therefore important to train all the line managers regarding issues concerning HR responsibilities so that they own and are aware of the issues.

4.4.4 Speed in Decision Making

The slow decisions will not benefit the organisation as everything becomes slow hence services and sales will not be done in time. Othman's (2008) study entails that devolvement of HRM responsibilities to line managers has brought fast decisions. This may be because of the direct work relation between the line managers and the employees. Similarly, Renwick (2000) explains that devolvement of HRM responsibilities to line managers may increase the speed of decision making. Through speed decision making the organisations will benefit a huge change in products and services. The study results show that 65.1% of the respondents strongly agree that line managers involvement in HRM responsibilities benefits the bank through speed in decision making. Fast decisions are always appropriate to the effectiveness of the organisation.

The line managers in the Malawian banks are providing fast decisions because of the HR support, clear policies, rules and guidance on people management, help provided in decision making and advice and guidance. Without this help being provided to the line managers the banks will not be able to benefit speed in decision making. Hence,

through such support the line managers are aware of the problems encountered and solutions as they are working with the employees and are able to decide on what needs to be done. Furthermore, the line managers are aware and own the HR responsibilities hence they are familiar with any decisions they make.

It becomes a question whether all managers are providing the benefit of speed in decision making. Different managers have different levels of thinking. Hence the need to send the line managers for training to learn how to make proper and right decisions.

In summary the results of this study indicate that there are more benefits in involving line managers in the delivery of HRM responsibilities. It is important to involve the line managers in HRM responsibilities for the benefit of the banks through fast made decisions, shorter line of communication and HRM services are taken closer to the people. However, there is need to train the line managers on how to make fast decisions as managers have different levels of thinking.

4.5 Challenges encountered by Line Managers' in delivering HRM

Responsibilities

There are various challenges which cause line managers not to deliver HRM responsibilities effectively as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 HRM Challenges for Line Managers

| CHALLENGES | STRONGLY AGREE/AGREE | NOT SURE | STRONGLY DISAGREED ISAGREE | MEAN SCORE |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| More workload | 58.8% | 13.8% | 27.5% | 3.54 |
| Lack of enough HRM skills | 57.6% | 13.8% | 28.8% | 3.39 |
| Not considering themselves experts in HRM matters | 53.8% | 15.0% | 31.3% | 3.23 |
| Short term job pressures | 51.3% | 15.0% | 33.8% | 3.25 |
| Lack of time to do well HRM responsibilities | 50.1% | 18.8% | 31.3% | 3.23 |
| Lack of training | 41.3% | 13.8% | 45.1% | 2.99 |
| Reluctant to take HRM responsibilities | 38.8% | 18.8% | 42.6% | 3.03 |
| Lack of HRM support | 13.8% | 16.3% | 70.1% | 2.29 |

N = 80

Table 4.6 shows that the top 3 challenges that line manager encounter in delivering of HRM responsibilities include more workload, lack of enough HRM skills. However, lack of HRM support is perceived as least challenge.

4.5.1 More Workload

Qadeer (2010) observes that HRM activities are a special responsibility of HRM department but these responsibilities are also a part of every line managers job along with their basic responsibilities. Similarly, Brewster and Larsen (2000) noted that HRM tasks are generally devolved to line managers without reducing their other

duties. 58.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that line managers encounter more workload as a challenge when they deliver HRM responsibilities. The line managers have their own operational responsibilities which they perform hence HRM is an added responsibility.

At the banks in Malawi line managers are experiencing more workload which may have a negative impact of their performance. It is important for the line managers to manage their time and plan their responsibilities to be able to achieve both responsibilities. If the line managers fail to manage these responsibilities it may affect the achievement of goals of the Banks.

How are these line manager managing to effectively deliver the HR responsibilities since they encounter more workload.

Apparently, other managers are able to cope with stress whilst other cannot cope. Hence, the need to train line managers to plan their work to ensure each and every task is given enough time and is handled adequately.

4.5.2 Lack of Adequate HRM Skills

The purpose of HRM is to ensure that the organisation is able to achieve success through people and it operates through human resource systems that bring together in a coherent way (Armstrong, 2006:4,8). Line managers do not possess the skills and competencies necessary to perform the HR aspects of their jobs effectively without the support and involvement of personnel practitioners (Marchington and Wilkinson,

2002:259). The findings of this study show that 57.6% of the respondents agreed that line managers lack enough HRM skills to deliver HRM responsibilities.

The line managers at the banks lack enough HRM skills which can pose as a threat to performance and attainment of goals. The lack of HRM skills will affect the performance of the bank as these are crucial responsibilities that mode the employee to achieve high performance. If the line managers lack HRM skills it becomes a challenge to achieve organisational goals as they provide direction and guidance to the employees on how to do things.

Lack of enough skills has negative impact in many ways. It is important to train the line managers on issues concerning HRM to develop the ability to deliver the HRM responsibilities.

4.5.3 Not Considering themselves experts in HRM Matters

The way line managers implement and enact policies, show leadership in dealing with employees and in exercising control through a major issue (Armstrong, 2006:97). Line managers have been entrusted to manage the HR responsibilities hence they need to accept and own the HR responsibilities. The role of the line managers is affected by their ability to do the HR responsibilities assigned to them (Armstrong, 2006:98). 53.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that line managers do not consider themselves experts in HRM matters.

This suggests that line managers at the banks are performing well their HR responsibilities. That means the line managers at the banks are able to take advice and

guidance provided to them by the HR unit and management. Line managers have supervisory responsibility and are responsible for the day to day running of their work rather than strategic matters and employees report to them (Armstrong, 2006:93). The line managers at the banks consider themselves experts in HR responsibilities that is why they are able to manage these employees and are able to learn the HR expertise. It shows that they have prepared themselves well psychologically hence the good results.

However, the managers may consider themselves experts in HRM matters yet they are lacking skills in other areas. This may have negative impact to the bank. It is therefore important for the line managers to seek help where they feel they do not understand properly the HR matters. The line managers need to build a good relationship with the HR managers in order to get more assistance on HR matters.

4.5.4 Lack of HRM Support

A number of aspects of line manager involvement in HRM have been identified as problematic, including the lack of consistency of HR decisions and lack of integration resulting in more difficulties in implementing HR strategy (Torrington et.al 2008). These line managers are not experts in the HR responsibilities hence without providing them with the necessary HRM support they will be unable to deliver the HR responsibilities. A research conducted by Hutchinson and Purcell (2004) cited in (Torrington et.al 2008) found that line managers behaviour is the most important factor explaining the variation in both job satisfaction and job discretion, and they have a direct impact on employee performance. The study results indicate that only 13.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that line managers lack HRM support.

This study reveal that line managers are getting support from the HR managers and management in the banks are delivering the HRM responsibilities effectively. As line managers are involved and are responsible for HRM issues there is need for them to be provided with all the support in order for them to deliver these responsibilities appropriately. Through provision of support to the line managers there will be direct positive impact to the employees that will further affect the organisation.

The line managers are being provided with adequate support. However, the support will be provided depending on willingness of line managers to be helped in various different HR areas. There is need for line managers to be flexible and humble in order to request for support from HR experts.

The summary of the results of the study shows that line managers encounter challenges of workload, lack of enough HRM skills and line managers not considering themselves experts in HRM matters which can have negative impact to the banks. Hence the demand for success lies with the HR experts to provide training support to the line managers on how to handle the workload and acquire new skills. There is need for proactive support to line managers on issues concerning human resources. However, the respondents denied that line managers lack support in HR responsibilities which the bank is providing and that is why they have various responsibilities which the line managers deliver effectively.

4.6 HRM Support and Tools For Line Managers

HRM department and management provide different kinds of support and tools to the line managers for them to deliver HRM responsibilities effectively. Tables 4.7 and 4.8 provide the kind of support and tools that line managers receive from the HRM department.

Table 4.7: HRM Support for Line Managers

| HRM SUPPORT | STRONGLY AGREE/AGREE | NOT SURE | STRONGLY DISAGREE/DISAGREE | MEAN SCORE |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Advice and Guidance | 85.1% | 8.8% | 6.3% | 4.01 |
| Receive Support from HRM unit | 81.3% | 11.3% | 7.5% | 3.68 |
| Help in decision making | 80.1% | 12.5% | 7.6% | 3.90 |
| Clear policies, rules and guidance on people management | 80.0% | 11.3% | 8.8% | 3.94 |
| Senior Management support | 75.1% | 20.0% | 5.1% | 3.85 |
| Coaching | 71.3% | 17.5% | 11.3% | 3.74 |
| Training | 70.1% | 11.3% | 18.8% | 3.70 |
| Provision of appropriate support materials | 65.1% | 18.8% | 16.3% | 3.64 |
| HRM techniques and ideas | 56.3% | 27.5% | 16.3% | 3.49 |

N = 80

Table 4.8: HRM Tools for Line Managers

| HRM TOOLS | STRONGLY AGREE/AGREE | NOT SURE | STRONGLY DISAGREE/DISAGREE | MEAN SCORE |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| Receive support from HRM unit | 81.3% | 11.3% | 7.5% | 3.68 |
| Policies, rules and guidance on people management are clear | 80.0% | 11.3% | 8.8% | 3.94 |
| Have necessary HRM information | 67.5% | 20.0% | 12.5% | 3.24 |
| Receive adequate training from HRM unit | 43.8% | 26.3% | 30.1% | 3.96 |

N = 80

Tables 4.7 and 4.8 reveal that the main support and HR tools line managers receive include advice and guidance, support in decision making from HR unit, help in decision making, have clear policies and rules and guidance on people management. The least type of HR tool provided is in the area of training from HRM unit.

4.6.1 Advice and Guidance

Advice and guidance include suggestions that are provided concerning any action to be taken on various responsibilities. Support provided to line managers in advice and guidance is very important for effective delivery of HR responsibilities. Qadeer et.al (2010) narrates how organizations that invest in provision of appropriate support for line managers for conducting HRM duties play an important role in their successful involvement. 85.1% of the respondents revealed that line managers receive advice and guidance from the HR department in order to deliver HRM responsibilities.

Advice and guidance are required for the organization to achieve its goals because without this support the line managers will perform inadequately therefore affecting the operations in the organization. Hence, support to the line managers in terms of advice and guidance is important to provide direction and feedback to staff. In addition, it assists line managers to follow the right procedures and guide the employees adequately.

However, the line managers may be provided with support of advice and guidance but the question is how this advice and guidance is being implemented. There is need for HR experts to work hand in hand with the line managers to ensure that they are implementing the advice and guidance given satisfactorily.

4.6.2 Support from HR Unit

Line manager's provision for HR support is very significant to the operations in the organization. However, it is very bad when support is not provided to the line managers because they handle the employees who are crucial to attainment of organizational goals. Gennared and Kelly (1987) cited in (Nehles 2006) state that some HR managers are either unable to provide line managers with the support they need or are reluctant to abandon their HR responsibilities and play a new organizational role in supporting line managers. However, in disagreement with Gennared and Kelly, results of this study show that 81.3% of the respondents are of the view that line managers receive support from HRM unit.

Storey's (1992) model explains that management of managers is very important which agrees with the study results which show how line managers are given the

support to enable them deliver HR responsibilities. If the line managers are not managed by providing them with support they would not be able to deliver the HR responsibilities which Storey's model also narrates that these HR responsibilities should not be left to personnel specialists only but the line managers be involved. Hence the needs to provide the line managers with enough support to enable them achieve the organizational goals.

Without receiving the HRM support line managers would encounter a lot of problems as there are lots of rules and procedures which line managers need to adhere to. In addition, without guidance the organization may perform ineffectively hence affecting the goals which are planned by the banks. Through seeking advice and guidance, line managers will effectively deliver HRM responsibilities as they are the right people to handle these responsibilities. The HRM specialists are experts in HRM issues because they go through courses and have more experience in HRM issues. However, the support which HRM unit provides to line managers to handle the HR issues is very crucial to the organization.

How do the line managers use the support provided? For the line manager to implement, receive and accept support from the HR unit it will depend on the individual manager's ability and attitude. There is need to train the line managers on the importance and implications of not handling adequately the employees.

4.6.3 Help in Decision Making

A decision is a reasoned choice among alternatives (Tripathi, 2011). Thus a wise decision brings effectiveness to the organization. Tripathi states that the decision capacity involves intelligence, design, choice and implementation of a decision maker. Thus, it is important for line managers to be provided with support in decision making on HRM issues otherwise the line managers may make improper decisions. 80.1% of the respondents agreed that line managers receive support in decision making.

The results show that banks consider supporting the line managers as very important. It shows that the banks are delivering effectively the top four most responsibilities such as performance appraisal, induction, recruitment and selection and training and development which require good decisions in order to achieve good results. HRM deals with interpretation and implementation of rules and regulations and also Labour Acts hence without knowledge of these stipulated labour Acts and rules and regulations it would be difficult to apply them. However, there is need for support to be provided to the line managers in decision making. Lack of advice and guidance to the line managers will lead to ineffective and inefficient provision of services hence non achievement of goals.

Nevertheless, the extent at which the decision making is applied by the line managers is not known. Appropriate and valid decision making will depend on individual managers. There is need for HR experts to work hand in hand with the line managers to ensure that the decisions which are made will not affect the goals of the banks.

4.6.4 Clear Policies, rules and guidance on people management

The line managers need tools to deliver HR responsibilities. The tool of having clear policies, rules and guidance on people management is vital for line managers in delivering HR responsibilities. Boudreau (1991) cited in (Singh and Mishra 2008) state that the impact of HRM policies and practices on firm performance is an important topic in the field of HRM. The results of this study also show that 80.0% of the respondents agreed that line managers have clear policies, rules and guidance on people management that help them to deliver the HRM responsibilities. It may be the reason line managers are delivering the HR responsibilities effectively.

The study results show that the banks consider provision of support to line managers to ensure effectiveness in the bank. HRM is about managing employees hence it is linked to a lot of policies, rules and guidance that direct the line managers on how to handle each and every situation they encounter through their involvement in HR responsibilities. Without the guidance it would be very difficult to handle issues with uniformity. Basically, if policies and guidance are not provided to the line managers to deliver the HR responsibilities it can negatively affect their performance.

The question is how line managers are making use of the tool they are provided having clear policies, rules and guidance on people management. is provided to the line managers. The implementation will depend on the capabilities of the different managers.

4.6.5 Training from HRM Unit

Training is the use of systematic and planned instruction activities to promote learning (Armstrong, 2006: 575). Sloman (2003a) in (Armstrong, 2006) states that training lies within the domain of the organization. Hence, Khan (2011) explains that training helps employees to get knowledge. The line managers work with the employees and are doing the HRM responsibilities which means they need adequate training to deliver effectively the HRM responsibilities.

The results of this study show that only 43.8% of the respondents strongly agreed that line managers receive adequate training from the HRM unit. The results show that there is lack of HRM training of line managers at the banks. Thus without training the line managers would not be capable to undertake the HRM responsibilities.

Storey's (1992) model explains that line managers should be deliverers and drivers of HR responsibilities. In this case line managers cannot deliver and be drivers of HR responsibilities when they do not have the skills. Singh and Mishra (2008) state that training of staff is the best investment in business which is in agreement with the model of Storey who says management of managers is very important.

Cunningham and Hyman (1995) elaborates how line managers are not necessarily satisfied with the amount of training they receive before taking on new responsibilities of HRM. This is in agreement with the results from the banks which show that line managers are not provided with adequate training. The results indicate that line managers need enough training to ensure effective delivery of the HRM responsibilities. The results indicate that line manager's lack support in training of HRM matters. This may be because the HRM experts are afraid of losing its job or

maybe the line managers are not willing to take up the HRM responsibilities. In such circumstances then the banks will suffer as human resource is the hub of the bank hence untrained line managers will not be able to perform adequately the HR responsibilities. All in all untrained line managers will lead to ineffective direction to employees hence non achievement of goals in the banks.

How can the line manager deliver HR responsibilities without the required necessities? Therefore, the banks need to provide various required training to the line managers to ensure proper delivery of the HR responsibilities.

To summarize line managers are provided with various kinds of support and HR tools which enable them to deliver HR responsibilities. However, the question raised is the about how they use the support provided as different managers have different abilities and attitudes. They may not be able to understand the help provided or they may not be willing to take support from the HR manager.

4.7 Correlation Between The Top Support Provided to Line Managers and the Top Effectively delivered HRM Responsibility

This section looked at a correlation between the top support provided to line managers which is Advice and Guidance and the top HRM responsibility that is effectively delivered that is Performance Appraisal. Table 4.9 presents the correlation.

Table 4.9 Correlation between Performance Appraisal and Advice and Guidance

| | | Performance Appraisal | Advice & Guidance |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Performance Appraisal | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .073 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .520 |
| | N | 80 | 80 |
| Advice & Guidance | Pearson Correlation | .073 | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .520 | |
| | N | 80 | 80 |

0.01 level (2-tailed)

This correlation measured the strength and the direction of the linear relationship between the top support of Advice and Guidance provided to line managers to ensure effective delivery of HRM responsibilities and the top HRM responsibility effectively delivered by the line managers'. The results of the correlation show that there is significant correlation at 0.01 level. This indicates that there is positive direction of the relationship and the two variables are increasing together meaning that when there is increase in support of Advice and Guidance, there is effective delivery of Performance Appraisal which provides indicates the value of the two variables.

The correlation results agree with Storey's (1992) model which shows that line managers should work hand in hand with other sectors and line managers should be provided with direction on human resource matters. Similarly, Gennard and Kelly (1997) did a study on 28 organizations and narrated that line managers are unlikely to acquire sufficient skills in Human Resource area without continuing support from the

HR specialists. This agrees with the correlation results which indicate that support provided to line managers will result in effective delivery of HRM responsibilities.

4.8 Chapter Summary

According to findings of the study line managers are greatly involved in performance appraisal, induction, training and development and recruitment and selection but less involved in payroll and pension handling. The findings also show that line managers are provided with support to deliver HRM responsibilities which enables them to adequately deliver the HR responsibilities. However, the line managers also encounter challenges when delivering HR responsibilities that needs training and working hand in hand the HR experts and line managers to ensure effective delivery of these HR responsibilities. This raises questions as to their effectiveness in delivering HR responsibilities. Furthermore, the line manager's involvement in HR responsibilities has benefited the banks in various ways such as shorter line of communication, fast decision which has positive impact to the bank.

These results are in line with the model of Storey (1992) who explained how the line managers involvement in HR responsibilities will provide benefits to the organization. Through this study we have noticed the benefits which emanate through line involvement in the HR responsibilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will present a conclusion based on the findings of the study and it will also provide recommendations.

5.1 Summary of Key findings

This study examined the delivery of HRM responsibilities by line managers at Commercial Banks in Malawi. Specifically, the objectives of this study were:

- (a) to identify HRM responsibilities delivered by line managers in the Commercial Banks of Malawi,
- (b) to establish the extent to which line managers deliver effectively the different HRM responsibilities,
- (c) to examine the challenges and benefits of involving line managers in the delivery of HRM responsibilities
- (d) to find out the support line managers receive to ensure effective delivery of HRM responsibilities.

According to the results of this study line managers are indeed more involved in and effectively delivering HRM responsibilities such as performance appraisal, induction,

training and development and recruitment and selection and are least involved in payroll and pension.

The involvement of line managers in HRM responsibilities benefit the banks in various ways such as; HRM problems being solved at source, shorter line of communication, owing and awareness of HR issues and speed in decision making. It was also established that line managers were receiving support from management and the HRM unit in form of advice and guidance and help in decision making in order to deliver HRM responsibilities adequately. However, there are various challenges that are encountered through line manager's involvement in HRM responsibilities such as more workload, lack of enough HRM skills and line managers not considering themselves experts in HRM matters.

5.2 Conclusion

This study agrees with Storey's model which elaborates the following three critical areas;

HRM is too important to be left to personnel specialists alone. It implies devolution of HR responsibilities to other sectors apart from HR. It also means more people, other than HR experts, should be involved in HR responsibilities. In this study the banks are involving line managers in HR responsibilities. These include performance appraisal, induction, recruitment and selection, grievance and discipline amongst others. The direct work relations with the employees make line managers appropriate persons to which HR responsibilities should devolve as they know the strength and weaknesses of the employees. They also work with them on daily basis.

Delivery of HR responsibilities by line managers however should not mean exclusion of the experts. The model also explains that there is need for line managers and the HR specialists to work hand in hand. The line managers cannot handle the HR responsibilities on their own they need support from the HR specialists thus there is need to build good relationship for the betterment of the banks.

From the findings this is an area banks should improve. The line managers require support. This is in light of the challenges they face. These include more workload and lack of HRM skills. This entails that line managers need support in areas like advise, guidance and training in all issues relating to HRM.

However, the theory falls short while advocating devolution of HR responsibilities. The findings indicate that line managers are overloaded on top of their technical responsibilities and they lack HR skills. This therefore entails a need to assess what kind of responsibilities the line managers should be involved in and the kind of training to be provided to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

The theory also states that line managers need to be closely involved as deliverers and drivers of HRM. The model states that line managers should be more involved and in the forefront in handling the HR responsibilities. In light of the work overload given to line managers this would imply that line managers should be deliverers and drivers of particular HR responsibilities. The nature of the responsibilities would therefore dictate what sort of responsibilities line managers should be involved? It is therefore consistent with the four HR roles that line managers are more involved due to the nature of their requirements.

However, this becomes a problem as the findings indicate that line managers are not provided with enough training. If line managers lack HR skills they cannot be efficient and effective drivers and deliverers of HR hence, there is need for training.

Managing the manager in the organization is critically important. This means that the line managers will need direction to ensure effective delivery of the HR responsibilities. As line managers lack HR skills and expertise, they need to be provided with guidance in decision making and other issues relating to HR matters. However, the study shows that line managers are provided with sufficient direction to be able to handle the HR responsibilities.

The study results further show that the line managers are more involved in 4 HR responsibilities which are performance appraisal, induction, recruitment and selection and training and development. These responsibilities are very key and unique because both these responsibilities directly provide the organization with skilled, knowledgeable employees and hence competent staff. In addition, the payroll and pension handling were rated low because these responsibilities are not directly providing knowledge and skills to the employees but they are incentives after employees provide services to the organization.

5.3 Recommendations

Basing on the results of the study the following recommendations have been drawn in order to find more insight about line involvement in the delivery of HRM responsibilities.

It is very important for line managers to be provided with training on HRM matters such as disciplinary, communication, motivation, decision making amongst other HR related matters to ensure that they acquire skills and knowledge on HRM matters in order to deliver the HRM responsibilities effectively. More needs to be done to ensure that the line managers are properly trained. If they are well trained they will achieve planned and required goals.

5.4 Direction for future research

- There is need for future research to find out involvement of line managers in other organizations apart from the banks. This is important because the results show that line involvement in HRM responsibilities at the Commercial Banks in Malawi has positive aspects which other organizations may also find beneficial.
- The study findings indicated a low percentage on involvement of line managers in handling the pension and the payroll system. Therefore, it is important to assess the reasons why line managers are not involved in handling of the pension and payroll.
- Find out the relationship between HRM and line managers in delivery of HRM responsibilities.

REFERENCES

- Amin, M.E. (2005). *Social Science Research: Conception, Methodology and Analysis*. Uganda: Makerere University.
- Armstrong, M. (2006). *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice* (10th ed.). USA: Kogan Page.
- Armstrong, M. (2009). *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice* (11th ed.). USA: Kogan Page.
- Babbie, E. (2007). *The Practice of Social Research* (11th ed.). Belmont: Thompson Wadsworth.
- Bakuwa, R.C. (2013). Exploring the Human Resource Professionals' Employee Advocate Role in Developing Country: The Case of Malawi. *Australian Journal of Business and Management Research*, 2(12), 39-48.
- Barker, M. & Hadi, A.A. (2009). Payroll Employment: Job losses Continue. *Monthly Labour Review*, 23-33. Retrieved 4th April from <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2010/03/art2full.pdf>
- Brewster, C. & Larsen, H.H. (2000). *Responsibility in Human Resource Management*. UK: Oxford: Blackwells
- Brewster, C. & Soderstrom, M. (1994). *Human Resource and Line Management*. In C. Brewster & A. Hegewisch (Eds), *Policy and Practice in European HRM: The Price Waterhouse Survey* (pp. 123-48). London: Routledge.
- Burns, N. & Grove, S.K. (2005). *The Practice of Nursing Research: Conduct, Critique and Utilization* (5th ed.). St. Louis: Elsevier Saunders.

- CIPD Annual Survey Report (2007). *Learning and Development*. UK: CIPD
- Cooper, D.R. and Schindler, P.S (2001) *Business Research Methods* (7th ed.). USA: Irwin/McGraw Hill.
- Cotarelo J.L. (2011). *Discretion: Understanding the Line Managers' Role in Human Resource Management*. UK: University of Warwick.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). USA: University of Nebraska.
- Cheruiyot, P.K. & Kwasira, J. (2013). *An Assessment of Devolving Human Resource Function in Kenya: A Case Study of Nakuru County*. Kenya: Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.
- Dessler, G. & Varkkey, B. (2009). *Human Resource Management* (11th ed.). India: Dorling Kindersley Pvt. Ltd.
- Dessler, G. & Varkkey, B. (2011). *Human Resource Management* (12th ed.). UK: Pearson Education.
- Flynn, M. (2010). The United Kingdom Government's 'Business Case' Approach to the regulation of retirement. *Ageing and Society*, 30(3), 421-443.
- Gibb, S. (2000). The State of Human Resource Management: Evidence from Employees' views of Human Resource Management Systems and Staff. *Employee Relations*, 23(4), 318-336.
- Hartog, D., Boselie, P. & Paauwe, J. (2004) Performance Management: A Model and Research Agenda. *Applied Psychology*, 53(4), 556-569.
- Haslinda, A. (2009). Evolving terms of Human Resource Management and Development. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 2(9), 180-186.

- Holt Larsen, H. & Brewster, C. (2003). Line Management Responsibility for HRM: What is happening in Europe. *Employee Relations*, 25(1), 228-244.
- Hope-Hailey, V. Farndale, E. & Truss, C. (2005). The Human Resource Departments Role in Organisational Performance. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 15(3), 49-66.
- Hunter, W. & Renwick, D. (2008). *Involving British Line Managers in HRM in a Small non-profit Work Organization*. UK, Sheffield: University of Sheffield.
- Hutchinson, S. (1995). Variations on the Partnership Model: People Management Model. *People Management*, 1(22), 38-9.
- Hutchinson, S. and Purcell, J. (2010). Managing ward managers for roles in HRM in the NHS: overworked and under-resources. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 20(4), 357-374.
- Hutchinson, S. & Purcell, J. (2003). Bringing Policies to Life: The Vital Role of Front Line Managers in People Management. *CIPD Research Report*. Retrieved 3rd November 2014 from <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/6345>
- IRS (2006). *Employment Reviews Roles and Responsibilities 2006 Survey (online)*. Retrieved 30th October 2013 from <http://www.personneltoday.com/Articles/2006/02/07/33792/who+is+responsible+for+what+in+HR.htm> (Accessed 20/02/2006).
- Joseph, O.B. (2012). Effectiveness of Performance Appraisal as a Tool to Measure Employee Productivity in Organizations. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 4(4), 89-104.
- Khan, R.A.G., Khan, F.A. & Khan, M.S. (2011) Impact of Training and Development on Organisational Performance. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research*, 11(7), 23-34.

- Kempen, M.E. (2010). *Guidelines for an Effective Staff Induction Programme at a Special School in Gauteng*. RSA: University of South Africa.
- Krulis-Randa, J. (1990). Strategic HRM in Europe after 1992. *International Journal of HRM*, 1(2), 131-139.
- Kulik, C.T. & Bainbridge, H.T.J. (2006). HR and the Line: The distribution of HR activities in Australian Organizations. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 44(4), 240-256.
- Legge, K. (1997). *Human Resource Management: Rhetoric, realities*. England: Macmillan Business.
- Legge, K. (1995). *Human Resource Management: Rhetoric and Realities*. England: Macmillan.
- Mangham, G. (1995) Training the Trainer at Coral. *Management Development Review*, 8(2), 22-25. doi: 10.1108/09622519510082000
- Machington, M. & Wilkinson, A. (2002). *People Management and Development: Human Resource Management at Work* (2nd ed.). Vienna: CIPD.
- Mzama, F.B. (2011). *An Assessment of the Impact of Reforms in Bank Regulations and Supervision on the Performance of Banks in Malawi* (Master's Thesis). University of Malawi, Blantyre.
- Mullins, L.J. (2005). *Management and Organizational Behaviour* (7th ed.). USA: Pearson Education.
- McGovern, P. (1999). Human Resource Management Policies and Management Practices. In L. Gratton, V. Hope Hailey, P, Stiles & C. Truss (Eds.), *Strategic Human Resource Management* (pp. 45-87). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- McConville, T. and Holden, L. (1999). The Filling in the Sandwich: HRM and Middle Managers in the Health Sector. *Personnel Review*, 28(5/6), 406-424.
- McGovern, P., Gratton, L., Hope-Hailey, V. Stiles, P. & Truss, C. (1997). *Human Resource Management on the line?* *Human Resource Management Journal*, 7(1), 12-29.
- Mondy, R.W. & Noe, R.M. (2006). *Human Resource Management* (9th ed.). India: Dorling Kindersley.
- Odiya, J.N. (2009). *Scholarly Writing: Research Proposals and Reports in APA or MLA Publication Style*. Uganda: Gulu University.
- Othman, A.E. (2008). *Devolution of HRM Practices: Perspectives of Two Major Japanese Electrical and Electronics Companies in Malaysia*. Malaysia: University of Malaysia Sarawak.
- Omolo, J.W., Oginda, M.N. & Oso W.Y. (2012) Effects of Recruitment and Selection of Employees on the Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises in Kisumu Municipality, Kenya. *International Journal of HR studies*, 2(3), 45-56.
- Procter, S. & Currie, G. (1999). The Role of the Personnel Function: Role, perceptions and processes in an NHS Trust. *International Journal of HRM*, 10(6), 1077-1091.
- Qadeer, F., Shafique, M. & Rehman, R. (2011). An Over view of HR-line Relationship and its Future Directions. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(1), 2512-2523
- Renwick, D. (2000). HR-Line Work Relations: A Review, Pilot Case and Research Agenda. *Employee Relations*, 22(2), 179-205.

- Renwick, D. & MacNeil, C.M. (2002). Line Manager Involvement in Careers. *Career Development International*, 7(7), 407-14.
- Renwick, D. (2003). Line Manager Involvement in HRM: an inside view? *Employee Relations*, 25(3), 262-280.
- Rosenfeld R.H. and Wilson, D.C. (1999). *Managing Organizations: Text, Readings and Cases* (2nd ed.). UK: McGraw Hill.
- Roe, J. (2012). Performance Appraisal System: Its Implication To Employee Performance. *International Journal of Economics and Management Sciences*, 2(3), 55-62
- Ruziwa, M. & Martens, A. (2015). *Human Resource Function is a Shared Responsibility*. Retrieved 4th August 2015 from www.herald.co.zw/hr-function-is-a-shared-responsibility/
- Saunders, M, Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students* (5th ed.). New York: Pearson
- Senge, P. (1990). *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. London: Century Business.
- Sekaran, U. & Bougie, R (2009). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach* (5th ed.). England: Wiley
- Sedibeng District Municipality (2014). *Payroll Management Policy, Processes and Procedures*. Retrieved 12th January 2015 from http://www.sedibeng.gov.za/a_keydocs/budget_policies_2014_15/Payroll%20Management.pdf
- Siugzdiniene, J. (2008). *Line Managers Involvement in Human Resource Development*. Retrieved 23th December 2015 from https://www.mruni.eu/upload/iblock/ce7/4_j.siugzdiniene.pdf

- Sims, R.R. (2002). *Organizational success through Effective Human Resource Management*. London: West Port
- Singh, B.D. & Mishra, S. (2008). Indian Retail Sector – HR Challenges and Measures for Improvement. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 44(1), 99-111.
- Srimannarayana, M. (2010). Line Managers Responsibility in HRM: An Empirical Study. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations*, 45(3), 470-480.
- Terhalle, A.M. (2009). *The Effect of Line Manager's Limitations on their Human Resource Management Implementation Effectiveness*. The Netherlands: University of Twente,.
- Tibamwenda, J. (2010). *Modern Management Theories and Practices: A Productivity and Profitability Approach*. Uganda: MacMillan.
- Tripathi, K.P. (2011). A Study of Information System in Human Resource Management. *International Journal of Computer Applications*, 22(8), 9-13.
- Torrington, D., Hall, L. & Taylor, S. (2008). *Human Resource Management* (7th ed.). England: Prentice Hall.
- Torrington, D. & Hall, L. (1996). Chasing The Rainbow: How seeking status through strategy misses the point for the Personnel function. *Employee Relations*, 18(6), 81-97.
- Torrington, D & Hall, L. (1998). Letting go or holding on-the devolution of operational activities. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 8(1), 41-55.
- Ulrich, D. (1997) *Human Resource Champions: The Next Agenda for Adding Value and Delivering Results*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press,
- Whittaker, S. & Marchington, M. (2003). Devolving HR responsibility to the line threat opportunity or partnership? *Employee Relations*, 25(3), 245-261.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Research Questionnaire

Annette N. Kaonga
P.O.Box 2210
Blantyre.

Email: kaongaa@yahoo.com
Cell: 0999 512 484

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Annette Ngasimenye Kaonga a student pursuing a Masters Degree in Human Resource Management and Industrial Relations at the University of Malawi, Chancellor College. I am writing to request your help in providing information needed for my research dissertation. You have been selected as a valued and knowledgeable participant in this research that aims to explore the involvement of line managers in delivering HRM responsibilities. This research is for academic purposes.

I assure you of confidentiality of this questionnaire. For the research to yield valid results, it is important that you answer all the questions as honestly and truthfully as possible. The answers must reflect your own opinion and perception. Please answer all the questions and statements.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. It is greatly appreciated.

Section A

Please provide the following biographical information.

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of Bank | |
| Position of Respondent | |
| Department | |
| Your highest level of education | |
| Number of years you have worked for the Bank | |

Section B

Instructions

Please answer each question by placing a tick on the appropriate response option as labeled below:

Strongly Disagree (1) Disagree (2) Not Sure (3) Agree (4) Strongly Agree (5)

Line Managers' HRM responsibilities

| In this Bank line managers are involved in the following HRM responsibilities. | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Recruitment and Selection of employees | | | | | |
| 2. Induction of new employees | | | | | |
| 3. Health and Safety | | | | | |
| 4. Performance Appraisal | | | | | |
| 5. Training and Development | | | | | |
| 6. Rewards and Benefits | | | | | |
| 7. Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures | | | | | |
| 8. Ensuring HR processes are maintained | | | | | |
| 9. Dismissal issues | | | | | |
| 10. Payroll | | | | | |
| 11. Handling of the pension system | | | | | |
| 12. Managing flexible working conditions | | | | | |

Line manager's HRM delivery

| In this Bank line managers deliver the following HRM responsibilities effectively. | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Recruitment and Selection of employees | | | | | |
| 2. Induction of new employees | | | | | |
| 3. Health and Safety | | | | | |
| 4. Performance Appraisal | | | | | |
| 5. Training and Development | | | | | |
| 6. Rewards and Benefits | | | | | |
| 7. Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures | | | | | |
| 8. Ensuring HR processes are maintained | | | | | |
| 9. Dismissal issues | | | | | |
| 10. Payroll | | | | | |
| 11. Handling of the pension system | | | | | |
| 12. Managing flexible working conditions | | | | | |

| In this Bank line managers have the following tools to deliver HRM responsibilities | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|--|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Have necessary HRM information to deliver responsibilities | | | | | |
| 2. Policies, rules and guidance on people management are clear. | | | | | |
| 3. Receive adequate training to undertake HRM responsibilities. | | | | | |
| 4. Receive support from HR unit to undertake HRM responsibilities | | | | | |

Line managers' HRM Support

| In this Bank line managers receive the following support in delivering responsibilities. | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|---|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Training | | | | | |
| 2. Advice and Guidance | | | | | |
| 3. Help in decision making | | | | | |
| 4. Coaching | | | | | |
| 5. Provision of appropriate support materials | | | | | |
| 6. Senior Management support | | | | | |
| 7. HR techniques and ideas | | | | | |

Benefits from line managers' involvement in HRM Responsibilities

| In this Bank line managers provide the following benefits to the Bank through their involvement in HRM responsibilities | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|--|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Human Resource problems are solved at source | | | | | |
| 2. Better change management is achieved | | | | | |
| 3. Speed in decision making | | | | | |
| 4. They own human resource issues, and are aware of them and Cannot ignore them. | | | | | |
| 5. They are likely to be committed to their own human resource decisions | | | | | |
| 6. Low costs | | | | | |
| 7. There are shorter lines of communication | | | | | |

Line managers' HRM Barriers

| In this Bank the following are barriers line managers face in their Involvement in delivering HRM responsibilities. | SD | D | NS | A | SA |
|--|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. More workload | | | | | |
| 2. Lack of enough HRM skills | | | | | |
| 3. Reluctance to take HR responsibilities | | | | | |
| 4. Lack of training | | | | | |
| 5. Lack of HR support | | | | | |
| 6. Short term job pressures | | | | | |
| 7. Lack of time to do well HRM responsibilities | | | | | |
| 8. Not considering themselves experts in HRM matter | | | | | |

NAME:.....DATE.....SIGNATURE.....

**END OF QUESTIONNAIRE
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!
GOD BLESS YOU!!!!**

Appendix 2: In-Depth Interview Questions

1. How is the pension system handled in your bank and who handles the system?
2. Who handles the payroll system in your bank?
3. Why do you think pension and payroll handling were rated the lowest?
4. How is the performance appraisal procedure conducted in the bank?
5. Why do you think the four (4) top most rated responsibilities were rated highly?