

**ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
BLANTYRE RURAL WEST**

M.Ed. (POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP) THESIS

LOYCE KEPHAS

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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**MASTER OF EDUCATION (POLICY, PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP)
THESIS**

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LOYCE KEPHAS

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University of Malawi

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this dissertation is my 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.

Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Name: Frank Mtemang'ombe, PhD

Main Supervisor

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family who has been my constant source of inspiration. They have given me the drive and discipline to tackle my task with enthusiasm and determination. Without their love and support, this project would not have been made possible.

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ABSTRACT

The practices of managing people have undergone tremendous changes. However, today public and private organizations can no longer afford to look at people as a commodity to be exploited to exhaustion and then discarded. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which human resource management practices are utilized in selected public primary schools within Blantyre rural. The target population consisted of head teachers at selected primary schools, teachers and primary education advisors. Seventy-three respondents were selected for the sample of the study using purposive and random sampling methods. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Thematic analysis was used to categorize the qualitative data into themes and sub-themes. The results of the study will be important to policymakers and various stakeholders in the primary education sector, and future researchers who may wish to do more research in this field or other related fields. The findings suggest that public primary schools in Blantyre Rural, to a reasonable extent, have adopted HRM practices such as training, motivation, the orientation of staff, and supervisory support among others. It also reveals that performance appraisal and employee participation in decision-making have been practised.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	:	African Union
EFA	:	Education for All
HR	:	Human Resources
HRD	:	Human Resource Development
HRM	:	Human Resource Management
MESD	:	Malawi Effective Service Delivery
MoEST	:	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
PEA	:	Primary Education Advisor
PTA	:	Parents Teachers Association
UNESCO	:	United Nations Education and Scientific Cooperation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an overview of human resource management. It describes the background to the problem which gives the origin of the problem being studied. The chapter also has the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and limitations of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

In recent years the practice of human resource management has changed to be in line with society's needs and demands. Human resources play an active role in every activity of the organization because humans sometimes become planners, actors, and determinants of the realization of the organizational goals. This also applies to the education sector more specifically the learning process played by educators which cannot be replaced by technology. Human resources have a big role in the implementation of education. Inevitably, the practice of human resource management at the school level is the key to the school's success. Planned human resource management is important to ensure an effective school (Blanford, 2009). School leaders are expected to practice good human resource management practices to ensure the attainment of the school's vision and mission.

The need to empower human resource management, however, takes into consideration the guidance from the Malawi public Service policy. The Malawi Public Service Management policy (2018 – 2022) was developed to guide public service management for an efficient and effective public service that will consistently deliver high-quality services to its citizens and effectively implement policies and programmes to accelerate the growth and development of the country.

The public service is the main tool which the government use to implement various national development policies and deliver services in education, health, community development, transport, and maintenance of law and order among others (Dzimhiri, 2008). The policy covers several areas which include: creating a shared understanding of the vision, mission and functions of the public service; aligning the public service to the national development agenda; creating an enabling policy, legislative and institutional environment for an effective public service; entrenching public service ethos and values; improving public sector governance; improving productivity and performance in the public service; strengthening human resource management infrastructure and; modernization of the public service and administration. All Public Service institutions are to be guided by this policy and all sectoral and organizational level policies will be aligned to this policy as stipulated in the Malawi Public Service Management policy (2018 – 2022). Likewise, this fact holds in the school system.

As stipulated by the (Malawi Public Service policy, 2018-2022), some of the strategies that government engage in concerning HRM include: Providing comprehensive orientation to all new employees to ensure that they embrace public service ethos, policies, programmes, regulations and procedures, providing continuous training and development of staff using various methodologies, enhancing competencies in the current jobs, strengthening systems for supporting comprehensive and systematic human resource development and creating a fund to support and sustain strategic human resource development transparently.

Human resource management in schools is not much different compared to other organizations. In the school context, the human resource includes teachers, students and the support staff. The success of any educational programme depends to a considerable extent on the availability and utilization of skilled manpower of all types. Therefore, all the activities of any school system are initiated and determined by the persons who make up the school. School plants, offices, machines and other material resources are unproductive without the direction of human efforts (Nwafor, 2012).

Education is recognized as the most important form of human resource development. Human resource management is about the procedures and practices that cover the human resource aspects within organisations (Al-Ariss & Dessler, 2012; Obeidat,

2012). In Schools, the human resource managers are head teachers, their deputies, heads of departments and so on. Their core responsibilities are to manage, nurture, educate and prepare the prospective human resources of the society.

The role of head teachers in the management and utilization of human resources is a complex task since the entire school is impacted by their decisions. Head teachers, as school leaders, are responsible for handling the whole spectrum of human resource management at the school level.

The core function of HRM is to plan, develop and administer policies and interventions aimed at making the best use of human resources for the attainment of organizational goals. A human resource management infrastructure that effectively delivers all the elements of the human resource management functions, is aligned with the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) III (2017-2022) and is crucial for improving the performance of the public service (Malawi Public Service Policy, 2018-2022). The HRM function has four main roles which are human resource planning; staffing; employee development and employee maintenance. This means that the needs of the institution and those of the people are of equal importance.

Human resource managers in education perform these similar jobs. The core job of these human resource managers in education is unique and very different from other organizations. It will be more understanding if we define who these Human resource managers in education are. In education, human resources managers include; head teachers, their deputies, heads of the department and so on. Their core responsibilities are to manage, nurture, educate and prepare the prospective human resources of the society. These prospective human resources are the students who will lead the country, society and family. Their innovation will take the country to its great height. The prosperity of a country is largely dependent on the quality of human resources it produces. The people who are responsible for developing these prospective human resources are the greatest persons in the country and society. Their jobs are unique and can be regarded as very important human resource managers in the country.

Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (2005) divides human resources in a school setup into 3 categories; administrative staff (head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers) teaching staff (all teachers) and support staff (the school

clerk, messenger, driver, ground men, cooks and school nurse). The report (EFA) continues to indicate that teachers are in the line of management while non-teaching staff are in the support staff management. Nakpodia (2010) indicates that the success of every educational system depends on the quality and the number of its factors of production which are human and material resources. It should be pointed out that of all these factors, human resource is the most important factor because, without human efforts, all others are inept. This is why proper human resource management should be effected for better production.

In primary schools, human resources required for the production of services, comprise the teaching and non-teaching staff, students, Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and the members of the community in which the school is located. Oboegbulem in Mgbodile (2004) in her own opinion, states that human resources in the primary schools do not include teachers only but also the non-teaching staff, students, Parent Teachers Association (PTA) which the administration uses in achieving the goals of the school. This tends to suggest that human resources are not restricted, but encompass all that influence the school: infrastructure, the students, the workers and even the environment both at home and in school.

Although human resources in primary schools include teachers, non-teaching staff, students, and the PTA, the management practices of the fore mentioned are the focus of this study because teachers play the most vital role in achieving school goals while others assist. Teachers are the ones who execute teaching assignments and bring learning to bear on students. They are the ones who translate the curriculum and educational objectives into meaningful and observable terms.

Mgbodile (2004) rightly observes that teachers are the catalysts that make things happen in the school and without them, school objectives, buildings, and curricular programmes, among others, will make little or no impact on the students. Thus, to avoid the disruption of educational activities, teachers need to be managed properly by their administrators in schools.

1.3 Human Resource Management Practices

Human resource management (HRM) is defined as the strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets – the people working there can individually or collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives (Armstrong, 2006). Similarly, Stewart (2006) sees HRM as a combination of people-centred management practices that recognize employees as assets and are geared toward creating and maintaining a skilful and committed workforce for achieving organizational goals. Human Resource Practices in most organizations are derived from the major roles that are carried out.

Barasa, (2007) asserts that all organizations, schools being inclusive, cannot do without human and material resources. These resources complement each other in organization development and must be managed. Human resource management (HRM) identifies seven major functions of HRM. The activities involved in human resource management need to be well specified to enable the manager to comprehend the extent of his job. The human resource management functions of the primary schools identified in this study include orientation and training, performance appraisal, professional development motivation of teachers and keeping teachers' records.

It should be pointed out that in primary schools, head teachers are regarded as school managers. They are responsible for the orientation of newly employed teachers by introducing them to other members of the staff, school policies, practices and environment, providing them with different training needs as well as supporting in-service training of teachers. They should adopt appropriate communication channels while communicating with the teachers; motivate the teachers by adding satisfaction to their personal needs and employ equal treatment to all. It is also the function of the school administrators to adopt appropriate evaluation methods while appraising the teachers' performance, and provide feedback on time so that the teachers could note their areas of strength and weakness. Additionally, head teachers are also responsible for the collection of teachers' data. Head teachers of primary schools are responsible to their teachers in the aforementioned ways.

Saleem (2010) suggested that managers should follow the correct procedure when conducting orientation and induction, training and development, appraisal, and taking care of their welfare. Rightful steps should be followed in human resource management. In a school setup, the head teacher has teaching staff, non-teaching staff and students as human resources to be managed. The institutional objectives should be achieved alongside the individual's objectives with the help of the head teacher.

In Malawi, the ministry of education has the overall responsibility to manage all aspects of education and training with the assistance of semi-autonomous government agencies (Malawi Effective Delivery of Public Service, 2011). The Ministry of Education is responsible for planning, managing and financing the education sector in Malawi Kimura, H. (2005). Thus, proper management of the workforce is imperative. At the school level, the head teacher is responsible for the management of human and other resources to facilitate smooth operations, structure development and provision of teaching and learning materials. To avoid disruption of educational activities, therefore, teachers need to be managed properly by their administrators in schools

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Human resources play an indisputable role in maintaining and promoting quality education in the school system. They contribute largely to the tone of the school. Odden (2011) states, "...education systems cannot implement a powerful educational improvement strategy unless they have both the management and teaching talent to execute the complex actions such comprehensive improvement strategies require" (p. 3). HRM practices deliver progressive career support and development to employees. In Malawi, the Human Resource Management Manual, compiled by the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms is responsible for the management of human resources in the public service. The manual provides guidelines and sets out procedures that ensure an appropriate level of standardisation in the application of rules, regulations and conditions of service in force (Human Resource Management Manual, 2008). In Malawi, the ministry of education has the overall responsibility to manage all aspects of education and training with the assistance of semi-autonomous government agencies (Malawi Effective Delivery of Public Service, 2011). On the other hand, the school managers, who have been trained in Human Resource Management may or may not be

adopting the HRM practices in their schools. Either way, Primary schools need to embrace human resource management practices that will help cope with challenges facing their workforce and ensure continued educational excellence.

Shaun (2006) in a study based on a desk review of available literature in the United States of America argued that there is an undeniable link between HRM practices that ensure that teachers are well equipped to become effective in their jobs and good performance in examinations. Najtal, et.al (2018), studied the effectiveness of human resource management practices among headmasters in national and private primary schools across Malaysia, the major findings revealed that a majority of the headmasters perceived human resource management as a shared responsibility among teachers and school administrators. Another study by Nwafor (2012) investigated human resources management for effective teaching and learning in secondary educational institutions by male and female principals in Rivers State, Nigeria. The results indicated that 57.17 per cent of the human resources are available with exception of the science teachers.

Dzimbiri (2016) examined the role and impact of politics on public service human resource management systems in Malawi. The paper concluded that if the public sector reform recommendations are implemented properly, some of the challenges regarding political interference in public sector human resource management would be reduced.

Much of the research has been skewed to other sectors. Although there is some literature in the field of human resource management from other sectors in other countries and within Malawi, none tends to focus on primary schools in Malawi. In this regard, schools in Malawi, like elsewhere need to adopt the best human resource practices that will ensure the provision of quality education to young people to enable them to make sense of what they learn intending to function effectively in society. The current study, therefore, seeks to bridge this gap by investigating the HRM practices in public primary schools, using Blantyre Rural West as a case study.

1.5 Objectives of the study

This study was guided by one general objective and three specific objectives

1.5.1 General Objective

To establish the extent to which some primary schools in Blantyre Rural have realized best practices in human resource management.

1.5.2. Specific Objectives of the Study

The study objectives are to:

- i) Identify human resource management practices practised by public primary school head teachers in Blantyre Rural;
- ii) Examine the factors that influence the head teacher's human resource management practices in some public primary schools;
- iii) Establish the challenges encountered by the head teacher's choice of some HRM practices adopted in some primary schools.
- iv) Are there strategies adopted by head teachers to curb challenges related to human resource management?

1.6 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i) What are the human resource management practices practised by public primary school head teachers in Blantyre District?
- ii) What factors influence the head teacher's human resource management practices in school?
- iii) What are some of the challenges of the strategies adopted by head teachers' human resource management practices?
- iv) What are some of the coping mechanisms?

1.7 Significance of the Study

In light of the information provided in the problem statement and background of the study, the study seeks to find out the adoption of human resource management practices in public primary schools. The information generated will inform various education stakeholders such as MoEST, teachers and Heads of schools to promote the best human resource management practices in public primary schools. In addition, the result of this study will enable human resource practitioners to acquire information on human resource management practices commonly used by head teachers in some primary schools in Blantyre District. Furthermore, the findings will enhance awareness of best human resource management practices among primary schools and help administrators adopt the best practices.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The method of analysis of data used in the study and especially the over-reliance on percentages may have created an exaggerated statistical impression. The target group were head teachers, teachers and PEA of the schools and it is possible that the findings would be different if other levels of employees would have been involved in the research.

1.9 Scope of the Study

1.9.1 Content scope

The context of this study covered only primary schools in Blantyre Rural West.

1.9.2. Geographical scope

The study was carried out in primary schools in Blantyre Rural

1.9.3. Delimitation of the study

This study is delimited to assessing human resource management practices in ten primary schools in Blantyre District. It is delimited in content to human resources management practices of primary school head teachers, which include: orientation of

teachers, communication between the head teacher and the teachers, motivation of the teachers by the head teachers, appraisal of the performance of teachers, keeping of staff records and staff training and development.

1.10 Definitions of key terms

Administrator: A person who acquires and allocates resources to achieve the organizational goals in a school setup.

Appraisal: Refers to a systematic or formal evaluation of an individual concerning his/her performance on the job in terms of the job requirement.

Barriers: Hiccups or difficult tasks that head teachers face in the line of their duties to manage workers in school.

Headteacher: This is a term used synonymously with the principal to mean the head of a primary school.

Human Resource Management: The effective utilization of human resources in a school through the management of people and related activities in a school setup.

Induction: This is making the new employees familiar with the work environment and fellow employees.

Management: This is the planning, organizing, directing, coordinating and controlling of all the school's operations to achieve the instructional objectives effectively and efficiently. **Motivation:** These are forces inspiring a person at work to willingly use his/her energies for the accomplishment of certain objectives.

Professional Development: Development of the employees through different methods and techniques to equip them with different changes in a dynamic and technological world.

Recruitment: Process of searching for prospective employees and stimulating them to apply for a job in an institution.

1.11 Organization of the Study

The research has five chapters. The introductory chapter consists of the background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitations as well as the organization of the study. Chapter two reviews the existing literature to do with human resources. A summary of relevant studies conducted by other scholars and a conceptual framework. Chapter three is composed of a detailed description of the research design, target population, sample design, methods of collecting data, tools and data analysis procedures. Chapter four covers the research findings and discussion. Lastly, chapter five focused on a summary, conclusions and recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

1.12 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has introduced the problem that drove a researcher's desire to undertake the present study. It has presented the background of the study followed by the statement of the problem. This chapter has also highlighted the purpose of the study, specific objectives and the research questions that guide the study. This has been followed by the significance of the study in which the questions of how and to whom the findings are useful are addressed. The chapter has winded up by presenting the delimitation of the study. The next chapter focuses on the review of literature related to the study's research problem.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses literature related to human resource management practices practised by the head teachers in the course of their duties. The chapter contains the concept of management and the roles of head teachers as managers. The researcher will review the literature concerning human resource management practices in some primary schools, the factors that influence head teachers' choice of human resource management practices and some of the implications of the strategies adopted by different head teachers in human resource management.

2.2 Concept of Management

Bush (2008) defines management as a kind of work a manager performs to enable people to work most effectively together, while Mgbodile (2004), views management as a social process which involves planning, staffing, leadership, directing, controlling and coordinating the efforts of the people towards the achievement of goals. In schools, human resources management practices are the activities which the head teachers perform to make the teachers work most effectively towards achieving the goals of the school.

2.3 The Concept of Human Resource Management

According to (Shoeb, 2011) human resource management refers to a process that binds people and organizations to accomplish both needs and purposes. Human resource management is about the procedures and practices that cover the human resource aspects within organisations (Al-Ariss & Dessler, 2012; Obeidat, 2012). The existence of HRM is linked to the beginning and growth of an organization since it acts as a formal constitution of people working together to achieve the organization's goals (Dessler, 2013).

Barasa (2007) asserts that all organizations, schools not exceptional, cannot do without human and material resources. These resources complement each other in organisational development and as such these must be managed. Writers have initially tried to distinguish between personnel management and human resource management but fail and that is why (Boxall & Purcell, 2008) identified the reason for its popularity today is because of the lack of proper definition of the term HRM referring to the activities of the managers about personnel management. The consensus origin of HRM lies within the employment practices which are associated with welfare capitalist employers in the US during the 1930s.

2.4 Human Resource Management in Primary Schools

Human resource management in schools is not much different compared to other organizations. In the school context, the human resource includes teachers, students and the support staff Nyongesa (2007). They need to be managed systematically to produce an effective school. Research shows that students under the guidance of ineffective teachers lag significantly behind students taught by effective teachers and this issue compounds over time Rothman, (2005). Conversely, low-performing students with several effective teachers guiding them show improvement Rothman, (2005).

This research will cover five major HR practices known as orientation, training and development, motivation, communication and keeping staff records. These practices are mainly studied due to their importance within schools and discovering their influence in schools, will provide the readers with a sufficient understanding of such practices and their influential roles.

Great attention thus needs to be paid to human resources and its management as this will have an impact on the performance of any organization. Teachers are recognized as key to the improvement of the quality and success of the education system. Understanding the importance of human resource policies, and practices and professionally supporting and providing a proper working environment to teachers help to improve education.

In schools, the teaching staff is the most important human resource in the hands of the administrator that strives in achieving educational objectives. Therefore, teachers must be handled with care for they have the potential to disrupt educational activities if poorly managed by the heads of schools. The qualities of all the teachers should be given due consideration by the head teachers as managers. This is because an experienced, knowledgeable, risk-taking, highly connected teacher means a lot to the school. The head teacher should do everything possible to retain such an asset since she or he can contribute immensely to organizational success.

By implication, head teachers and their teachers should be viewed as partners and not superior and inferior ideologies that exist in schools. This is for the fact that both groups have a contribution(s) to make towards the success of the school. No one can exist without the other, and no one is a custodian of knowledge. Onah (2003) asserts that a manager who underrates the critical roles and underplays the importance of people in goal achievement can neither be effective nor efficient. Head teachers and their teachers need to co-operate with each other for the achievement of educational goals.

2.5 Success of Human Resources Management

Human resource management is concerned with obtaining the best possible staff for an organization, looking after them to ensure they stay on the job, be happy on the job and cope with the demands of their jobs (Onah, 2003). The success of any organization depends, to a great extent, on how the human resources are maintained and utilized. In schools, an efficient and effective head teacher appreciates that his or her staff are the weapons with which the achievement of the school objectives is possible. He assigns jobs and functions to the teachers properly; updates their knowledge, passes information to them on time, listens to their views, attends to their personal needs, and checks the performance of workers to reward appropriate behaviour. He keeps proper records of their documents and maintains a cordial relationship with the labour. Since the effectiveness of an organization depends on human resources, head teachers should be able to work effectively with teachers and solve the varied problems the management of teachers may entail.

2.6 Human Resources Management Functions

Human resources management functions have been classified differently by management experts. Armstrong (2006) states that Human Resource Management operates through related systems and is consisted of HR philosophies (guiding principles); strategies (direction); policies (guidelines on values, principles, and specific strategies); processes (procedures); practices (informal approaches); and programs that enable the elements to be implemented (Armstrong, 2006).

Price (2004) categorises contemporary best practice models for Human Resource management functions into manpower planning, recruitment and selection, promotion, pay, dismissal, performance appraisal, training/development, welfare, communication, industrial relations and personnel records.

In Malawi, the headmasters in the public primary schools are not involved with teacher recruitment and the selection process. The Malawi Teaching Service Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Education undertake this task.

In primary schools, there are varied human resources management activities undertaken by head teachers. These activities are of strategic and operational dimensions (Onah, 2003). Human resources can be viewed strategically as other resources that are managed in an organization and can be rated higher than other resources since the management of other resources entirely depends on the former. As a result, head teachers should endeavour to perform the strategic role for the accomplishment of the school objectives. Therefore, teachers should be recognized and accorded due respect.

The operational human resources management activities which the head teachers are supposed to perform in schools may include orientation, training of teachers, communication with teachers, motivation, and appraisal just to mention but a few. For example, poor orientation and training of teachers could trigger some communication problems which negatively affect other activities involved in the management of teachers. Zaidatol and Foo-Say-Fooi (2007) agree that human resource management is the coordination and integration of human capital to move effectively towards achieving an organization's goal. He further observes that the effectiveness of human

resources management functions has a substantial impact on the bottom-line performance of the firm. This implies that every teacher irrespective of his/her position in the school is affected by the decisions of the head teachers and such decisions could affect his/her output.

For head teachers to achieve the objectives of primary education, they have to orient and provide training to support teachers, establish easy communication channels, motivate teachers, appraise their performance, and be able to deal with other activities involved in the management of teachers.

2.7 The Roles of Head teachers in Human Resources Management in Primary Schools

In schools, head teachers perform various activities about the management of teachers. Some of the activities may include orientation of teaching staff, communication, motivation, performance appraisal and records keeping among others.

2.7.1 Orientation of Teachers

Head teachers have a duty to orient new teachers in their schools. In a school set up orientation is a planned introduction of teachers to the school, work unit, and co-workers. There are many purposes of the orientation process. Harrison et al. (2004) say that the orientation process is designed to acquaint the newly employed individuals with the community, the school and colleagues. Through this, the newly employed are helped to build up confidence in themselves so that they may become efficient workers. It also helps to build a feeling of belongingness among the new teachers and they are helped to locate different facilities in the school (Saleem, 2010). The new teachers become integrated into the school as soon as possible, functionally and socially.

An efficient head teacher sees to it that new and experienced teachers are often provided with different development activities within and outside the school to enable them to function better and be more confident in carrying out their responsibilities.

Oboegbulem (2004) states that orientation should be provided to both new and experienced staff to acquaint themselves with current techniques and methods and be strategic in handling their functions.

2.7.2 Communication with Teachers

Communication helps to facilitate the process of sharing information and knowledge and developing relationships with others. Effective communication is the central phenomenon in any organization. Communication and organization may be referred to as identical substances because where there is an organization there is communication. In any organization, good communication is necessary for the achievement of organizational goals. This implies that in schools, the achievement of educational objectives depends on the efficiency of the head teachers in communicating with the teachers. Kreitner et al. (2002), communication involves an exchange of information between a sender and a receiver, and the inference of meaning between the individuals involved. In other words, communication is the process of transmitting meaning from the sender to the receiver because it does not take place unless the receiver correctly interprets the message.

2.7.3 Motivation of Teachers

The head teachers are supposed to have knowledge and understanding of communication strategies in their schools. Motivation refers to the reason that makes a person behave in a particular way toward achieving a specific goal. It has to be pointed out that the motivation of teachers is an important component of administration since it propels maximum achievement of school goals. Some motivational theories such as Maslow's Need Hierarchy and Expectancy theories have been postulated to help administrators meet the needs of their institutions and that of the workers. Discussing the motivation of teachers on the bases of Maslow's Needs Hierarchy, teachers have needs to be met by the head teachers. These needs are of different intensities or levels. Once a level of need is satisfied, the next level of need emerges. Maslow categorized man's needs in a hierarchical order ranging from belly to brain, which of course allows for individual variations.

Maslow argues that these needs are related to each other and are arranged in a hierarchy of propensity. He emphasized that the needs must be satisfied following their order, beginning with the basic need. This tends to suggest that head teachers should endeavour to identify each teacher's level of need since individual differences abound among them. Rewards given to teachers should be appropriate to satisfy the needs of each of them at a particular time.

Mgbodile (2004) opined that teachers could be motivated by ensuring that those who perform extraordinarily are duly rewarded. They should be properly assigned to duties based on their competencies, and by making the teaching job challenging as well as regularizing conditions of service. These facts portray that human motivation is generally based on needs which when unsatisfied or partially satisfied create agitation, grumbling, side talks, tension and even lead to strikes of different levels as has always been the case in workplaces recently. An efficient and effective manager aims at checking these anomalies by providing conditions necessary for co-existence.

Ganta (2014) lists some of the ways to ensure adequate staff motivation in schools. These include: enhancing the feeling of achievement of the teachers: such as by recognition and reward of excellence to teachers and by encouraging them to strive to achieve better; recognition of the individual worth and personal dignity and ego of teachers; involving the staff in decision-making and leadership, creating healthy social climates in the school and improving the personal outlook of the teachers, making work challenging and interesting such as by assigning special duties and projects to competent individual teachers; promoting the personal and professional advancement of teachers in the school and providing the teacher with a full unit of work whose end product can be easily assessed by the teacher to see how well he has performed.

2.7.4 Appraisal of Staff Performance

According to Armstrong (2009), a performance appraisal is defined as the formal assessment and rating of individuals by their managers at or after the review meeting. The purpose of teachers' performance appraisal is to help in identifying, evaluating and

developing the work performance of teachers such that the goals and objectives of the school are effectively achieved Ross-G., (2017). Performance appraisal is concerned with determining how well teachers are doing their job, communicating that information to employees, agreeing on objectives and establishing a plan for performance improvement Stone, (2011).

Performance appraisal is central to all human resource management activities. This provides an evaluation which gives the basis upon which every human resource management decision is made (Cole, 2000). Appraisal of performance is necessary to determine how successful or otherwise the goals of an organization have been achieved. Evaluation of teachers' performance is very important since the results enable the head teacher to identify the areas of success or failure to amend. Thus, without valid evaluation, no individual, organization or system will be able to claim superiority over the other.

Appraisal goes beyond finding out how a teacher has performed. It also involves getting feedback. Performance appraisal is an exercise in observation and judgment, and a feedback process (Armstrong, 2009). Head teachers should observe and judge their teachers accurately and inform them of the results of the evaluation on time to effect changes immediately. It should be pointed out that, as soon as teachers realize any form of inaccuracy in the evaluation of their performance, they tend to be aggrieved, have low morale and may perform less in subsequent assignments.

2.7.5 Keeping of Teachers' Records

In schools, it is important to keep records since no organization can operate effectively without records. All human resource management roles begin and end with human resource records. For instance, the orientation of new teachers in schools is based on data reflecting the number of newly posted teachers. Head teachers who move their institutions forward are those who have mapped out a strategy to collect, maintain, retrieve, disseminate and check third- party's access to teachers' data. According to Thomson and Kleiner (2005), keeping records is one of the most important aspects of school administration is keeping of records. He further maintains that classification of

records into different categories brings into focus the risks that may be involved in the event of loss, thus the need for adequate security. He stressed that records should not be allowed into the wrong hands to avoid misplacement.

The head teacher is responsible for all teachers' data collected and careless handling of any of them might have a disastrous effect. A head teacher, skilled in the management of teachers' records, embraces all guidelines and policies on information handling to curb the problems surrounding the management of teachers' data in schools. Communication of such information to the teachers is of equal importance. Given the above, managers need to avoid fraudulent, secretive or unfair means of data collection. Information should be collected directly from individuals concerned, and staff should be informed of information stored on them.

2.7.6 Training and Skill Development Programmes

Head teachers are responsible for staff development, working with management in the organization of staff training, and identifying staff development opportunities within and without the school. According to the Comprehensive National Human Resource Survey (2014), there is a need for 35.0 percent of teacher training needed mostly by those in professional occupations. Effective training and development programs help teachers to learn job skills. Training also helps to eliminate some performance problems and improve performance Gomez-Mejia et al., (2004). It is the sole responsibility of the school head teachers to recognize the training or development needs of their teachers. This will determine his ability to achieve the purpose of the institution. Therefore, head teachers should not underscore the importance of training their teachers.

Mpofu and Hlatywayo (2015) defined training as systematic and planned instruction activities to promote learning. Training involves the use of formal processes to impart knowledge and help people acquire the skills necessary to perform their jobs satisfactorily. These authors also proceed to describe training as a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behaviour through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work

situation, is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organization.

Onah (2003) posited that in-service courses are effective ways of staff training. They maintain that the trainees have the advantage of using the available resources in the school as is often the case with teachers, and courses are often taught by well-educated persons with wide experience. In addition, other teachers from varied backgrounds offer stimulation for learning.

Furthermore, the Staff meeting is an important method of training but may become a dull vehicle for conveying information that could be efficient in written form. To make staff meetings effective, each meeting has to be planned and the agenda written and distributed to teachers ahead of time so that they could come to the meetings prepared. It is emphasized here that limited objectives for each meeting can be set to allow for more thorough coverage and discussions.

Another form of teacher training could be having a workshop. Participants can be actively involved in doing or in making something to broaden their practical skills. There is a lot to learn from workshops, such as learning new teaching methods, construction of improvised teaching aids and others. According to Powar (2000), professional development is needed for enabling the staff to perform their tasks more efficiently.

According to Armstrong (2009), human resource development is the development of abilities and attitudes of the individual leading to personal growth and self-actualization, which enables him to contribute to societal well-being and development in achieving personal satisfaction and happiness. Staff development is, therefore, a strategy that helps the teacher acquire the requisite knowledge and skills to do their jobs more effectively.

Another effective training method is mentoring. A mentor is someone who can serve as a role model to help an inexperienced worker gain new skills and knowledge. Professionals who advocate this kind of training, point to its effectiveness although it

takes a lot of time and energy. This method requires two teachers to work closely together as equal partners. They are expected to function as a team, with common aims

2.8 Empirical Review

Researchers have attempted to answer different questions on issues concerning human resource management practices. Unfortunately to date, there has been little consistency in their findings.

Gove (2012) carried out a study in the USA titled global, act local: How early reading assessments can improve learning for all. The study was based on a desk review of available literature. The findings obtained show that teaching and training programs are essential in facilitating continuous training in most organizations. Since the former study does not focus on an African country, its findings may not relate to this current study.

Dessler (2008) presented an extensive analysis of human resource management practices based on a desk review of extant literature in the United States of America. The work argues that rewards are indirect forms of compensation that employees get from their employers as part of the employment relationship. The former work was focused on the USA and may not relate to this current study which focuses on primary schools in Malawi.

Ngeno, Shadrack and Cheruiyot (2013) carried out a study titled the performance appraisal policy and tools used by the Kenya Teachers Service Commission in Bomet Constituency. The findings of the research indicated that performance appraisals are crucial in the improvement of the teaching standards in schools in Kenya.

In the Kenyan situation, Chemisto, (2007) observed that individual schools are unable to initiate staff training. The study also established that it was difficult for the head teacher to choose among staff members whom to attend the training without being tribal or biased. Evidence from the literature shows that training and management practices are more successful at maximizing effectiveness.

Appiah (2010) in a desk review of available literature in Ghana among other western African countries posits that training and development are vital in improving the competence of the workforce. Since the former study does not relate to Malawi, this current study investigates the level to which training and development impact the performance of public schools.

According to Sudin (2011) in the research “On how perceived fairness during appraisal process may influence employee satisfaction,” he found out that the evaluators’ problems during the appraisal process as managers tend to be personally intentional in choosing their way of conducting an appraisal.

Madeleine (2010) assessed the impact of Human Resource Management practices on employee turnover, at the International Criminal Tribunal Court for Rwanda and found out that the level of compensation is one of the factors that may tie employees to their jobs.

2.9 Summary of Related Literature Review

The reviewed literature has shown that good human resource management is a very critical issue in school management. Most of the studies reviewed do not attempt to link such practices in public schools in Blantyre Rural, which is the focus of this current study. As such, the findings and premises of these studies may not relate to this current study. This underlines the importance of this current study that investigates the adoption and utilization of Human Resource Management Practices in public Primary schools in the area.

2.10 Theoretical Framework

Studies and academic discussions in education and social sciences are hardly successful without linking them to some theoretical viewpoints. According to Mgbodile (2004:69), “theory is a set of interrelated concepts, ideas or propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables to explain and predict the phenomena”. Tana (2011:17) defines theory as “a set of relevant, internally consistent postulates about a particular observable phenomenon, along with definitions, to enable

the user to move from the abstract to the real, to describe, explain, predict, and/ or advance knowledge”.

This implies that theories are guideposts to all fields of human endeavours, which prevent studies to be based on mere judgment derived from experience, guesswork or speculations but on the chosen line of action guided by experience derived from scientific research. The consequences of such an action will then fall in line with the intended direction as much as possible. Theories provide administrators with the basis for understanding behaviours and events through a systematic view of the phenomenon.

2.11 Theoretical Orientation

Expectancy Theory and Human Capital Theory have formed the theoretical framework of this study.

2.12 Expectancy Theory

This study was guided by the Expectancy Theory of Motivation where the proponent was Vroom (1964). The theory posits that motivation is a conscious process in which decisions lawfully relate to psychological events that occur simultaneously with behaviour. The forces within the individual and environment combine to determine the behaviour. Vroom explains that motivation is a product of three factors which he refers to as valence, expectancy and instrumentality.

The theory is based on the assumption that rewards influence the motivation of workers. In this regard, workers who feel that they are adequately rewarded tend to be more motivated than those who are of the contrary opinion. Schools should therefore put mechanisms to enhance the motivation of their teachers to boost their job motivation since this can boost their performance.

In addition, the expectancy theory posits that there is a perceived link between behaviour and pay. In this regard, employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be better paid. They also tend to have other benefits such as frequent promotions, better and flexible working conditions as well as the freedom to influence decisions (Gupta, 2003).

Human resource experts have depicted the Expectancy theory as one of the most important theories in predicting employee behaviour as posited by Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson (2012). The theory helps managers understand how to best utilize psychological processes that cause motivation to enhance the performance of their employees (teachers in the case of this current study). The theory is intuitively appealing and is based on common sense. In this regard, it argues that the best way to motivate employees is to create a work environment, climate and culture that can best enhance the motivation of teachers. This is only tenable if the manager (school administration in the case of this current study) understands the factors that motivate and demotivate individual employees. This is because each employee has his or her own motivation needs (Stephan & Timothy, 2013).

The expectancy theory provides educational managers with a strong conceptual framework for understanding how motivation and good relations at work can be improved. The manager learns that their style of management has a certain outcome; the nature of the treatment given to teachers has its expected outcome and a manager-employee relationship has its expected outcome. If a head teacher puts efforts into training and developing his staff, there will be effects of the same; if one does not spend on human resource development, then the performance will be affected. Staff meetings can be used to identify the needs in a particular school so that the head teacher can act accordingly.

In addition, the theory suggests that, if a teacher is well-remunerated, is given proper induction and orientation, if he or she is well developed and properly motivated, then this teacher will always be in school and will have proper timekeeping, this will finally result in a good performance. However, if the opposite happens and teachers are poorly remunerated, and are not allowed for teacher development either, then there will be teacher absenteeism, poor time keeping, and even head teacher demotivation, which will, in turn, lead to poor performance.

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Several criticisms of the expectancy theory have been advanced. To begin with, the theory does not specify exactly which rewards will motivate particular groups of workers (Shermerhorn, Hunt, & Osbourne, 2002). As such, head teachers can easily be lost on how to motivate some teachers seeing that the theory takes cognizance of the realities of individual needs for motivation. The theory has also been critiqued as not being complete and comprehensive (Shermerhorn et al., 2002). The theory is also complex since it is pegged to human nature, behaviour, attitudes and motivation which are very hard to measure. This means that it is hard to scientifically test this theory since most of these human attributes are more subjective than objective which means that they can never be completely objectified or theorized.

Furthermore, the theory is complicated and has many variables. In this regard, the practical applicability of the theory could be hard to ascertain. The theory is often questionable since some of the variables have multiplier effects which cannot be tested reliably since there is a lack of proven measures of expectancy (Stephan & Timothy, 2013). It is also worth noting that the theory does not provide specific solutions to motivational problems. In this regard, the theory just assumes that people are rational and logically calculating. This is a wild assumption since this is hard to measure and quantify in testing the theory.

The expectancy theory relates to this current study since it shows that teachers are likely to perform better when they are well motivated. As such, there should be efforts to come up with ways of ensuring that teachers are motivated through various methods such as rewards and compensations, which could go on to enhance their performance as conceptualized in this current study.

2.13 Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory as stated by Ehrenberg and Smith “conceptualized workers as embodying a set of skills which can be rented out to employers. The knowledge and skills that a worker has, which come from education and training, including the training that experience brings, generate a certain stock of “productive capital”. For the employees, the expected return on human capital investments is a higher level of earnings, greater job satisfaction and security in employment. For employers, the return on investment in human capital is expected to be an improvement in performance, productivity, flexibility and capacity to innovate that should result from enlarging the skill base and increasing levels of competence (Armstrong, 2006).

Teachers like any other employees as the theory states expect higher levels of earning, greater job satisfaction and assurance of job security. Human Resource Management practices such as Performance appraisal, Training and development are the key motivators that any employee expects to perform well. The absence of one or more of the above may lead to poor performance.

This theory relates to this current study since training and ensuring that performance management is undertaken to appraise and enhance the capacity of teachers to meet teaching requirements could contribute to better performance among such teachers as well as that of the students they teach.

Therefore, this theory will help the researcher in the formulation of the conclusion concerning the adoption of Human Resource Management practices for teachers in public primary schools.

2.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on management concepts and has described the theoretical framework adopted in this study. In the management concepts, human resources in primary schools are the teachers the head teachers use in the achievement of educational objectives. Teachers are conceived generally as the most important asset in institutions because they control the materials and other assets of the school. As such,

teachers have to be recognized or managed strategically. Moreover, the operational functions involved in the management of the teachers need to be well articulated to achieve the objectives of the institution as well as the desires of the workers. The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology of the study. It focuses on the theoretical orientation of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the research methods and procedures that the researcher employed to collect and analyze data. It includes the research approach, research design, and geographical area of the study, target population, sample and sampling techniques, methods of data collection, ethical considerations as well as data processing and analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Approach

The researcher opted for and utilized a qualitative research paradigm which hinges on narrative and descriptive approaches to data collection and analysis. Hesse-Biber (2016) posited that the qualitative research approach is intended to give subjective meanings and multiple viewpoints. The qualitative research method is suitable for understanding human behaviour from the perspective of the informant (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014).

Within this qualitative paradigm, a case study design was used. As mentioned by Creswell (2005), a case study is an in-depth exploration of a specific entity (e.g., an activity, event, process or individual) based on extensive data collection. On another occasion, he mentioned that it is based on constructivism, encouragement, or shared knowledge in which a researcher looks for meaning, and contexts, and brings personal values into the study. It employs the use of subjective data, such as observations, interviews, open-ended questions, and journals (Creswell, 2003). A case study design involves the analysis of a single unit case or multiple unit cases, bound by time and activity (Solis, 2016).

The qualitative research approach allows studying a phenomenon in its real-life situation, without any sort of manipulation of data (Creswell, 2003). In this study, the researcher spent time with the participants; created rapport to obtain first-hand information and experiences on the human resource management practices in primary schools. Given the fact that participants' behaviours are unpredictable (tend to change with time and context), the primary school's environment was used to enable the study's participants to provide information in a more relaxed manner.

Qualitative research emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality and the close relationship between the researcher and the researched and the situational constraints (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). They are also attuned to the unfolding of events over time and to the inter-connections between the actions of participants in a social setting Bryman, (2008). Therefore, the qualitative research approach, with detailed interviews focused on processes, was appropriate to enable the researcher to come closer to and understand the specifics of the research contexts.

Moreover, the qualitative approach allows a mutual relationship between the researcher and the participants during data collection. This allowed the researcher to cultivate the inside of the participant to develop insights and ultimately generate bulky and wide information about the research problem under exploration (Cohen et al., 2000). In the light of this study, the researcher was directly involved in interviews, discussions and observations with the participants, striving to tap the insights and ultimately generate bulky and wide information on the human resource management practices in primary schools.

3.3 Research Design

This study employed a case study design. The case study design was concerned with the practical investigation of a phenomenon in detail within its real-life context as it appears in its natural form (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2009). A case study design involves the analysis of a single unit case or multiple unit cases, bound by time and activity (Solis, 2016). According to Creswell (2009), Case-studies are a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect

detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period. The case study design was deemed appropriate in this study because the researcher intended to explore in-depth the human resource management practices in primary schools.

Sekaran and Bougie (2010) describe case studies as detailed and conceptual analyses on similar issues in several different organizations that experienced the same nature and problems. On the other hand, Creswell (2003) defines it as a collective study where the researcher purposively selects multiple cases to exemplify one issue or concern to maximize different perspectives on the phenomenon studied. Similarly, Stake (2010) indicates that a case study concentrates on a search concern that belongs to a particular collection of cases categorically bounded by a common characteristic or condition. According to Aaker et al (2002), a case could be persons, social communities, organizations and institutions that can be the subjects of a case analysis.

This was the appropriate design for this study because it elicits existing information on head teachers' management practices in primary schools which will then be explained, analyzed and documented.

3.4 Geographical Area of the Study

This study was conducted in Blantyre District. The region is located in the Southern part of Malawi. Blantyre District is divided into two areas, rural and urban settings. The district is divided into zones. A zone is an area within the district where seven schools are closely located (Blantyre Desk Officer). Blantyre Rural West was selected as the study area due to its accessibility to the required primary schools. All the ten primary schools are located in Blantyre rural west, thus reachable by whatever means of transport without much economic stress on the part of the researcher.

Another justification for the choice was accessibility to required information that helped in the study. According to Creswell (2003), 'studying one's back yard provides easy access to information at minimal cost' (p.115).

The advantage of accessibility and proximity was to assist the researcher complete the work within the specified time at the researcher's disposal.

3.5 Study Population/ Participants

Salkind (2009:89) defines a sample as “a subset of the population”. In other words, it refers to the number of participants needed for the research to represent the overall group of people studied. The population of this study included: 10 head teachers from ten primary schools, 60 teachers; 10 from each primary school under study and 3 Primary Education Advisors from the primary schools in Blantyre Rural West.

Heads of school: Heads of schools were involved in this study of their administrative position. Among others, school heads are entitled to ensure that any changes in the management practices are carefully adopted, implemented and effectively supervised for the overall better performance of their schools.

Teachers: These are the human resources responsible for adopting any changes in teaching and learning.

Primary Education Advisors: These were selected for the study because they are zone advisors for the selected schools. They are responsible for supervising all activities related to teaching and human resource management practices in primary schools. PEAs' are destined at Teacher Development Centre.

3.6 Sample and Sampling Techniques

As it is not possible to study the whole target population, a sample of 73 respondents was drawn from the population. These 73 respondents were considered to be appropriate and adequate in this study because qualitative studies seek to provide in-depth insights into the understanding of the problem under study rather than simply generalize the data collected.

These respondents were obtained through two techniques: purposive and simple random sampling. Nieuwenhuis (2007) defines purposive sampling as selecting the sample because of some defining characteristics that make them relevant for the

intended data. Under purposive sampling, the researcher deliberately includes or excludes some of the elements in the sample. The chosen elements are those that researcher believes will be able to deliver the required data (Adam and Kamuzora, 2008). The purposive sampling technique in this study helped the researcher to obtain ten (10) primary schools which are located near each other. In purposive sampling, the researcher intentionally “selected individuals and sites to learn and understand the central phenomenon” (Creswell, 2005, p.218).

The researcher purposively selected ten schools to study HRM practices, in the South West Education Division. There was a need to seek out people who possess knowledge about specialized interests and concerns in the social setting, people whom the researcher feels are integral to the scenes and situations being investigated. The other reason for purposive sampling was that the sample being studied was quite small, especially when compared with probability sampling techniques. Again, purposive sampling was used to obtain ten (10) head teachers at schools that meet the purpose of the study.

Random sampling was used to obtain (60) teachers from primary schools. The ten schools were chosen because they met the purpose of the study. In selecting the Primary Education Advisors for the study, a purposive sampling technique was used. This was so because they were the only consultants in the area under study.

Random sampling was used to select teachers because according to Gay (1987), all individuals have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample. The probability of selection is the same and the selection of one individual in no way affects the selection of the other, so the sample used in this study is a representative one. The researcher used simple random sampling to get the sample by writing the names of teachers on small pieces of paper. The papers were folded, put in a container and mixed thoroughly and then the researcher picked the required number of teachers randomly. This was done to give all the participants in the population equal opportunity to participate in the study. Below is a summary of the sample.

Table 1: A Sample of Participants in the Study

	Sample Understudy		Total population	Sampling procedure
	Males	Females		
Teachers	36	24	60	Random Sampling
Head teachers	6	4	10	Purposive
Primary Education Advisors	2	1	3	Purposive
Total	44	29	73	

3.7 Data Collection Methods

Denzin and Lincoln, (2008) states that qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus. He also states that the use of multi-methods ensures an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question and adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to an inquiry. Within a study, different methods can be used, which are traditionally interviews, observations, and documentary analysis. Silverman (2000) talked about the choice of methods, stating that: There is no best method, but the choice should be according to the feasibility of time and resources. The reason behind choosing multi-methods, in collecting data, is that every method has strengths as well as weaknesses, and matching the strengths of one with the weaknesses of another could help in later stages of the study.

According to McCusker and Gunaydin (2015), data collection instruments are critical in the qualitative research process, which serve as the fundamental tools to collect data from the participants. In this study, I served as the primary data collection instrument to interview and collect data from the participants (Yin, 2014). The interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee in qualitative research can enrich data in respect of life experiences (Bailey, 2014; Hurst et al., 2015).

The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through interviews. Secondary data was used to depict pertinent issues as they existed before the study and as a basis to confirm or contrast the findings of the study. Questionnaires and interviews were used as research tools to collect data from the sampled respondents. The schools were visited seven times over a period of three months to talk to teachers, PEAs and head teachers and to obtain documents. This process was from 1st December 2016 till 30th January 2017.

After collecting data, data cleaning, coding, error checking exploratory analysis, and tabulation were done. Questionnaires were given to the respondents with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the study. The first step in data analysis is data entry and storage. The researcher then transcribed the data. Transcribing offers another point of transition between data collection and analysis as part of data management and preparation.

The researcher made sure that all the data was available in the database. She made copies for safe storage, for writing on, and for cutting and pasting. This data was put into smaller meaningful parts. Then the researcher labelled each chunk with a code. Coding is defined as marking the segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or category names (Biklen & Bogdan, 2007). This is a means of sorting the descriptive data that was collected so that the material bearing on a given topic can be physically separated from other data. The researcher then compared the codes to identify emerging themes. Data was also being compared to the initial research questions to find the answers. Later, the coded data were critically analyzed to find out any differences and similarities. The differences and similarities enabled the researcher to bring together larger data into a broader category. Those sharing similar characteristics were assigned to a broad category. The presentation of data was done in form of tables to illustrate the description and explanations of the research findings.

This study used both questionnaires and interview guides to collect data from the sample populations. The questionnaires were used to solicit data from the teachers. This was done because the questionnaires can collect a wide variety of data (Owen, 2002). The use of the questionnaire was deemed appropriate as it permits anonymity and results in more honest responses. The questionnaires for teachers were composed of

several sections. An introductory section and instructions preceded the first section of the questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire dealt with the demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the other parts solicit information about the role of head teachers in human resource management practices in enhancing the quality of free primary education in selected schools in Blantyre rural.

The interviews were used to solicit data from the head teachers. The interview would give chance to probe for more and deeper information. The interview schedule contained both closed and open-ended questions. The first section of the guide contained the demographic factors of the respondents and then the second section concentrated more on the role of head teachers in human resource management in enhancing the quality of free primary education.

3.7.1 Sources for Primary Data Collection

One of the methods used for the study was based on primary data collection using semi-structured interviewing, and this choice was made partly by the researcher considering the nature of the population targeted.

3.7.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

This study employed a semi-structured interview because the researcher intended to capture first-hand information by probing deeper into participants' experiences, feelings, opinions and suggestions concerning the human management practices in primary school. This is the method where the researcher conducted face-to-face conversations with participants (Creswell, 2003). This type of interview was conducted in this study because it is a much more flexible version of a structured interview since the primary issue is to generate data which give authentic insights into people's experience. The researchers believed that semi-structured interviews were best suited to the nature of this study as they allowed the respondents to be more spontaneous but precise in giving answers. This is supported by Nik S., (2008) who pointed out that the respondents could feel more relaxed in describing the phenomenon using their own words rather than being restricted. Both closed and open-ended questions were used in

the interview schedule. There have been observations made by various authors about using interviews for collecting data that they take you the researcher into participants' world as far as they can verbally relate what is in their minds (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). In this regard, some of the reasons why interviews are noted to be important in qualitative research include: understanding individual perspectives; generating rich descriptive, gathering insights into participants' thinking; and learning more about the context (Rossman & Lallis, 2003).

3.6.3 Questionnaires

According to Orodho (2005), a questionnaire is an instrument used to gather data that allow measurements for or against a particular viewpoint. The questionnaire was selected for the heads and teachers due to its ability to collect a large amount of information in a reasonably short time. Closed-ended questions were used since they were easier to administer and economical to analyze in terms of time noted by Mugenda and Mugenda (2008). The questionnaire was divided into four sections namely: Section A contained the introductory information, Section B contained information on HRM practices, Section C contained questions related to the extent to which challenges have affected teaching and learning and Section D contained questions related to adopting strategies to curb the challenges related to HRM.

Although questionnaires can be very complex, they are perhaps the most frequently used descriptive method in educational research (Cohen & Morrison, 2002). When they are well designed, questionnaires provide specific information rapidly. It is an inexpensive method of gathering data, especially for small-scale research undertaken by one person.

I designed questionnaires on concepts fundamental to human resource management practices. The questionnaires explored the human management practices practised in primary schools. Questionnaires with a list of HRM practices were distributed to the Headteachers and teachers. They were asked to indicate the HRM practices that are adopted in their schools. Again Headteachers were also asked the reasons for their choice of HRM practices. Then the responses were grouped and analyzed.

Questionnaires were used for gathering data from a large sample (Kothari, 2004). Questionnaires were prepared and administered to head teachers working in the ten primary schools. For this research, the questions in the questionnaire were closed and open-ended. These were used to ease the process of analysing data. Thus, the results gathered from respondents helped to increase the speed and accuracy of recording, as well as more comparable. The questions were adopted and modified from previous research papers conducted by other researchers.

3.8 Schedule Interviews

Since the participants were taking part in the study voluntarily, the researcher considered their busy schedules. They had the opportunity to choose the date, time and venue for the interview.

The continuous rescheduling of the interviews by some participants at the commencement of the interview period resulted in most interviews being carried out near the deadline of the specified period. Despite these disadvantages from changes in the interview timetable, the researcher allowed flexibility to the participants in all their schedules. The continuous visits and follow-up telephone calls by the researcher helped to get the required information. This was done within two weeks.

3.8.1 Duration of Interviews

The official duration of the interview was 10 to 15 minutes, but this happened only on a few occasions. Most of the interviews lasted beyond the expected time because the participants were keen to give detailed accounts of their HRM practices. There were also some occasions when the interview time exceeded the agreed time participants due to interruptions by clients, friends and employees of the participants, and yet they were faithful to their word and answered all the interview questions. All the participants were so willing to participate in the study that they were very open to giving information on their HRM practices and the problems or challenges they faced.

The researcher made sure that the interview questions were all covered within the given period. Participants' responses were guided towards the achievement of essential, reliable and valid data to answer the research question. The researcher made use of prompts during the interview to either clarify a point made by the participant or acquire further information on a specific issue.

3.9 Sources for Secondary Data Collection

3.9.1 Document Review

Documents studied were Ministry of Education Science and Technology manuals and reports, policies and documents to enrich the analysis of the human resource management practices. Some of the documents used were the Malawi Public Service Manual and Malawi Public Service Management Policy. These documents guided with the information on the management of employees for an efficient and effective public service (schools inclusive) that is to deliver high-quality services. The researcher also studied various documents used during Human Resources Management training. This was done because, during the process of research, qualitative investigations may collect data from different documents (Creswell, 2003).

3.10 Data Management

Involves operations that ensure a systematic and coherent process of collecting data, storage and retrieval constitute data management (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Large volumes of data came from the head teachers and teachers where I conducted the research. Large volumes of data may end up being miscoded. This study generated a lot of raw data and detailed notes from interviews that were done. Data management helped to ensure high-quality accessible data, the retention of data and associated analysis after the study.

3.11 Data Analysis Procedures

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008), data obtained from the field in raw form is difficult to interpret. Such data should be cleaned, coded and analyzed. All questionnaires and interview schedules were ascertained for completeness before the analysis was done. Responses from interviews and questionnaires were analyzed

qualitatively using a thematic approach. Data collected cannot be presented as a whole. The researcher analyzed the data to have a clear and easy interpretation and discussion of the findings. The analyzed data included information about management practices in primary schools. Since the study was confined to qualitative data, the collected information was subjected to content analysis. First of all, data from interviews and discussions were transcribed. Then it was read through carefully to establish a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning.

Data collected through interviews with Head Teachers were analyzed qualitatively. Qualitative data generated from interviews was categorized into themes by the research questions and reported in a narrative. The responses were kept in the computer files for later review, transcription and coding.

Qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions were analyzed according to themes based on the study objectives and the research questions and thereafter, inferences and conclusions were drawn. Qualitative data ranges from a short list of responses to more complex data (Saunders et al., 2007). In either case, there was the need for an appropriate method of analysis to give a meaningful and useful result. According to the literature, there is no standard approach to the analysis of qualitative data (Creswell, 2003; Saunders et al., 2007) since different authors use different approaches for qualitative data analysis.

The procedures for analysis involved organizing the mass of qualitative data that were collected into meaningful and related parts to help make sense of the text. Then thematic coding and analysis were used. The data collected, in the form of responses from the interviews, were first transcribed. The format for transcription was such that each general question or sub-question was followed by its corresponding response from the participant, and field notes made by the researcher during the interviews were typed in the appropriate margins of the text.

During the transcribing, the major topic headings were set in capital type font in red; the questions were in normal type font red (with prompt questions in pale pink), whilst all responses took normal type font in black. In each interview transcript, a code was assigned for the participant. Each interview transcribed was saved in a separate word-

processed file with the file name given corresponding to the interviewee's code. This method was adopted to make it easier to match participants' transcripts with their respective computer files. It was also used to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participant as specified in the participant information letter. A separate backup security copy of each data file was stored on a mass storage device.

In the coding process, Biklen & Bogdan (2007) suggested searching for regularities that can be found in the data collected along with the patterns and the topic that the data cover. The second step in coding was to identify the sub-themes which refer to the detail or elaboration of the main idea. Finally, themes were constructed. This was done by looking into the most repetitive main ideas given by respondents in the overall interview session. In this step, the researchers referred to the transcription and identified relatively similar main ideas. Based on the categorization of these main ideas, the researchers created a precise theme.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher adhered to some important ethical issues since it was involving people. The protection of individual privacy in education research involves obtaining consent from an individual to get involved in a study. The researcher clearly explained the purpose of the study to the participants. She clarified the research problem, the purpose of the study, and the short-term and long-term benefits and losses due to their participation in this study. The researcher asked for the participants' consent a week before the date of the interviews. Again, the researcher informed the participants that their participation was free.

The researcher assured the participants that there will be confidentiality by maintaining the anonymity of the respondents and that the respondents' names, as well as school names, will not be mentioned in the report. Instead, pseudo names were used to represent schools and teachers. The information collected was kept safe so that no unauthorized individual will be able to access it. Furthermore, the researcher clarified to the respondents that the information sought was only meant for research purposes. Thus, no respondents will be victimized for providing needed information.

The researcher maintained a good rapport with the participants, thus creating a free and friendly environment in which they divulged their information. The researcher used the following pseudo names for Head teachers; John, Mary, Pirie, Johnson, Mr Banda, Mwale, and Zimba. For PEAs, she used the following names: Mercy, Samson and Harry. The researcher used pseudo names for PEAs.

3.13 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has discussed the research design and research methodology which have been used and are discussed in detail. The study used the descriptive survey which affirms that reality is socially constructed based on a continuous process of interpretation and reinterpretation. Finally, it highlighted how data was managed and analyzed to come up with codes and categories that were useful for making sense of the large volume of textual data collected.

The next chapter deals with the study findings and discusses them based on the major categories generated from the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. As discussed in Chapter One, the study sought to find out the human resource management practices in selected primary schools in Blantyre District. This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the research questions. From the findings, the study came up with the following on human resources management practices in primary schools: head teachers' human resource management practices in primary schools, challenges faced in the effective use of human use management practices and coping mechanisms. This chapter presents the findings of the study and discusses the results. The major findings of the study are summarized at the end of the chapter.

4.2 Characteristics of the Respondents

Table1 shows the characteristics of the teachers in the study according to gender. The respondents' gender helped the researcher to determine whether there was gender disparity among head teachers and teachers in Blantyre District.

Table 2: Respondents' Gender

	Males	Females	Total
Head teachers	6	4	10
Teachers	36	24	60
PEA's	2	1	3
	44	29	73

Thirty-six respondents out of the 60 teachers were male while 24 were female. 10 head teachers were interviewed; 6 were males and 4 were females. Out of the three PEA's, two were males and one female. This implies that there was a gender disparity among the respondents.

4.2.1 Length of Service in the Current Station of the Head teachers

The respondent's working experience has been shown in Table 3 and this helped the researcher to determine their level of experience in effective human resource management practices by public primary school head teachers.

Table 3: Respondents' Duration at the Position

Work duration	No.	%
Less than 5 years	1	10
6-10 years	4	40
11-15 years	3	30
16-20 years	2	20
20 & above	0	0
Total	10	100

Four of the head teachers had worked in their current station between 5 and 10 years and three had worked for 10-15 years. It was evident that most of the head teachers had not stayed long in their current working stations. In Malawi, there is a policy that says a head teacher should not stay in one station for more than 10 years.

4.3 Key Findings

4.3.1 Adoption and Utilisation of Human Resource Management Practices

The issue of human resource management is central to the MoEST. In schools, the major decisions on human resources are handled by the head teachers. In this study, the concepts of human resource management practices revolved around the following: (1)

Orientation of new teachers, (2) Training of teachers (3) Communication with teachers, (4) Performance appraisal of teachers, (5) and keeping of staff records.

4.3.2 HRM Practices in Selected Public Primary Schools in Blantyre Rural West

The respondents were requested to identify HRM practices by indicating their level of agreement on the adoption and utilisation of human resource management practices by primary school head teachers. This was done to show the utilization of these HR practices in selected primary schools in Blantyre rural. Table 4 below was used to show the respondents' identification of the HRM practices in selected primary schools in Blantyre rural.

Table 4: The Respondents' Identification of HRM Practices

Responses on Human resource management practices in primary schools	AGREE	DISAGREE
	No. of Teachers	No. of Teachers
Adoption of HRM practices	45	15
Orientation of new staff	52	8
Good communication with teachers	43	17
Motivation and satisfaction of the teachers	23	37
Head teachers' appraisal of staff performance	43	17
Head teachers' keeping staff records	48	12
School providing Staff Training/in- service training	47	13
Development Practices	34	26

The study established the roles carried out by head teachers as HRM in primary schools. Some of the roles identified included orientation of new staff in schools and encouraging teamwork among staff, empowering staff and encouraging them in developing their career.

4.3.3 Orientation of New Teachers

The study identified the orientation of new teachers as one of the management practices adopted in the primary school under study. From the findings, 52 out of the 60 respondents agreed that orientation of new teachers is done and another 8 disagreed.

This implies that most of the teachers agree that the orientation of new teachers in schools is done. It is good practice for teachers to undergo an orientation process to ensure that they receive adequate support at the beginning of their career or when they move to a new role or school. In this regard, as the expectancy theory argues, it is motivated important to create a work environment, climate and culture that can best enhance the motivation of teachers.

4.3.4 Staff Training and Development Practices in Schools

Another management practice identified in the schools under study is training and development activities. The analysis found that 47 out of the 60 teachers agreed and 13 disagreed with being provided with in-service training which is organized within the Teacher Development Centres (TDC). Most of the teachers acknowledged that training has helped to impart professional ethics and skills and has improved their cognitive ability and made learners excel.

The findings show that 78% of the respondents have been having in-service training. These schools emphasize training as part of staff development. However, 22% disagreed with having enough training which would improve service delivery

The most common form of training in primary schools is in-service training for staff development. Respondents agreed that they attend seminars and workshops to build

their capacity. Training is an important tool for the teachers since it helps in passing values, work activities and job design from incumbents to the other teachers. Appropriate career development opportunities for teachers are important for attracting and retaining the most qualified, experienced and motivated teachers. Effective professional development, including study leave and exchanges with private and public workplaces, can contribute to opportunities that make teaching an attractive profession and retain the best teachers (UNESCO 2009).

The knowledge and skills that a teacher has, which come from education and training, including experience generate a certain stock of “productive capital”. For the teachers, the return on investment in human capital is expected to be an improvement in performance, productivity, flexibility and capacity for innovation that should result from enlarging the skill base and increasing levels of competence (Armstrong, 2006).

4.3.5 Motivation and Communication

The researcher also identified communication and motivation as another human resource management practice that has been adopted in the selected primary schools. The findings indicate that 47 of the respondents agreed that there is good communication between teachers and the Head teachers. 13 teachers out of the 60 teachers disagreed.

On the motivation of the teachers, the study found that 23 teachers out of the 60 agreed that they are motivated when carrying out their duties. However, 37 of the respondents disagreed that there is low motivation and unsatisfactory working conditions by their employer. Schools should therefore put mechanisms to enhance the motivation of their teachers to boost their job motivation since this can boost their performance as the expectancy theory posits.

4.3.6 Performance Appraisal

Another management practice identified was performance appraisal which is practised in the schools under study. From the findings, the researcher established that 17 of the

respondents agreed that both teachers and head teachers are clear about what is expected of their performance. This is a clear indication that the performance of workers is tracked through performance appraisal. 33 disagreed that the performance appraisal tool is widely used. This is acknowledged when inspecting work plans, records and schemes. However, it seemed that participants lacked knowledge of the importance of performance appraisal.

4.3.7 Head teachers' Responses on the Adoption of HRM Practices

During face-to-face discussions, the head teachers were interviewed to explore the adoption of human resource management practices in their schools. Head teacher John had this to say:

"I know some of the human resource practices like the orientation of teachers, motivation of teachers, keeping records, staff appraisal and many more only that I don't practice all of them. I do have some challenges with some". (Mary, face-to-face interview).

Head Teacher Pirie argued:

"I have adopted most of the human resource management practices in my school. Although this is the case, I do face some challenges when it comes to resources. Some of the things are not easy to implement without resources". (Face-to-face interview).

Head teacher Johnson added:

"I have adopted good human resources management practices but only that I have a challenge of all required resources. The only time I practice these is when I have resources" (Johnson, face-to-face interview).

The findings from the head teachers in this study indicated that they knew the human resource management practices in schools. During interviews, it was confirmed that the head teachers knew the human resource practices in schools. They were aware of most of the practices in primary schools.

The interviews also revealed that the head teachers who did not practice some of these lacked resources. Furthermore, the availability of resources determined the choice of activities be done.

Despite the limitations mentioned by the head teachers, they indicated that human resource management practices are important in the running of the schools. Most of these practices were said to be important because they help improve schools. One of the head teachers had this to say:

“Good Human Resource practices improve what goes on in schools” (Mary, face-to-face interview).

In addition, Johnson said:

“Some head teachers indicated that they could use the practices effectively if provided with resources”. (Johnson, face-to-face interview).

Out of the ten head teachers interviewed in this study, almost all of them agreed that they have adopted, and they utilize the human resource management practices under study.

Upon being interviewed on their role in the utilization of human resource management, head teachers, various responses were received. 4 of the head teachers agreed while 2 of them disagreed with the latter. Most of the Head Teachers reported that their duties as human resource managers included the following: monitoring teachers, providing housing to the staff members and creating conducive working conditions through improved teacher relations

As for teacher motivation, they indicated that it is affected by the multiple education changes and also by the wretched physical conditions in many schools. They said that if motivation and morale are low, then teaching and learning suffer. Therefore, motivation and morale are the main factors to performance in teaching and learning.

It is, therefore, the function of the head teachers to make sure that by all means the morale of the teachers is uplifted to enable the work to be carried out with a lot of interest which in turn will boost the performance of different individuals in their different tasks.

4.3.8 PEAs' Responses on the Head teachers' Adoption of HRM Practices in Primary Schools

During face-to-face discussions, the PEAs were interviewed to explore their knowledge of the human resource management practices used by the head teachers in primary schools. One of the teachers had this to say:

"I know that some head teachers have adopted human resource management practices in their schools".

Another one argued:

"I know most of the head teachers have adopted human resource management practices in their schools. Although this is the case, I know that they face some challenges. These challenges come about because of lack of resources" (PEA Mercy, face-to-face interview).

The other PEA added that:

"I know that head teachers use human resource management practices in their schools. Even though I know that head teachers face some challenges" (PEA Samson, face-to-face interview).

The PEAs in this study indicated their satisfaction with the head teachers adopting human resource management practices in their schools. They were aware of the human resources management that is used by most head teachers.

Despite the challenges mentioned by the PEAs, they indicated that adopting good human resource management practices improve teaching and learning in schools. Adoption of human resource management practices was said to be important because they improve learning. One of the PEAs (Harry) had this to say:

“Effective use of human resource management practices improves learning in school”

Regarding the utilization of HRM, all three respondents agreed that human resource management is adopted by head teachers.

In addition, another one said:

“When head teachers face challenges they use improvisation to curb these problems” (Johnson, face-to-face interview).

Regarding the systematic management of teachers, all six respondents agreed that human resource management is the systematic management of teachers in a school.

The second theme indicated that head teachers use human resource management practices in their schools, even though head teachers face some challenges.

Another theme that emerged about the concept of human resource management is the motivation of teachers.

In primary schools, effective human resource management is seen as a mechanism to enable schools to be sustainable and competitive in the education market. Respondent 3 pointed out that: “To the public, a good school is the one that can motivate teachers.

Regarding the systematic management of teachers, all three respondents agreed that human resource management is the systematic management of teachers as a school asset. For instance, respondent 1 said:

“To me, human resource management at school is mainly about a system to manage the teachers”.

The third theme was that keeping teachers’ records could be done and this can help retain teachers longer in their school.

The findings show that most respondents in the primary school understudy believed that human resource management is important for the accomplishment of educational

goals. They also agreed that some practices such as motivation of teachers and keeping of staff records are important for the management of their schools.

4.3.9 Factors Influencing Head Teachers' Human Resource Management Practices

Many factors combined influence head teachers' choice of HRM practices. Motivational factors become important in their choice. Table 5 shows the various factor influencing the choice of HRM practices.

Table 4: Factors Influencing the Choice of HRM Practices

Factors Influencing Head Teachers' Human Resource Management Practices	Yes	No
Availability of funds and time	9	1
Availability of resources	6	4
Desire to make improvements	8	2
Inspiration of the work	8	2

It was revealed that each of the head teachers had a motivational source that influenced their choice of HRM practices. For example, 9 head teachers indicated that their choice of HRM practices is based on the availability of funds. Whereas 8 out of the 10 head teachers indicated that if they are motivated and inspired, they do well in their schools. Such varied and interesting profiles of the head teachers contributed to their choices of HRM practices to run their schools.

4.3.10 Human Resource Management Challenges Related to HRM Practices

To establish some of the challenges head teachers face in handling human resource management practices in public primary schools, the head teachers were asked the following question: What are some of the challenges of the strategies adopted by head teachers' human resource management practices?

Regarding the challenges related to HRM practices, all the ten head teachers agreed that there are some challenges in carrying out their duties.

For instance, respondent 1 said:

“To me, human resource management at school is mainly faced with a lack of adequate funds in schools and this is regarded as a challenge related to human resource management”.

As for the orientation of new teachers, six out of ten respondents believed that to lack of time to offer orientation was one of the challenges. This is because head teachers have to teach also. According to respondent 6

On factors related to the motivation of teachers,

Respondent 3 said that:

“Teachers absent themselves from school since they are not motivated”.

Respondent 5 said:

“As a headmaster, I must manage every aspect of resources in this school. Although the main idea that I have about human resource management is about managing teachers”.

Respondents 7 indicated that:

“Working conditions for many teachers are generally not good and tend to lower the self-esteem of teachers to a greater extent”.

On analysis of staff development, out of the ten said that there is low staff development

Respondent four said:

“Regarding time for professional development, this seems to be problematic since some teachers are overloaded”.

The findings show that some head teachers said that they face some challenges in the management of teachers. Some respondents said that although the practice of human resource management is crucial at the school level, they face challenges. These include motivation of teachers and staff development

4.3.12 Coping Mechanism in HRM Practices

To further assess the ways of coping mechanisms in HRM practices the respondents were asked what happened in their schools. From the interviews with the PEA's and head teachers, the study established some of the ways how head teachers cope with challenges concerned with human resource management practices.

All the three PEAs and all the ten head teachers reported that the heads t in different schools used diverse ways to curb the HRM challenges in schools. All the three PEAs highlighted that they give more effort to enhancing the adoption of human resource practices among teachers as a way to develop them.

Some head teachers said that by having regular meetings the head teachers and teachers critically discuss ways of improving their schools' and learners' performance. The mechanism helps in laying different strategies to address the problem and especially ways of raising the educational standards in the school.

Some of the head teachers said that they serve as role models in schools in terms of class performance, integrity, responsibility and accountability. Teachers in schools follow the steps through a few teachers strain to do it. These head teachers lay clear rules and regulations to be followed by teachers, learners and parents. This creates a situation where everyone knows what to do and when to do it. This helps create a learning environment that is conducive and friendly to all.

In some schools, some head teachers said that they organize educational tours where they visit performing schools and learn from them. One of the head teachers said that another HRM practice used by some head teachers is sensitizing parents through individual class meetings where parents and students are guided separately. The mechanism has been found to help in curbing indiscipline cases in schools.

Another mechanism adopted by the head teachers is availing the teacher code of regulation in the staffroom for the teachers to read. This helps to curb some indiscipline cases from the teacher's given knowledge of their consequences. This also helps

improve interpersonal relations between the head teachers and teachers. Some head teachers and teachers use regular staff meetings for a consultation to solve teachers' problems. It leads to smooth and mutual relationships in school thus providing a conducive environment for learning.

This study revealed, that even though head teachers have adopted and utilized good HRM practices, to achieve set government objectives. This happens in schools under study but head teachers face some challenges. Respondents further revealed that they have limited decision-making authority as everything is subject to approval by the Ministry of Education.

4.4 Chapter Summary

The analysis of data came up with four major categories explaining the extent of the adoption of HRM practices. These categories are factors influencing the choice of HRM practices, challenges and coping mechanisms in the adoption of selected HRM practices.

The analysis has brought to light the choices of HRM practices that the head teachers had adopted in the areas covered by the study. The participants' views on why such choices were made and how they were executed have been presented as well as the problems and challenges they faced in the execution of such choices of HRM practices.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter gives a summary of the findings of the study, the conclusion of the researcher as well as recommendations and suggestions for further research. The chapter also gives an outline of the limitations of the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The research established several key findings. First, the study established that teachers are provided with opportunities for training or development.

The findings from the analysis showed that participants agreed that to some extent head teachers have adopted some of the HRM practices in their respective schools. They were engaged in all the HRM practices covered under this study namely, the orientation of teachers, training and development programs (in form of in-service training and staff meetings), and record-keeping, but these were at varying levels of adoption. Participants' HRM practices were mostly deployed informally, which tended to hurt the success and growth of their schools.

The schools under study utilized on-the-job training, with little planning or budgeting. Formal performance management methods such as appraisal were not evident in the participants' HRM practices. Those who used formal appraisal forms merely handed out the forms for the teachers to check for themselves.

The study also concluded that the lack of adequate funds and resources to motivate teachers was a challenge in the adoption of some HRM practices by head teachers. The study also established that most Management does not fully involve teachers when making decisions that affect them.

The study findings suggest that some public primary schools in Blantyre rural have utilized innovative HRM practices such as in-service training and improvisation though they have not utilized others like performance appraisals. The study also established that in most schools, staff records are properly kept.

The choice of informal HRM practices generated problems in the participants' execution of HRM activities that negatively affected the achievement of their set objectives. Despite the key role of human resources in ensuring quality education, some problems still militate against the adoption of some human resource management practices, the effective utilization of available ones and the active involvement of head teachers in human resource management for effective teaching and learning in the schools.

5.3 Conclusions

With the changing world, there is a greater need to manage HR not only for operational efficiency but also for strategic effectiveness. In schools too, there is a need to manage human resources for effectiveness and high performance. HRM rarely emerges as a fully formed set of practices, but the trend is changing. Based on the evidence obtained from the study, we can conclude that the context in which HRM practices are implemented imposes certain challenges. HRM practices such as the orientation of staff, staff training and development, and staff motivation, performance appraisal, keeping of staff records have to be looked into in public primary schools in Blantyre Rural West.

The research has revealed that in general, the uptake of HR practices is satisfactory with challenges highlighted in some areas. It appears that public primary schools in Blantyre Rural, to a reasonable level, have successfully done better, and this may have reflected in performance within the various sections in public primary schools in Blantyre Rural. More research might be needed to identify good human resource management practices in public primary schools in Blantyre Rural. There are varying degrees of adoption of various best practices in human resource management among primary schools in Blantyre Rural and the findings might help schools to reassess their practices and strengthen their human resources.

From the data collected and the subsequent analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that despite the small sample size of this study, the findings reflected the HRM practices in primary schools. Through this approach, the study has achieved its objective of finding out the types of HRM practices engaged in selected primary schools. This study has also revealed how and why such practices are employed, challenges that are faced in the choices of such practices and their coping mechanisms. It has also provided the reader with an understanding of HRM practices in selected primary schools. In effect, it has filled a knowledge gap in HRM practices within the primary schools in Blantyre Rural West. The findings and the subsequent discussion revealed that there was a need to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of HRM activities engaged in primary schools. Given this, some recommendations are made in the next section.

5.4 Implications of the Study Findings

To improve the performance of staff in primary schools, there is a need to fully embrace best practices in human resource management. This should start from planning to the adoption of different human resources management practices.

Staff training and development should be continuous. The training should be regular and consistent given the ever-increasing need to provide quality education while performance management especially objectives should be enhanced in response to the market needs. To curb employee turnover, human resource management practices should be improved to be consistent with the work activities.

If the take-up of HR practices as outlined in this thesis is representative of other public primary schools, then it would appear that managers still have a long way to go to catch up with the competitive world. Certainly, with increasing pressure from the government to achieve improvements in performance key HR practices have to be adopted always. Furthermore, such attempts are unlikely to place a burden on the already limited resources that schools have. Therefore, some innovative HR practices may be appropriate for the smooth running of public primary schools to improve performance.

Head teachers and even the teachers should have a say in determining what training is needed in their schools. The sample in the study (as stated in earlier chapters) was selected from rural schools and the characteristics of HRM practices there may differ from those in the urban areas. This means that the findings cannot be generalized. It is recommended that future research take note of this and include the views of people in urban areas.

5. 5 Suggestions for Further Studies

The researcher aimed at establishing the extent of adoption of best practices in human resources management in Blantyre Rural primary schools. Further studies, therefore, can be carried out on the influence of best practices in human resource management on the academic performance of primary schools in Blantyre Rural.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Headteacher

I am a post-graduate student and currently undertaking research for my master's degree studies. The title of the research is human resource management practices in primary schools in Blantyre District. This questionnaire is divided into four sections. The researcher kindly requests you to answer all the questions honestly and frankly. The researcher would like to assure you that, the information gathered will be treated with confidentiality and anonymity and only used for research purposes. There's, therefore, no need to indicate your name or that of your school.

Section A: General information about the respondent.

This section is designed to gather information about the respondent's experience and professional qualifications. Kindly tick (✓) in the appropriate box or fill in the information necessary.

1. Respondents gender: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Indicate the duration you have worked as a head teacher in the current station? Less than 5yrs
☐ 6-10 yrs.' ☐ 11-15 yrs. ☐ 16- 20 yrs.' ☐ 20 and above ☐
3. Indicate the number of human resources you have in your school by gender?
Teachers: Male ☐ Support Staff: Male ☐ Female ☐ Female ☐

Section A: Practices related to human resource management.

This section contains questions that seek to gather data related to HRM practices in primary school.

- (i) Identify some of the management practices in primary schools.
- (ii) Kindly indicate by ticking the extent to which you agree with the following statement. Use the following scale: YES or NO to indicate the HRM Practices in their schools.

	Human management Practices in Primary Schools	Yes	no
	Orientation of new staff in schools		
	Teacher professional development		
	Motivation of Teachers		
	Training of teachers		
	Conducting staff appraisal		
	Arranging for trainings for staff development		
	Keeping staff records, motivating teachers		

(iii) Give reasons for your choice of the ticked HRM practices.

Section B:

Interview Questions for Headteachers

1. What are some of the human resource management practices in your schools?
2. What are some of the challenges related to human resources management practices?
3. What are some of the coping mechanisms that head teachers use to overcome their problems?
4. What are some of the factors that influence the choice of human resource management practices?

The End

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Teachers

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT INSTRUCTIONS

SECTION A: In this, tick (✓) against one of the boxes as they apply to you.

PERSONAL DATA

Gender of the head teacher:

Male () Female ()

Years of experience:

Below 5 years () 5-9 years () 10-14 years () 15 and above ()

SECTION C:

The following suggest different human resource management functions for primary school teachers. Please indicate your response with a tick (✓) against the one you consider most practised by choosing: Kindly indicate by ticking the extent to which you agree with the following statement. Use the following scale: Agree and Disagree

	ITEMS	AGREE	DISAGREE
	Head teachers Orient teachers :		
1	Provision of school rules and regulation to newly employed teachers.		
2	Introducing new teachers to other members of the school and to the school environment.		
9	Seek views of teachers during caucus.		
10	Assist teachers in issues of school		

	Head teachers Communication with Teachers:		
11	Speak clearly and concisely with teachers		
12	Adopting appropriate channel of communication.		
13	Disseminates information to teachers on time.		
14	Adopting appropriate methods/medium such as oral or written form of communication with staff.		
15	Providing adequate instructional supervision to teachers.		
16	Providing adequate instructional supervision to teachers.		
17	Adopting surprise visits to classes.		
18	Setting target goals with teachers.		
19	Sharing relevant information with teaching staff.		
20	Distinguishing between rumours and facts.		
	Head teachers' motivation of Teachers :		
21	Assigning teachers to duties on the bases of competence.		
26	Provision of good working conditions to enhance performance.		
27	Employing equal treatment of teachers.		
29	Being fair to all the staff.		
30	Assigning appropriate workload to teachers.		

	Headteachers' Appraisal of Staff Performance :		
34	Timely provision of feedback to staff.		
35	Allowing deputy head teachers to rate teachers.		
36	Rating teachers after due observation		
	Headteachers Keeping Teachers' Records:		
39	Providing adequate security to staff records.		
40	Storing information in a systematic way for quick retrieval when needed.		
41	Assuring privacy of staff information.		
42	Using information on teachers for specified purposes.		
43	Ensures that information on teachers are properly documented.		

The End

Thank You for your cooperation

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule for Primary Education Advisors

Probing questions

Introduction

- Briefly tell me more about yourself
- How long have you worked in your current station?

Work station

- Briefly tell me about your current station
- How many schools are under you? · How many head teachers · How many are men?
- How many are women?

Challenges related to HR

- What HRM challenges do you think Head Teachers in your area face?
 - i. orientation of new teachers ·
 - ii. Teacher development
 - iii. Retention and motivation

Effects of challenges on HRM management

- How do you think these challenges affect teaching and learning?
- In academics' performance · Co-curricular performance

Coping mechanism

- What are the coping mechanisms used by head teachers to curb challenges in the adoption of HRM practices?
- Specify

The End

Thank you for your cooperation