

NWU BUSINESS SCHOOL

TOPIC: Explaining effective HRM implementation: The role and HR related functions of line managers and challenges experienced in effective HRM implementation practices.

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1. Introduction

Human resource (HR) management elicits different definitions. There is no universal agreement to this terminology, ~~however, however~~ authors agree that there has been ~~a~~ transition from personnel management to human resource (Rees and French, 2015:18). The shape of HR has evolved to adapt to the changing circumstances and for the profession to remain relevant, it ought to be adaptive and flexible. Rees and French (2015:30) acknowledged that HR does not operate in isolation but requires support from senior management especially line managers. ~~By-virtue-of~~ the direct contact that Line managers have with employees as immediate supervisor, they are well placed to perform HR duties. Thus, for any HR strategy to be implemented, it is crucial for Line managers to buy into it to ascertain success.

1.1. Background and problem statement

In the increasingly changing work-place, HR functions can no longer be left to HR practitioners as organizations realize that human capital is a critical asset. HR has become more inclined to human resource approach through which organizations benefit in two folds, namely increased organizational effectiveness as well as employee satisfaction (Wärnich et al. 2015:8). There is a distinct difference between Line managers and HR managers; Line managers consistently play a crucial role such as during recruitment and selection, monitoring and controlling employees, interpreting policies to employees just to name a few. While HR management has evolved to the extent that the functions have been devolved to line managers, increasingly, the latter views HR functions as add-on and feels less equipped to perform them. Additionally, line managers perceive that there is limited support from HR and hence inadequate to perform certain functions.

1.2. Research questions

Line managers play a pivotal role in motivating employees to perform and achieve targets set in their respective disciplines. Thus, they may not be suited to perform HR functions which require them to be disciplinarians and enforcers of workplace law and order amongst others. The current arrangement prompts one to ask the following questions:

Do Line Managers deem themselves well suited to perform HR functions?

Are HR functions well executed when performed by Line Managers?

What Institutional arrangements and support is required for the successful devolution of HR functions to Line Managers?

What challenges are encountered by Line Managers in performing HR functions?

1.3. Research objectives

The general objective of this research was to investigate perceptions and factors that influence Line Managers' effectiveness of executing HR functions. In order to achieve the broader objective of the study, the following specific objectives guided this research, namely:

- examine the current performance of HR implementation by Line Managers.
- explore Line Managers perceived contribution to effective HRM implementation
- assess factors influencing Line Managers effectiveness in executing HR functions.
- evaluate organisational factors such as organisational support, red tape and autonomous motivation that affect the effectiveness of line managers' HR implementation
- describe the interpersonal factors such as HR support, supervisor support and co-workers support to influence the effectiveness line managers' HR implementation

2. Literature Review

2.1. Devolution of HR

Human resource management (HRM) is ~~vital~~important to realizing the bottom-line targets of an organization, and integrating human resource (HR) with business strategy enables service organizations to realize their performance goals (Rimm, et al., 2017: 45). The effectiveness of HR department helps the organization sustain its operations. In most organizations, HR specialists are assigned to oversee employee/~~labou~~labor relations; compensation and benefits, employee training and development; recruiting or talent acquisition; and health and safety among other duties. Conversely, line managers (LMs) hold the operational responsibility of managing people and resources in pursuit of accomplishing specific functional or

organizational goals. Thus, line managers are limited to performance reviews, promotion decisions and communicating terminations.

However, the assignment of responsibilities for HRM to LMs outside the HRM department has recently captured the attention of both practitioners and academicians (Rimm et al. 2017:43). Tasks formerly undertaken by the specialist HR department are now allocated to LMs, also called 'HR devolution'. Thus, activities that were previously the exclusive domain of HR specialists have devolved to the line managers such as among others, recruitment, career planning, occupational health and safety compliance, and organizational culture development and maintenance. Bainbridge, (2015:860) argued that devolution undertaken ~~to~~ to increase line managers' involvement, ownership of people management and HR efficiency enhanced HR's strategic integration. By contrast, devolution undertaken to centralise HR or cut costs undermined HR's strategic integration and were associated with decreases in HR function size.

Devolution of HR activities to line managers has far-reaching consequences of which ~~some~~ some authors have identified benefits while others suggested that there are negative results (Intindola, et al., 2017:1798; Bainbridge, 2015:861). The Australian Human Resource Institute (AHRI) study in Australia, for example, that devolution raised line managers' ownership of people management issues and increased people management efficiency (Bainbridge, 2015:861). As such, devolving some of the HR responsibilities to line managers would facilitate ~~quicker~~ decision-making that is in line with business reality. On the other hand, a devolution that adopts the strategic value of the HR function reinforce to HR specialists the importance of their contributions – enhancing their commitment to being a true business partner and to their people management responsibilities (Bainbridge, 2015:860).

Although the devolution of HR duties may be rewarding for LMs, as it allows them to focus on strategic issues besides business targets, it is also a source of additional work and challenges (Trullen et al. 2016:455), which in some cases results in discrepancies between intended policy and actual practice (Evans, 2015:468). Devolvement is actually responsible for a decrease in the effective management of workers, and increased frustrations for line managers

2.2. Advantages and disadvantages of devolution

The HR devolution process can either enhance or undermine HRM effectiveness in an organisation. However, Gerport (2015:228) argued that HRM departments should base their decision about retaining or delegating HRM tasks upon their stage of development. For instance, small companies that are rapidly going through an expansion phase need HRM professionals who possess expertise in recruiting skilled employees and knowledge about administrative skills; unlike large organisation. Moreover, Rimm, et al. (2017:49) noted that collaboration between line managers and HR managers plays a joint role in ensuring the effectiveness of an organization's HRM initiatives; they both are the agents of HRM performance.

Although originally HR devolution was intended to allow HR Practitioners to focus on more strategic areas of the HR function, Gerport (2015: 229) argue that devolution is accompanied with a loss of HR functional control or power. Intindola et al. (2014:1798) explained that HR functions with a place on the board have access to strategic decision-making processes and are thus more likely to influence outcomes related to HRM. In firms with less HR power, HR partners will be confined to that of a service provider to line managers who in turn will regularly evaluate the quality and relevance of the service provided. Therefore, in line with this, we argue that a strategically positioned HR department has more power than an administrative HR function that is purely a service provider and is less likely to devolve HR decision-making responsibility to line managers.

Intindola et al. (2017: 1796) attested that as devolvment continues to be a viable practice for assigning HR tasks from the human resources department to managers, its effects can have an impact on the performance of the organizational, the strategic positioning of the HR function, and various job attitudes of line managers. Therefore, it is imperative that a clearer picture of devolvment is obtained in order to understand its continued significance in the evolution of HR functions. Op de Beeck et al. (2017:16) argue that the idea of an HR partnership, in which HR business partners and line managers share an organisation's HRM responsibility, if managed effectively, such a partnership is believed to increase social capital, create synergies and improve organisational performance.

3. HR-responsibilities and practices of line managers

Line managers play a critical role in performing HR initiatives, because they are responsible for implementing HR practices and policies in the production of goods or the provision of services (Hassan et al., 2014:3). Within the modern HR literature, increasing attention has been given to the roles and responsibilities of line managers to translate the strategic plan such that it is understood by the employees for implementation (Shipton et al., 2015:31).

The devolution of Human Resource Development practices and policies to line managers is one of the crucial enabling features of the Strategic Human Resource Development system and the assumption is that line managers should implement Human Resources Development practices and policies, which are designed to realise the organization's strategic objectives through identifying, supporting and developing the proper skills, knowledge, commitment, and performance in employees (Šiugždienė, 2018:34). This follows from the fact that HR and L&D professionals are more focused on strategic issues and thus line managers are vested with the responsibilities of translating policies into the day to day practices at an operational level. This necessitates capacity building for line managers since the expectation is that they need to engage and be consistent with the organisational policies while on the other hand customising their approach to individuals and teams.

SPARC HRM (2013:8) articulates that line managers execute activities which were traditionally known to belong to HR such as providing coaching and guidance, undertaking performance appraisals and dealing with discipline and grievances. However, recruitment and selection and pastoral care are carried out jointly with the HR unit. In summary, from literature there is generally no dispute that the roles and responsibilities of a line managers entail but not limited to: People management on a daily basis, Operational budgets and costs management, Providing technical expertise, Organizing work processes, methods and tasks allocation, Work processes monitoring, Quality assurance on output, Dealing with external and internal service users, Operational performance assessment and monitoring and Executing and identifying skills development among others.

4. Human Resource Business Partners and Line Managers

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The human resource business partner (HRBP) concept was developed by Dave Ulrich in 1997 as part of the Human resources model. HRBP can be defined as the HR personnel who aligns the objectives of the business with the day to day duties of the managers and employees (Thill et al., 2014:103). Human Resource Business Partner (HRBP) model contributes to establishing the closer relationship between HR department and business department, improving the efficiency of managing the talents for group enterprises, and also provides the shortcut for HR department's transformation from a cost centre to profit centre (McCracken et al., 2017:61).

Although HRBP is business orientated and valuable partners in HR, they are mindful of HR rules but not paralysed by them. It is evident that both the HRBP and LM have a critical role to play in HR, and both can work together to achieve business objectives. In cases whereby organisations have no HRBP, the LM still play a critical role in HR (Sikora & Ferris, 2014:277).

5. Line Managers' Effectiveness to Perform HR Functions and Responsibilities

Over the years, research has shown that it is difficult for line managers to implement HR functions because they are not experts. However, it is not impossible. The question still remains as to what hinders the effective implementation of HR functions by line managers? Terhalle (2009:9) is of the opinion that "line managers are responsible for implementing HR functions as they have to be executed on the work floor. Moreover, HR functions can be developed properly; however, if line managers do not implement them effectively on the work floor, the organization will not grow or achieve its objectives.

According to Hassan, Mansor, Rahman and Kelana (2014:2), "the active role of line managers in executing or performing HR functions can assist organizations in achieving a more strategic approach in value-added employee management". Hassan et al. (2014: 3-4) listed that good relationship with HR specialists, support from top management and commitment from the line managers as some of the factors that can permit line managers to effectively perform HR functions. On the contrary, lack of support and commitment can hinder effective implementation.

Mat, Salleh, Mohamed and Yusof (2015:535) are of the opinion that "the role of line managers in performing HR functions has always been unclear, particularly with regards to determining the depth of their involvement in HR activities. This has led to

line managers' performance being criticized as they often ~~times~~ fail to meet organizational expectations". According to Terhalle (2009:21-24), the factors that are expected to impact line managers' effectiveness to perform their HR functions and responsibilities effectively include:

Desire: Line managers can have lack of interest in executing their HR functions resulting from low confidence or motivation in themselves as they may feel that ~~manya lot of~~ responsibilities are thrown at them without any form of incentive.

Capacity: Due to restructuring in organizations, line managers may have more people reporting to them, thus increasing their workload as more responsibilities are added or given to line managers without reducing those that were initially assigned to them.

Competencies: Line managers are often given HR responsibilities without undergoing adequate training to execute them. This results in ineffective performance as these managers do not have the required skills and are not competent enough to perform HR duties.

Support: lack of support from HR specialists contributes to the ineffective performance of line managers in executing HR functions. Without proper guidance from HR specialists, line managers will not succeed in performing these functions effectively.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research design

This study is a quantitative cross-sectional as well as explanatory in nature and has predominantly used the survey research method. It is a cross-sectional because it will be done at a single point in time with no follow-ups. The study has focused on the perceptions regarding the effectiveness of HR functions to line managers at the NWU-Mafikeng. The study has also explained the factors which determine the effectiveness of devolution of the HR functions within the organisation.

3.2. Sample

The target population for the study and the sampling frame was a database of line managers at the NWU-Mafikeng. This sampling frame was used because it is an

updated list of individuals is currently working and holding the positions of line managers at the NWU-Mafikeng.

This study used stratified random sampling to allow uniformity and proportionate samples over the entire population (Bryman and Bell, 2017:174). Respondents in the sampling frame were stratified based on the level of management, i.e. head of departments (junior line managers), director/deputy director (middle line managers) and dean/deputy dean (senior line manager). Thus, stratified random sampling improved the representativeness of the study sample.

3.3. Measuring Instrument

Measuring instrument refers to a method through which a researcher obtains data from respondents for research work. For purposes of this study, a survey was conducted where a questionnaire was used to collect data from participants. The questionnaire was in line with the objectives of the study and literature review to ensure ~~the~~ content validity. A self-administered English version questionnaire was used to collect data from the management (junior, middle and senior managers) at the North West University, Mafikeng Campus.

For measuring perceptions and factors that influence Line Managers' effectiveness of executing HR functions, items were taken from Op de Beeck et al. (2018). HRM effectiveness measured line managers' perceptions of the extent to which they contributed to HRM implementation and execution of HR tasks (Appendix 1).

3.4. Data collection

The data were collected through a survey of line managers in various faculties and departments of the North West University-Mafikeng in September 2018. The researcher adopted the "online survey" method whereby questionnaires were emailed to respondents. Respondents were asked to indicate their replies using simple notations, such as an "x" on the questionnaire (Bryman and Bell, 2017:291). Thirty questionnaires were distributed, and all of them were returned. All questionnaires were completely filled, I, therefore there were no exclusions in the data analysis.

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3.5. Data analysis

Quantitative data collected from the sample respondents ~~were~~ analysed using descriptive statistics. Information from questionnaires was gathered, coded, transformed and analyzed using ~~the~~ Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). ~~The r~~Reliability test was done, and frequency tables were drawn.

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3.5.1. Reliability statistics

The reliability analysis is presented in Table 2. It is concluded that the data is excellent and consistent. The data is reliable and can be used for further analysis.

Table 1: The Reliability analysis

Data	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Comments
NWU-Mafikeng	0.982	40	Excellent and consistent

4. Results

This section presents the findings on perceptions and factors that influence Line Managers' effectiveness of executing HR functions. These findings emanate from the survey that was conducted at the NWU-Mafikeng. This is preceded by a discussion based on the current debates from literature.

The results from the are presented by way of these categories: demographic information, Line managers perception of HRM implementation effectiveness and factors that influence line managers' effectiveness of executing HR tasks.

4.1. Demographic information

The majority of the respondents were males constituting 63% while females were 37%. The age categories of the respondents were between the ages of 20 to 29 years and 30 to 39 years combined which means that 70% of them were below 40 years of age.

The results also revealed that the majority (40%) of the respondents were middle managers, followed by junior managers (37%) and the least being senior managers with 23%. ~~Regarding in terms of~~ service, the results shows that at least half of the respondents (50%) have served for a period 10 years and below and 6.6% have served for 31 years and over. From ~~the~~ survey, 30% of the respondents indicated that they hold a

degree, followed by 23% with master's degree, 20% hold a doctoral qualification, and the least (3.3%) hold a national diploma and post-graduate diploma.

4.2. Line managers perception of HRM implementation effectiveness

The objective of table 1 to 3 is to know the perception of line managers in their contribution to the success of the HR policy in the organisation. It is measured on five-point Likert scale having items like strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral (neither agree nor disagree) Agree, and Strongly Agree.

4.2.1. Contribution to the success of the HR policy

From the 30 respondents, 86.7% disagree or strongly disagree that they contribute to the success of HR policy in the organisation, only 10% neither agree nor disagree and 3.3% agree or strongly agree.

4.2.2. Performance and execution of HRM responsibilities

The disagreement to the contribution to the success of HR policy in the organisation reflected that 93.4% of the line managers disagree or strongly disagree that they are performing well in executing their HRM responsibilities, only 3.3% agree or strongly agree.

4.2.3. Perception of HR tasks by line managers

With regards to HR tasks, 86.7% disagree and strongly disagree that they are good like managers, only 6.7% neither agree nor disagree and 3.3% agree or strongly agree that they are good line managers.

4.3. Line managers' effectiveness of executing HR tasks in the Organization

4.3.1. Perceived Organisation support

Perceived organisation support is categorised into four parts namely: execution of HR tasks by line manager, the role of line managers in executing HR tasks and respect by leadership, reward systems to line managers and execution of HR tasks and public recognition of line managers in the execution of HR tasks. Results of perceived organisation support are shown in Figure 2.

The results in Figure 2 shows that 76.6% of the line managers disagree and strongly disagree that the execution of HR tasks by them is encouraged in the organisation.

Out of the 30 respondents, 6.7% are neutral while 16.7% agree that the organisation encourages line managers to execute HR tasks. It can be observed from Figure 2 that almost half of the line managers (53.3%) disagree and strongly disagree that the role of line managers in executing HR tasks is respected by the leadership in the organisation. Of the total 30 respondents, 20% are neutral while 26.7% agree that leadership respects the role of line managers in executing HR tasks.

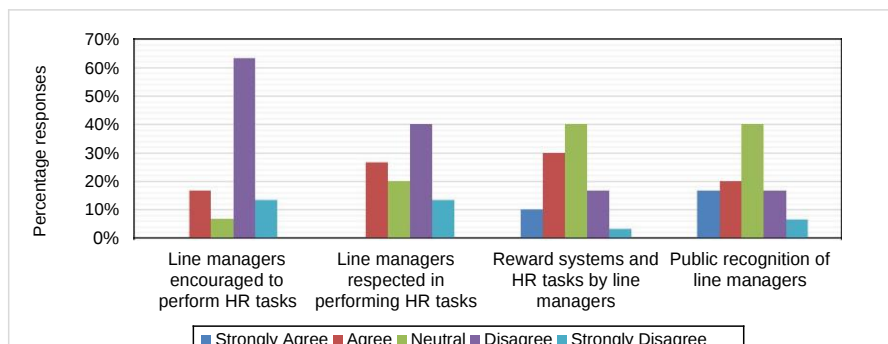


Figure 1: Perceived Organisation Support

Figure 2 shows that the bulk of the responses are shared equally between those who agree and those who are neutral at 40% that the reward system in their organisation encourages line managers to execute their HR tasks, and 40% of the respondents are indecisive about whether or not the line managers who perform well in the execution of their HR tasks are publicly recognised by the organisation.

Figure 2 indicates that although 22% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree, 37.7% of the respondents strongly agree and agree that line managers who perform well in HR tasks are recognised publicly. However, 40% are neutral indicating that they are not sure whether there is public recognition of well-performing line managers in HR tasks in the organisation.

4.3.2. Red tape

The responses to the question relating to red tape were received, and respondents answered the statements by rating them on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = never; 2 = seldom; 3 = about half the time; 4 = usually and 5 = always.

Accordingly, 46.7% (16.7% and 30%) of the respondents indicated that usually and probably always there is a burden as far as administrative rules and procedures.

This red tape tends to have negative effects on the organisation's effectiveness. However, 36.7% perceive that the red tape happens half of the time while 16.7% indicated that this is seldom.

4.3.2.1. Personnel red tape

In Figure 3, the responses to the questions relating to personnel red tape are presented. Respondents provided answers to the five statements and were requested to rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = not sure/neutral; 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree.

Accordingly, 83.3% (60% and 23.3%) of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree that even when an employee performs poorly, formal rules make it hard to remove him or her from the organisation (the reverse ~~is being~~ true in this case). Interestingly, 60% of the line managers disagree and strongly disagree that the rules governing promotion make it hard for a good employee to move up faster than a poor one.

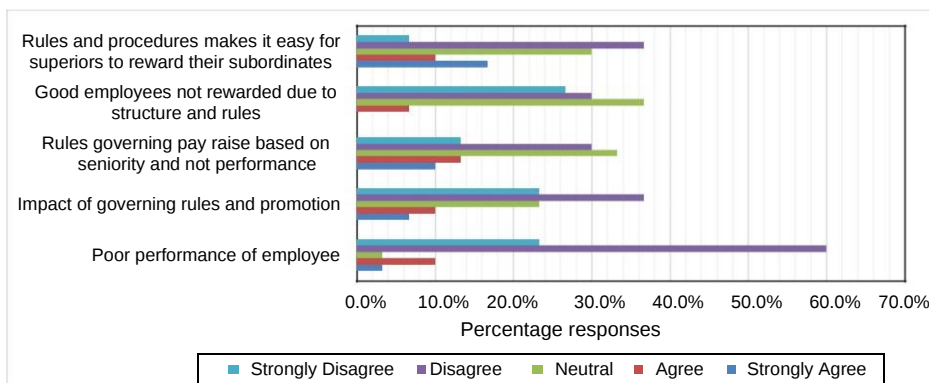


Figure 2: Personnel red tape

The results in figure 3 indicate that 33% of the respondents were indecisive on the fact that due to formal rules, pay raises for employees are based primarily on seniority instead of performance. Additionally, 56.7% disagree and strongly disagree that the formal pay structures and rules make it hard to reward a good employee with higher pay. The results also noted that 43.4% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree that the personnel rules and procedures that govern their

organisation make it easy for superiors to reward subordinates for good performance.

4.3.3. Individual Capacity

In Figure 3, the responses to the questions relating to individual capacity on role overload is presented. Respondents provided answers to the three statements by rating each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = not sure/neutral; 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree.

Accordingly, 60% (50% and 10%) of the respondents indicated that they do not have to perform HR tasks which they do not really have the time for (R), 40% (33.3% and 6.7%) disagree that they feel they have to perform HR tasks hastily and maybe less carefully to get everything done (R), and 40% (33.3% + 6.7%) of the respondents disagree that their HR tasks lead to a workload that is too heavy (R).

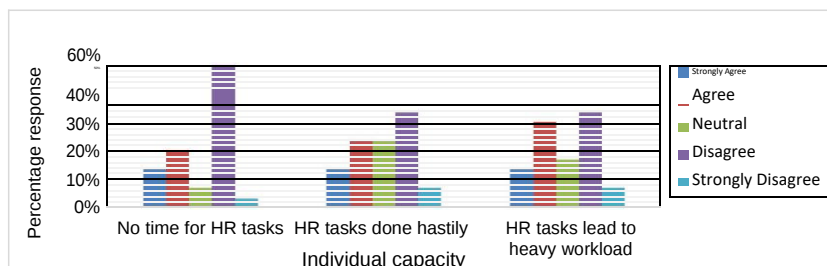


Figure 3: the Individual capacity to perform HR tasks

4.3.4. Autonomous motivation

To evaluate organisational factors that affect the effectiveness of line managers' HR implementation, the sources of autonomous motivation were used. These include external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and intrinsic regulation. In Figure 5, the responses to the questions relating to individual capacity on autonomous motivation are presented. It should be noted that 86.6% of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree that they try to do their best in executing their HR tasks. Respondents provided answers to the nine statements and were requested to rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = not sure/neutral; 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree.

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Figure 5 depicts that 70% disagree and strongly disagree that the motivation to implement HR tasks is externally regulated by the fear to create problems for themselves. Out of the 30 respondents, 60% disagree and strongly disagree that the risk of receiving a negative staff appraisal drives the motivation to implement HR tasks. Regarding~~In terms of~~ introjected regulation, 50% disagree and strongly disagree that they feel bad and guilty if they implement HR tasks; the motivation is rather internalised by their values. Of the 30 respondents, 93.4% disagree and strongly disagree that they would like to be good supervisors (identified regulation), and 73.3% (40% and 33.3%) of the respondents disagree and strongly disagree that it is their duty (identified regulation). Based on intrinsic motivation, 63.3% and 56.6% disagree and strongly disagree that it is interesting and enjoyment respectively.

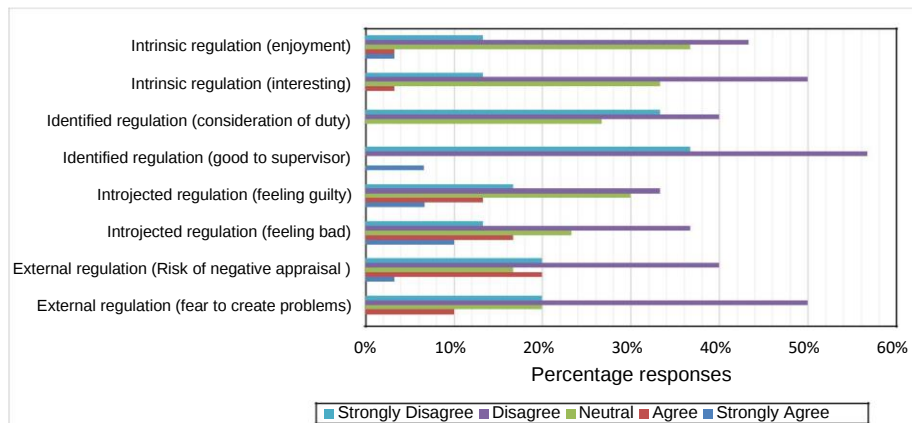


Figure 4: Autonomous motivation

4.3.5. HR Support

In Figure 6, the responses to the questions relating to individual capacity on HR support is presented. Respondents provided answers to the five statements and were requested to rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = not sure/neutral; 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree.

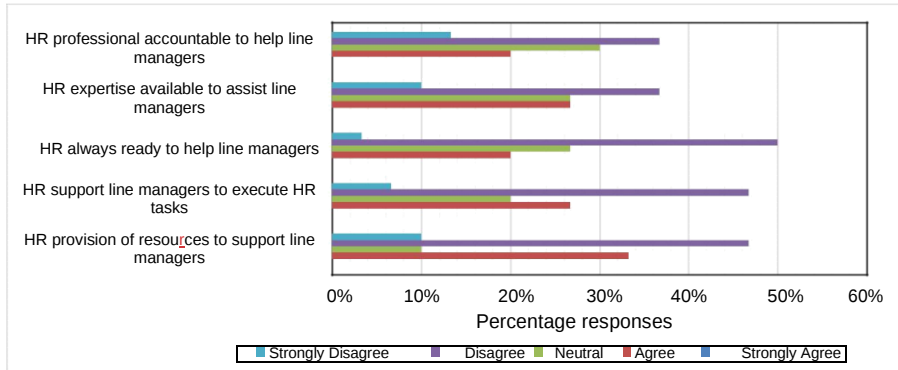


Figure 5: HR support

Accordingly, 56.7% (46.7% and 10%) of the respondents indicated that the HR department/HR professionals do not provide the necessary resources to help them perform their HR tasks. ~~Regarding~~In terms of support, 53.3% disagree and strongly disagree that the HR department/HR professionals support them in executing their HR tasks. There is also feeling by 53.3% of the line managers that help is not always readily available from the HR department/HR professionals. Out of the 30 respondents, 46.7% disagree and strongly disagree that they can count on the expertise of the HR department/HR professionals to execute their HR tasks, whereas 50% (36.7% and 13.3%) of the respondents disagree that if they encounter a problem in the execution of their HR tasks, they can always count on the HR department/HR professionals.

4.3.6. Supervisor support

The responses to the questions relating to individual capacity on supervisor support is presented. Respondents provided answers to the five statements and were requested to rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = not sure/neutral; 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree.

Accordingly, 50% (46.7% and 3.3%) of the respondents indicated that their supervisor does not provide the necessary resources to help them perform their HR tasks, 53.3% (46.7% and 6.6%) disagree that their supervisor supports them in executing their HR tasks, 56.6% (53.3% and 3.3%) of the respondents disagree that their supervisor is always ready to help them with their HR tasks. 50% (46.7% and 3.3%) disagree that If necessary, they can count on the expertise of their supervisor to execute their HR tasks, and 66.6% (63.3% and 3.3%) of the respondents disagree

that if they encounter a problem in the execution of their HR tasks, they can always count on their supervisor.

4.3.7. Co-worker support

In Figure 7, the responses to the questions relating to individual capacity on co-worker support ~~are is~~ presented. Respondents provided answers to the five statements and were requested to rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = not sure/neutral; 4 = disagree and 5 = strongly disagree.

Accordingly, 53.4% (36.7% and 16.7%) of the respondents indicated that their colleagues do not provide the necessary resources to help them perform their HR asks., 70% (56.7% and 13.3%) disagree that their colleagues support them in executing their HR tasks., 56.7% (50% and 6.7%) of the respondents disagree that their colleagues are always ready to help them with their HR tasks. 63.3% (56.7% and 10%) disagree that if necessary, they can count on the expertise of their colleagues to execute their HR tasks, and 63.3% (46.7% and 16.6%) of the respondents disagree that If they encounter a problem in the execution of their HR tasks, they can always count on their colleagues.

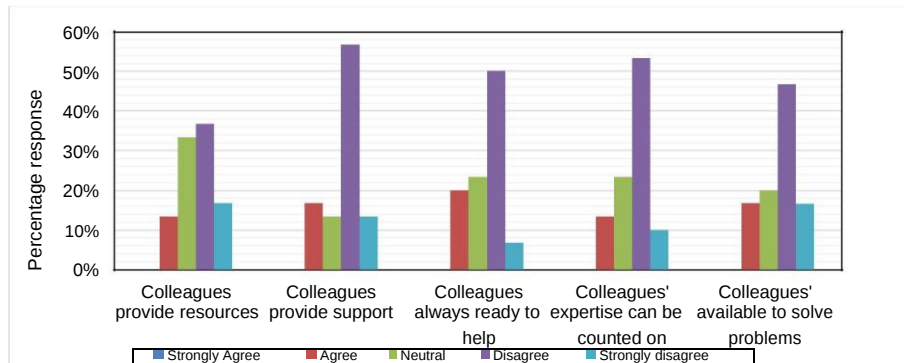


Figure 6: Co-worker support

4.2 Discussion

The findings of the study shows that 86.7% of the respondents indicate that they refuse to contribute to the success of HR policies in their organization, 93.4% disagree that they are performing well in executing their HR responsibilities and 86.7% do not agree that with regards to their HR functions, they are a good line

Managers. Mat, Salleh, Mohamed and Yusof (2015:535) noted that line managers are the best people to transform and put into place the organisation's HR policies. Line managers are better placed to influence the way activities are executed to achieve organisational goals. However, the problem arises because line managers' roles and responsibilities are unclear and the depth of their involvement in HR matters is not certain. This assertion confirms the results of this study whereby line managers are not aware of how their roles in executing HR functions contribute to the success of organisational goals. It is however interesting to note that the majority of the line managers in this study believe that they are good managers, but they are not willing to take responsibility in performing HR functions because they perceive that it is the role of HR specialists.

Terhall (2009: 21-24) is of the opinion that line managers are often not interested in performing their HR functions because they believe responsibilities are thrown at them without any form of incentive or recognition. This observation confirms the results obtained in this study whereby 76.6% of the respondents perceive that the performance of HR functions is not encouraged in the organisation and that top management does not respect their execution of HR functions. Also in addition, although there are endeavours within the HR department to support line managers, it is not sufficient; only 50% HR support regarding in terms of resources and expertise which is just an average. Providing them with the required support will assist in ensuring that there is a balance in all departments during growth periods and all employees are engaged in talent promotions and other related activities implemented to retain personnel. Benson (2017:55) alluded that companies need to realise the value of involving line managers in HR matters at the ground floor as they work closely with other employees. Therefore, the lack of support from leaders or top management and HR department in the organization plays a critical role in line managers not executing these functions effectively.

From the survey responses, it can be noted that there is generally lack of understanding that line managers' have HR roles and responsibilities within their units. So they are apparently exonerated from their HR responsibilities, and hence 40% maintain that HR tasks do not lead to the workload that is too heavy. Nonetheless, most of the respondents in this study stated that HR functions increases their workload since top management does not reduce or reassign tasks that were initially

assigned to them. Such tendencies leaves most line managers feeling overloaded thereby negatively impacting their confidence and HR performance in particular. Moreover, most of the line managers concurred with Dewulf (2016:48) that due to lack of lack of motivation and they refuse to perform their HR functions. Such circumstances force top management to rethink the delegation of HR functions to line managers as it poses a threat to the overall performance and effectiveness of these managers at work.

As such, ~~concerning with reference to~~ the above-stated results, the execution of HR functions by line managers proves to be a daunting task and people would rather opt not to do it for the reasons that they are not motivated, encouraged, trained, supported and given the right incentives or recognition.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

It is evident that neither HR nor Line Managers can work in a silo. There is a need to support each other for an effective organization. However, their duties and roles might differ or in some cases criss-cross, but in order to attain outstanding organizational performance *vis-à-vis* employees satisfaction and organisational growth, they must support each other. The support could be in the form of resources and HR expertise. ~~Also in addition~~, relevant training could capacitate Line Managers to effectively execute HR duties.

This study recommends that the job description of line managers should be clear in order for them to participate effectively in HR roles. Moreover, their participation ~~in~~ HR performance should be publicly recognised through incentives to motivate them as they perceive it as an extra workload thrown to them.

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7. Appendices

7.1. Research design Questionnaire

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Gender

Male	Female
1	2

2. Age group

20 – 29	1
30 – 39	2
40 – 49	3
50 – 59	4
60 and older	5

3. Indicate your managerial level

Junior management	1
Middle Management	2
Senior Management	3

4. Number of years of service within the organisation

0 – 10 years	1
11- 20 years	2
21 – 30 years	3
31 - 40 years	4
41 and more years	5

5. Qualification level

National Certificate (Matric)	1
Higher Certificate	2
Advanced Certificate	3
National Diploma	4
Diploma	5
Post-Graduate Diploma	6
Degree	7
Honours Degree	8
Master's Degree	9
PhD	10

SECTION B:

Line managers perceived HRM implementation effectiveness

Items	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. In my opinion, I contribute to the success of the HR policy in my organisation	1	2	3	4	5

2. I think I am performing well in executing my HRM responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
3. With regard to my HR tasks, I think I am a good line manager	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C: FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE LINE MANAGERS' EFFECTIVENESS OF EXECUTING HR TASKS

Factors and items		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Organisation						
Perceived organisational support						
1	The execution of HR tasks by line managers is encouraged in my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The role of line managers in executing HR tasks is respected by the leadership in my organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
3	The reward system in my organisation encourages line managers to execute their HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
4	The line managers who perform well in the execution of their HR tasks are publicly recognised by the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
Red tape						
5	If red tape is defined as "burdensome administrative rules and procedures that have negative effects on the organisation's effectiveness," how would you assess the level of red tape in your organisation? 1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = about half the time, 4 = usually, 5 = always	1	2	3	4	5
Personnel red tape						
6	Even when an employee performs poorly, formal rules make it hard to remove him or her from the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
7	The rules governing promotion make it hard for a good employee to move up faster than a poor one.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Due to formal rules, pay raises for employees are based primarily on seniority instead of performance.	1	2	3	4	5
9	The formal pay structures and rules make	1	2	3	4	5

Factors and items		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
	it hard to reward a good employee with higher pay.					
10	The personnel rules and procedures that govern my organisation make it easy for superiors to reward subordinates for good performance. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
Individual Capacity						
Role overload						
11	I have to perform HR tasks which I do not really have the time for. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
12	I feel I have to perform HR tasks hastily and maybe less carefully to get everything done. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
13	My HR tasks lead to a workload that is too heavy. (R)	1	2	3	4	5
Autonomous motivation						
14	I try to do my best in executing my HR tasks, because	1	2	3	4	5
15	Otherwise, I might create problems for myself (external regulation)	1	2	3	4	5
16	Otherwise, I risk receiving a negative staff appraisal (external regulation)	1	2	3	4	5
17	Otherwise, I will feel bad about it (introjected regulation)	1	2	3	4	5
18	Otherwise, I will feel guilty about it (introjected regulation)	1	2	3	4	5
19	I would like to be a good supervisor (identified regulation)	1	2	3	4	5
20	I consider it my duty (identified regulation)	1	2	3	4	5
21	I think my it is interesting (intrinsic regulation)	1	2	3	4	5
22	I enjoy it (intrinsic regulation)	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal						
HR support						
23	The HR department/HR professionals provide(s) the necessary resources to help me perform my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
24	The HR department/HR professionals support(s) me in executing my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
25	The HR department/HR professionals is/are always ready to help me with my HR	1	2	3	4	5

Factors and items		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
	tasks.					
26	If necessary, I can count on the expertise of the HR department/HR professionals to execute my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
27	If I encounter a problem in the execution of my HR tasks, I can always count on the HR department/HR professionals.	1	2	3	4	5
Supervisor support						
28	My supervisor provides the necessary resources to help me perform my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
29	My supervisor supports me in executing my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
30	My supervisor is always ready to help me with my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
31	If necessary, I can count on the expertise of my supervisor to execute my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
32	If I encounter a problem in the execution of my HR tasks, I can always count on my supervisor.	1	2	3	4	5
Co-worker support						
33	My colleagues provide the necessary resources to help me perform my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
34	My colleagues support me in executing my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
35	My colleagues are always ready to help me with my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
36	If necessary, I can count on the expertise of my colleagues to execute my HR tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
37	If I encounter a problem in the execution of my HR tasks, I can always count on my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5

R) indicated that items must be reversed scored

7.2. Ethics Letter

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The MBA and PgDip students have to do a group assignment on the topic: ***Explaining effective HRM implementation: The role and HR-related functions of line managers and challenges experienced in effective HRM implementation practices***

As part of the study the students have to conduct a quantitative cross-sectional survey amongst line managers to measure:

- Line managers' perceived HRM implementation effectiveness
- Organisational factors such as organisational support and red tape that affect the effectiveness of line managers' HR implementation
- Individual factors such as HR related competency, motivation and capacity (time) that impact the effectiveness of line managers' HR implementation
- Interpersonal factors such as HR support, supervisor support and coworkers support to influence the effectiveness line managers' HR implementation



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The research is for educational purposes only to enable students to acquire basic empirical research skills. The research will not be published or available in the public domain. The questionnaires of respondents are confidential, and anonymity is guaranteed. The students will not attach the completed questionnaires in their research reports. Once the data have been captured and analysed, the students were instructed to destroy the questionnaires. Therefore, no ethical clearance or formal approval is needed to conduct the study. Thank you for understanding and your willingness to participate in the study. Your contribution is essential for developing the research skills of our students.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Botha".

Professor PA Botha

RUBRIC FOR MARKING GROUP ASSIGNMENT

1	<u>Meeting the objectives of the assignment</u> <u>The extent to which:</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>42</u>
*1.1	the assignment was <u>understood</u> and answered <u>comprehensively</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
*1.2	<u>independent (own) thought</u> is reflected	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
*1.3	<u>Insight</u> into the topic was demonstrated	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
1.4	logical, systematic <u>thought</u> and <u>reasoning</u> is demonstrated	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
1.5	<u>quality research</u> (literature study and/or empirical work) was done	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
1.6	<u>conclusions</u> are logic, meaningful and substantiated	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
2	<u>Presentation and technical aspects</u> <u>The extent to which:</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>20</u>
2.1	the <u>content</u> shows a <u>logical and integrated development</u> and forms a <u>balanced, holistic whole</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>11</u>
2.2	the <u>executive summary/introduction</u> reflects the <u>content</u> <u>comprehensively</u> and <u>meaningfully</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
2.3	the <u>table of contents, references</u> and <u>list of sources</u> are noted correctly	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
2.4	the <u>style and language</u> (grammar) meet the requirements	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>
3	<u>General quality rating</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>
	Evaluator's <u>general evaluation</u> mark of the assignment's quality - taking into consideration the above and other factors		
	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>69</u>
<u>4. General Remarks / Comments: Assignment</u>			
<u>5. Plagiarism Report. Marks deducted for plagiarism infringements</u> • <u>-10 (5 % - 20 % out of single source)</u> • <u>-20 (21 % - 40 % out of single source)</u> • <u>0 (41 % - 60 % out of single source)</u> • <u>Disciplinary steps (anything higher than 60 %)</u>		<u>-00</u>	
<u>6. Remarks / Comments: Plagiarism (If applicable)</u>			
Total mark:		/100	

<u>6. Remarks / Comments: Plagiarism (If applicable)</u>		
<u>Disciplinary Action to be taken (If applicable)</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
 <u>Prof PA Botha</u>		