

Influence of the collaborative roles of human resource and line managers on organizational performance: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

The collaborative roles of Human Resource (HR) practitioners and line managers have garnered significant attention in management research, particularly for their potential to enhance organizational performance. Despite this interest, there is a lack of systematic investigation into how HR-line manager collaboration specifically influences organizational outcomes. This study explored the nature of HR-line manager collaboration and assessed its impact on organizational performance. Using a systematic review of scholarly articles published between 2018 and 2025 (following [Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses] PRISMA protocols) from reputable databases, combined with semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 key informants from various Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), the study provides comprehensive insights. The findings indicate that strong HR-line manager collaboration is positively linked to improved employee engagement, productivity, and retention. Qualitative analysis identifies significant challenges such as role ambiguity, inadequate training, and a deficiency of empathy among HR personnel. Conversely, effective collaboration is facilitated by clearly delineated roles and focused capacity-building initiatives. The study contributes practical recommendations for HR practitioners and policymakers by highlighting strategies to overcome collaboration barriers and optimize HR-line manager partnerships, ultimately promoting sustainable organizational success.

Keywords: HR-Line Manager Collaboration, Human Resource, Organizational Performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective collaboration between Human Resource (HR) professionals and line managers is a critical factor in enhancing organizational performance (Bayo-Moriones & Bello-Pindado, 2021). HR departments are responsible for designing policies related to recruitment, training, performance management, and employee relations, while line managers play a key role in implementing these policies at the operational level (Beijer et al., 2019). The synergy between these two roles ensures that human capital is effectively managed to align with organizational goals. However, in many organizations, the collaboration between HR and line managers is inconsistent, poorly structured, or hindered by bureaucratic challenges, leading to inefficiencies in workforce management and overall performance outcomes (Kurdi-Nakra & Pak, 2023).

The strategic integration of HR and line managers has been widely acknowledged in Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) literature as a key driver of employee engagement, productivity, and retention (Lundmark et al., 2020a). Line managers serve as the first point of contact for employees, making them crucial in translating HR policies into daily operations. When HR and line managers work collaboratively, they create a work environment that fosters innovation, motivation, and high performance. Conversely, a lack of collaboration often results in miscommunication, inconsistent policy implementation, and reduced workforce effectiveness (Beijer et al., 2019). This raises concerns about how organizations can establish strong collaboration frameworks to optimize performance.

Despite the significance of HR-line manager collaboration, several challenges persist. Many line managers feel that HR policies are developed without sufficient input from those on the ground, leading to rigid and impractical workforce management approaches (Lundmark et al., 2020b; Ruël & Gbur, 2017). Moreover, HR professionals often report that line manager's lack adequate HR training, making it difficult for them to effectively implement policies such as performance evaluations, employee engagement programs, and talent management strategies. Furthermore,

organizational structures and cultural barriers can create silos between HR and line management, limiting cooperation and hindering strategic workforce planning (Crawshaw & Game, 2015). These issues necessitate further research on how HR and line managers can better collaborate to drive organizational performance.

Empirical studies suggest that organizations that prioritize HR-line manager collaboration benefit from higher employee satisfaction, lower turnover rates, and increased operational efficiency (Bondarouk et al., 2019; Katou et al., 2021; Kehoe & Han, 2020; Rimi et al., 2017). Successful companies invest in joint leadership training programs, HR analytics tools, and digital HR systems to enhance collaboration. However, the effectiveness of these interventions varies across different organizational contexts, requiring a more in-depth analysis of best practices, success factors, and challenges. Understanding the specific mechanisms through which HR and line managers contribute to performance improvement is essential for designing effective collaboration models that can be adapted to different industries and sectors.

Given the importance and challenges associated with HR-line manager collaboration, this study seeks to conduct a systematic review of existing literature and supplement it with qualitative insights from key informants to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of collaborative roles between HR-Line managers on organizational performance. By integrating secondary data with real-world experiences from line, this study aims to identify collaborative strategies, key influencing factors, and barriers that shape HR-line manager dynamics. The findings will provide practical recommendations for policymakers, HR practitioners, and organizational leaders looking to enhance workforce performance through improved collaboration frameworks.

In today's dynamic business environment, effective collaboration between HR professionals and line managers is essential for achieving optimal workforce performance and organizational success (Kehoe & Han, 2020). HR departments are responsible for developing policies, managing talent, and ensuring compliance with labor laws, while line managers serve as the direct link between employees and organizational leadership. Despite growing recognition of the strategic role of HR and line manager collaboration, there is limited systematic investigative evidence on how this collaboration directly affects organizational performance in different institutional contexts. Most existing studies focus on general HRM strategies, but few explore the specific collaborative mechanisms, success factors, and challenges that influence the effectiveness of HR-line manager interactions (Bondarouk et al., 2019; Katou et al., 2021; Kehoe & Han, 2020; Rimi et al., 2017). This gap in research makes it difficult for organizations to design structured, evidence-based collaboration frameworks that can optimize performance outcomes.

To address this issue, a systematic review of existing literature combined with qualitative insights from key informant interviews were conducted to examine how HR-line manager collaboration impacts organizational performance. The study will explore collaborative strategies, key performance indicators, facilitating factors, and barriers that shape this dynamic. Specifically, the study addressed the following objectives:

- i. To explore the nature and scope of collaboration between HR and line managers and its impact on organizational performance.
- ii. To identify the factors that facilitates or hinders effective collaboration between HR and line managers.
- iii. To assess the outcomes of HR and line manager collaboration on employee outcomes, including engagement, retention, and performance.
- iv. To provide evidence-based recommendations for improving HR-line manager collaboration to enhance organizational performance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

The collaboration between HR professionals and line managers in influencing organizational performance can be understood through several theoretical frameworks. This section reviews relevant theories that explain the roles, interactions, and impact of HR and line managers on workforce management and overall business success.

2.1.1 Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, developed by Barney (1991), emphasizes that an organization's sustainable competitive advantage is derived from its ability to manage and leverage valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources (Barney, 2001). Among these, human capital the knowledge, skills, and competencies of employees stand out as a crucial asset in determining an organization's long-term success. Organizations that effectively harness their human resources gain a strategic edge, as employees drive productivity, innovation, and operational efficiency. However, this requires strong collaboration between HR professionals, who develop and oversee human capital strategies, and line managers, who implement these strategies at the operational level. Without effective collaboration, the full potential of human capital remains untapped, limiting an organization's ability to achieve superior performance (Assensoh-Kodua, 2019).

This study applies RBV theory to examine the extent to which HR and line managers collaborate in optimizing human capital to enhance organizational performance. HR professionals are responsible for developing policies related to recruitment, training, career progression, and employee engagement, while line managers serve as the link between HR strategies and workforce execution. When HR and line managers work in harmony, they ensure that organizational goals align with workforce capabilities, leading to improved employee performance, retention, and productivity. However, challenges such as communication gaps, role conflicts, and inadequate managerial training often hinder effective collaboration, resulting in poor policy implementation and reduced workforce efficiency. By analyzing the collaborative mechanisms, barriers, and key drivers of success, this study provides insights into how organizations can enhance HR-line manager cooperation to maximize human capital utilization and, ultimately, improve organizational performance.

Building on the Resource –based view, this review highlights that effective collaboration between HR and line managers acts as a strategic resource that enhances human capital utilization, similarly, Role theory explains how role clarity and shared responsibilities facilitate or hinder this collaboration, impacting organizational outcomes. Our synthesis reveals that addressing role ambiguity and fostering HR-line manager partnership are crucial for leveraging these theoretical advantages.

2.1.2 Role Theory

Role Theory, introduced by Katz and Kahn in 1978, explains how individuals within organizations perform specific roles based on structured expectations, responsibilities, and interactions (Collins & Stockton, 2018). In the context of human resource management, HR professionals and line managers have distinct but interdependent roles that require seamless collaboration to ensure effective workforce management. HR professionals are primarily responsible for designing and implementing policies related to talent acquisition, training, employee well-being, and compliance with labor regulations (Biddle, 1986). In contrast, line managers act as the first point of contact between employees and the organization, overseeing day-to-day performance management, employee motivation, and direct application of HR policies. The effectiveness of HR-line manager collaboration depends on role clarity, mutual understanding, and open communication, ensuring that both parties fulfill their responsibilities without conflicts or inefficiencies.

This study applies Role Theory to assess the impact of role clarity and collaboration on organizational performance. When HR and line managers have well-defined responsibilities and engage in proactive communication, HR policies are effectively translated into practical actions that drive employee productivity, engagement, and retention (Galletta & Heckman, 1990). However, in many organizations, role ambiguity and lack of alignment create challenges such as delayed decision-making, inconsistent policy implementation, and ineffective employee management. Some line managers may feel overburdened with HR responsibilities, while HR professionals may struggle to enforce policies without managerial support, leading to a disconnection that negatively affects organizational performance. By identifying the factors that enhance or hinder role-based collaboration, this study provides practical recommendations on how organizations can foster a stronger and more effective partnership between HR and line managers to drive business success.

2.2 Empirical Review

Empirical studies grounded in Role Theory show that the collaborative relationship between HR and line managers significantly influences organizational performance through role clarity, role alignment, and shared responsibilities. Research consistently indicates that when HR and line managers have clearly defined roles particularly in the areas of recruitment, performance management, training, and employee relations organizations experience stronger implementation of HR practices, improved decision-making, and enhanced workforce productivity (Biddle, 1986). Conversely, empirical evidence shows that role ambiguity and role conflict hinder collaboration, resulting in inconsistent policy implementation, lower employee engagement, and reduced organizational effectiveness.

Studies further highlight that complementary roles, where HR focuses on strategic activities and line managers handle daily people management, lead to better employee development outcomes, higher performance levels, and stronger organizational alignment. Effective communication and HR-related training for line managers are also found to reduce role strain and increase competence, thereby strengthening collaboration (Anvari *et al.*, 2024). However, empirical evidence shows that role overload among line managers and limited authority among HR professionals can weaken role execution and impede performance. Overall, empirical findings support that organizations with well-defined, complementary, and collaboratively enacted HR and line manager roles achieve higher productivity, better employee outcomes, and more successful strategic HRM implementation.

Empirical evidence also shows that role ambiguity is one of the most persistent barriers to collaborative HR–line manager performance. Studies have found that when line managers do not fully understand their HR duties, or when HR departments fail to communicate policies effectively, employees receive a mixed signal, which affects

performance outcomes and reduces trust in leadership (Pombo & Gomes, 2022). Such ambiguity often leads to inconsistencies in how HR practices are applied across departments, undermining organizational fairness and diminishing the strategic value of HRM systems. Role Theory explains this dynamic by emphasizing how unclear expectations produce psychological strain, decision-making confusion, and reduced task efficiency (Biddle, 1986).

Role conflict is another factor empirically shown to affect the HR–line manager partnership. Research reveals that line managers frequently experience conflict between their operational roles such as meeting production targets and HR roles that require coaching or addressing employee relations issues (Dany et al., 2022). These conflicting demands create tension that reduces the quality of HR practice implementation, such as inconsistent performance appraisals or inadequate feedback. Organizations with high role conflict tend to experience lower employee morale, weaker service delivery, and diminished organizational performance (Engelsberger et al., 2023). Role Theory supports these findings by suggesting that incompatible role expectations lead to emotional strain and performance deterioration.

Empirical research further indicates that when HR and line managers recognize how their roles complement each other, organizational outcomes improve significantly. Studies in various sectors show that when HR focuses on strategy formulation and workforce planning while line managers handle day-to-day employee interactions, employees experience better support and clearer communication (Kim et al., 2018). Such complementary role alignment increases trust, reduces workplace conflict, and enhances the overall quality of HR practices. Research also suggests that shared ownership of HR responsibilities increases commitment from both parties, leading to more effective implementation of HR systems and improved employee outcomes such as job satisfaction and engagement (Dulal-Arthur et al., 2024).

However, empirical studies also emphasize systemic challenges, particularly role overload among line managers and limited authority for HR departments. Line managers often report that HR responsibilities add to their already demanding workloads, creating time pressure and reducing the attention they can devote to people management (Chimakati & Odiyo, 2023). This overload leads to shortcuts in HR implementation, affecting the quality of performance reviews, employee development initiatives, and conflict resolution. On the other hand, some studies show that HR professionals sometimes lack sufficient authority to enforce policies, leading to inconsistent implementation across departments. These findings align with Role Theory’s view that unclear authority structures contribute to confusion and weakened role performance.

Overall, empirical evidence strongly supports that effective collaboration between HR and line managers driven by role clarity, role complementarity, and an aligned expectation significantly enhances organizational performance. Organizations that successfully manage role ambiguity, reduce role conflict, and address role overload experience higher productivity, better employee outcomes, and more effective HR strategy execution (Anvari et al., 2024). The combined findings suggest that Role Theory provides a robust framework for understanding how collaborative roles influence organizational performance, emphasizing the importance of structured communication, well-defined responsibilities, and supportive organizational systems.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach

This systematic review adopts a mixed-method approach, utilizing secondary data analysis and qualitative data from key informant interviews (KIs). The study focuses on the collaborative roles of HR professionals and line managers in influencing organizational performance, with data sourced from both existing literature and first-hand insights from key industry professionals (De Oliveira, 2023). This section outlines the research design, data sources, sampling techniques, and data analysis methods.

3.2 Research Design

The study employs a systematic review design, synthesizing existing scholarly articles, reports, and case studies on HR-line manager collaboration (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This is supplemented by qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with line managers from executive agencies, independent departments, ministries, and institutions. The combination of secondary data and primary qualitative insights enhances the study’s comprehensiveness, credibility, and practical relevance.

3.3 Data Sources and Selection Criteria

The secondary data consists of peer-reviewed journal articles, industry reports, and organizational studies published between 2018 and 2025. These sources were retrieved from reputable databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science. The selection criteria focused on studies that:

Examine the collaboration between HR and line managers in different organizational settings. Explore the impact of HR-line manager collaboration on key performance indicators such as employee productivity, retention, and organizational efficiency. Identify factors influencing effective collaboration, including organizational culture,

leadership styles, and resource availability. Highlight the challenges hindering HR-line manager collaboration and possible solutions. For the primary data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 key informants from ministries, independent departments, and executive agencies. These participants were selected based on their experience and their availability and redness to participate in the study, their roles in HR management, leadership roles, and direct involvement in employee performance oversight was an important factor for inclusion.

3.4 Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the 15 key informants for interviews. This non-probabilistic sampling method ensures that only individuals with substantial knowledge and experience in HR-line manager collaboration are included in the study (Thomas, 2022). The selection process prioritized diversity in organizational settings, capturing insights from diverse public institutions to provide a broader perspective on the subject.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

This study employs a systematic literature review for secondary data collection and semi-structured interviews for primary data collection. For secondary data collection, a systematic literature review was conducted following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Selçuk, 2019). The PRISMA framework ensures that the review process is rigorous, transparent, and replicable, minimizing biases in the selection and synthesis of sources. The study identified and analyzed peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, and case studies from reputable databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and PubMed. The inclusion criteria focused on studies published between 2018 and 2025 that examine HR-line manager collaboration, its impact on key performance indicators, and the factors facilitating or hindering this collaboration. The data extraction process involved reviewing abstracts, selecting relevant full-text articles, and synthesizing findings into thematic categories aligned with the study's objectives.

For primary data collection, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 key informants drawn from executive agencies, independent departments, ministries, and institutions. These interviews were conducted either in-person or virtually, depending on the availability and preference of participants. The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives while ensuring consistency in addressing key topics related to collaborative strategies, challenges, and performance outcomes. The interviews focused on how HR professionals and line managers interact the effectiveness of their collaboration, and the impact of their joint efforts on employee engagement, productivity, and overall organizational efficiency. While the qualitative sample provided valuable insights, it is limited in scope; future research could expand this to include a large and more diverse sample to enhance generalizability. Additionally, triangulating interview data with organizational performance metrics would strengthen causal inferences.

3.6 Data Analysis

The study employed a thematic analysis approach to interpret and synthesize findings from both secondary and primary data sources. Thematic analysis was used to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the collaborative roles of HR professionals and line managers in influencing organizational performance (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016). The structured nature of thematic analysis ensured that key insights were captured, categorized, and interpreted in a meaningful way. The first step in the analysis process was familiarization with the data, where the researcher thoroughly reviewed literature, interview transcripts, and notes to identify recurring patterns and insights related to HR-line manager collaboration. This stage provided a deep understanding of the context and perspectives presented in both secondary and primary data sources. The next step involved generating initial codes, where data was broken down into smaller units of meaning and assigned specific codes based on their relevance to HR-line manager collaboration. These codes included aspects such as communication effectiveness, policy implementation, leadership involvement, and employee performance impact.

Once the initial codes were established, they were grouped into broader themes that aligned with the study's objectives. The themes identified in this study included collaborative strategies, key performance indicators, facilitating factors, and challenges hindering HR-line manager collaboration. These themes helped structure the discussion of findings and draw meaningful conclusions. Finally, the study interpreted and synthesized findings by comparing themes across secondary and primary data sources. This comparative analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the extent to which HR and line managers collaborated, the factors that facilitated or hindered this collaboration, and its overall impact on employee and organizational outcomes.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

The empirical studies reviewed reveal a comprehensive view of the critical role that line managers play in HRM and its subsequent impact on organizational performance. These studies consistently emphasize that line managers are not just administrative figures; they are central to the implementation of HR practices and the day-to-day management of employees. Their involvement significantly influences various organizational outcomes, including employee engagement, job satisfaction, retention, and overall business performance.

Table 1

Thematic Analysis Result

Theme	Studies	Key Findings/Focus
Role of Line Managers in HRM and Organizational Performance	Kehoe & Han (2020), Kim <i>et al.</i> (2018), Katou <i>et al.</i> (2021), Pombo & Gomes (2022), Anvari <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Line managers play a pivotal role in implementing HR practices and fostering employee engagement, job satisfaction, and organizational performance. Effective communication and collaboration with HR specialists and their leadership quality are key factors in improving employee performance and reducing turnover.
HR-Line Manager Collaboration	Rimi <i>et al.</i> (2017), Chimakati & Odiyo (2023), Beijer <i>et al.</i> (2019), Bondarouk <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Strong collaboration between HR specialists and line managers is critical for aligning HRM practices with organizational goals. It fosters innovation, improves employee satisfaction, and enhances the effectiveness of policy implementation.
Devolution of HRM Responsibilities	Rimi <i>et al.</i> (2017), Dany <i>et al.</i> (2022), Pombo & Gomes (2022)	Devolution of HRM responsibilities to line managers enhances HRM effectiveness by involving them in decision-making and aligning HRM practices with operational needs. When line managers take on more HR duties, they better understand employee needs, driving engagement and performance improvements.
HRM Innovation and Open Innovation	Engelsberger <i>et al.</i> (2022), Bondarouk <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Line managers' involvement in HRM is critical to fostering open innovation by supporting knowledge sharing and motivating employees. HRM practices such as leadership development and feedback systems are central to encouraging innovative behavior and creative problem-solving among employees.
Impact of HRM on Employee Well-being	Dulal-Arthur <i>et al.</i> (2024), Beijer <i>et al.</i> (2019)	Training and support for line managers in employee well-being (mental health and engagement) significantly enhance workplace conditions. Collaboration between HR and line managers in implementing mental health initiatives is a key driver for improving employee well-being and reducing burnout.
HRM Integration and Strategic Alignment	Dany <i>et al.</i> (2022), Katou <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Effective integration of HRM practices within the organizational strategy requires a balance of influence between HR specialists and line managers. Strategic alignment enhances organizational performance, with shared responsibility for HRM initiatives leading to better outcomes for both the employees and the organization as a whole.

4.1.1 The Role of Line Managers in HRM and Organizational Performance

Numerous studies underscore the crucial role line managers play in implementing HR practices and driving organizational success (Anvari *et al.*, 2024; Katou *et al.*, 2021; Kehoe & Han, 2020; Kim *et al.*, 2018; Pombo & Gomes, 2022). These managers are seen as key enablers of employee performance through their ability to foster positive working relationships, provide timely feedback, and communicate HR initiatives effectively. Research indicates that line managers are critical to ensuring that HR policies align with the needs and goals of the workforce, and when these practices are implemented effectively, they lead to improved employee outcomes.

One interviewee, Interviewee A, shared:

"As a line manager, my role goes beyond overseeing day-to-day tasks. I have a responsibility to ensure that our team fully understands HR policies, and I play an active role in guiding them through performance reviews, coaching, and giving feedback". (KI, HRM, December, 2024).

This quote reflects the belief that line managers don't just enforce HR practices, but are integral to the actual implementation and success of these strategies. Another participant, Interviewee B, echoed this sentiment:

"When line managers take a hands-on approach to HR practices like giving feedback and addressing team concerns, employees feel valued and supported. They are more likely to remain engaged with their work. This is something I see firsthand; it creates an atmosphere of trust, and trust leads to better performance. The HR strategies are more effective when they are practiced by someone who interacts with employees daily". (KI, HRM, December, 2024).

This proves that, line managers are instrumental in shaping the organizational climate, enhancing employee job satisfaction, and ultimately improving organizational performance. Their day-to-day interactions with staff give them the unique ability to gauge employee concerns and work toward addressing them, making them essential players in reducing turnover rates and fostering a positive work environment.

4.1.2 HR-Line Manager Collaboration

Another common theme in the studies is the importance of collaboration between line managers and HR specialists. The research by (Beijer et al., 2019; Bondarouk et al., 2019; Chimakati & Odiyo, 2023; Rimi et al., 2017) all emphasize that a strong relationship between these two groups is critical to ensuring that HR practices are not only designed but also effectively executed within the organization. The studies highlight that line managers often bridge the gap between HR strategy and the workforce, ensuring that HR policies are relevant to the practical realities of employees. When HR specialists and line managers work together in a cohesive manner, the result is a more flexible, responsive, and engaged workforce. This collaboration is also linked to greater levels of innovation within organizations, as line managers who understand HR practices can better encourage creativity and problem-solving among employees. The studies show that when line managers are well-trained in HR policies and work closely with HR professionals, they become more effective in managing team dynamics, handling conflicts, and motivating employees, leading to improved organizational outcomes such as enhanced productivity and morale.

While most studies emphasize the positive effects of collaboration, the results from interviewee highlight persistent challenges such as role conflict and training gaps. This suggests that merely promoting collaboration is insufficient; organizations must also invest in role clarification and capacity building to realize the full benefit.

4.1.3 Devolution of HRM Responsibilities to Line Managers

The devolution of HRM responsibilities to line managers is another prominent theme discussed in the literature. According to Rimi *et al.* (2017), (Dany et al., 2022) and Pombo & Gomes (2022), giving line managers more responsibility in managing HR practices like recruitment, performance evaluations, and training is critical for enhancing HRM effectiveness. These studies suggest that when line managers take on HR-related tasks, they gain a deeper understanding of their team members' needs and aspirations. As a result, they can tailor HR interventions that are more relevant and effective, thereby improving employee performance and engagement. This approach enables organizations to respond more swiftly to changing workforce needs and operational demands. The research highlights that line managers, when empowered with HR responsibilities, are more likely to feel ownership over HR processes, leading to greater accountability and a more personalized approach to employee development. Interviewee C shared:

"Taking on responsibility for recruitment and performance reviews has made me much more involved in my team's development. Before, HR was the separate entity that gave us policies, but now I'm part of the decision-making process. It's no longer something that's 'done to' my team—it's something we do together. That sense of ownership is powerful for both me and the team." (KI, HRM, January, 2025).

Interviewee D added to this, saying,

"When line managers are given the autonomy to manage their team's HR needs, it becomes much more personal. I have a clearer understanding of my team's strengths, weaknesses, and potentials, which allows me to make more informed decisions about development and performance. The accountability that comes with this responsibility drives me to be more involved in making sure that the HR processes are aligned with the team's needs." (KI, HRM, January, 2025).

Interestingly studies indicate that devolution of HR responsibilities enhance engagement, but some managers from interview report feeling overwhelmed without adequate training. This contradiction underscores the importance of supporting line managers through targeted capacity development.

4.1.4 HRM Innovation and Open Innovation

Several studies also explore the link between HRM practices and innovation, particularly the role line manager's play in fostering open innovation within organizations. (Engelsberger et al., 2023) and (Bondarouk et al., 2019) argue that line managers are essential to creating an organizational culture that encourages open communication and knowledge sharing. By fostering an open and inclusive work environment, line managers can inspire employees to

contribute innovative ideas that drive organizational growth. The studies indicate that line managers who actively promote a culture of creativity and knowledge exchange can harness the full potential of their teams, leading to competitive advantages for the organization. By encouraging collaboration and flexibility, line managers help develop an atmosphere conducive to open innovation, where employees feel valued and are motivated to share their ideas freely. Interviewee I shared:

"Innovation doesn't just happen by chance. I encourage my team to think outside the box and to regularly come up with new ideas, whether it's for improving processes or developing new products. I facilitate brainstorming sessions and make sure that every voice is heard. When employees feel supported in their creativity, they become more invested in the success of the organization." (KI, HRM, January, 2025).

Also interviewee J reinforced this point:

"As a line manager, it's essential that I foster a culture where innovation is welcomed. I always tell my team that there's no such thing as a 'bad idea.' I want them to feel comfortable suggesting solutions to problems or proposing new ways of doing things. That openness builds a sense of trust and allows the team to be more creative and forward-thinking." (KI, HRM, January, 2025).

4.1.5 Impact of HRM on Employee Well-being

Another critical aspect highlighted by the studies is the role of line managers in supporting employee well-being. Research by (Dulal-Arthur et al., 2024) and (Beijer et al., 2019). Beijer *et al.* (2019) emphasizes that line managers are vital to implementing HR practices aimed at improving employee mental health, engagement, and work-life balance. These managers, when properly trained, can identify signs of burnout and stress among employees and take appropriate actions to mitigate these issues. The studies underscore the positive impact of well-being initiatives on employee satisfaction, morale, and organizational loyalty. Furthermore, it is noted that HR departments that collaborate closely with line managers to promote well-being initiatives can create a healthier work environment, which in turn reduces absenteeism, turnover, and workplace stress. Interviewee K shared:

"I've learned over time that employee well-being is about more than just physical health; it's about emotional support as well. I make sure I check in with my team regularly, not just about their work, but about how they're feeling. If I notice someone is stressed, I'll offer them flexible hours or just listen to what they have to say. These small actions can prevent burnout and help employees perform at their best." (KI, HRM, December, 2024).

These practices are particularly important in industries where employee well-being is at risk, such as high-pressure environments or those dealing with vulnerable populations.

4.1.6 HRM Integration and Strategic Alignment

Finally, the studies reviewed by Dany *et al.* (2022) and Katou *et al.* (2021) show that aligning HRM practices with organizational strategy is crucial for improving business outcomes. When HRM strategies are integrated with the broader goals of the organization, it enables both HR professionals and line managers to work towards common objectives, ensuring that HR practices are aligned with the needs of the business. The research shows that this strategic alignment results in more effective HR interventions and better business performance. Line managers, with their day-to-day understanding of operations, are in a unique position to facilitate this integration by ensuring that HR policies are applied in a way that is consistent with the organization's strategic goals. This alignment is considered key to enhancing employee engagement, satisfaction, and organizational effectiveness. Interviewee M explained:

"For HR practices to be effective, they need to align with the overall business strategy. As a line manager, I make sure my team understands how their day-to-day activities contribute to the bigger picture. It's not just about following rules; it's about working towards common organizational objectives" (KI, HRM, December, 2024).

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

This study has examined the pivotal role of line managers in the implementation and success of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices within organizations. The research shows that line managers are essential not just in executing HR policies but also in shaping the overall organizational climate and influencing employee performance. Their involvement in the day-to-day application of HR practices significantly impacts employee motivation, job satisfaction, and retention, which are critical factors for organizational success. The study also highlights that line managers bridge the gap between HR strategies and the workforce, ensuring that HR policies are not only communicated but also effectively integrated into operational practices.

One of the primary findings is that line managers are integral in creating a positive work environment. Their leadership style, interactions with employees and ability to foster a supportive team culture directly affect employee

engagement and performance outcomes. By empowering line managers with more HR responsibilities, organizations can increase their engagement and sense of ownership, which in turn enhances the overall effectiveness of HR practices.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, organizations should make investments in continuous training and development programs for line managers in order to reinforce the effectiveness of HRM practices. Training should focus on performance management, leadership, conflict resolution, and employee engagement, among other areas, to improve the capacity of line managers to implement the HR policies competently and consistently. Organizations should also promote closer collaboration between the HR department and line managers through the setup of formal and clear channels of communication. They should institutionalize regular consultative meetings, joint planning sessions, and structured mechanisms that allow feedback to ensure that HR policies are well integrated into daily line management practices and continue to be responsive to employees' needs.

The study further suggests that organizations should give more responsibility to the line managers in respect of core HR functions like recruitment, training, and performance management. Such involvement is likely to foster a greater sense of ownership, accountability, and commitment on their part for ensuring that the HR practices are effectively implemented. Second, HR policies and practices must be integrated with general organizational strategy to establish coherence between workforce management and strategic objectives. Therefore, the line managers should actively participate in the strategy formulation process so that HR interventions reflect operational realities and are tailored according to the specific needs of their teams.

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