

PRIME-HRM Implementation in Select Schools Divisions in One Province in the Philippines

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Abstract – This study endeavored to determine the extent of practices and challenges and the opportunities in the implementation of the Civil Service Commission's PRIME-HRM (Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management) of select school divisions of the Department of Education in Negros Occidental, Philippines. Specifically, this study sought to determine the extent of practices when taken as a whole and when taken per HR system, the extent of challenges when taken as a whole and when taken per HR system and the foreseen opportunities in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM along with the implementation of the Rationalization Plan. This is a Mixed-Method Research which involved the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. A survey questionnaire adapted from the PRIME-HRM assessment form by the Civil Service Commission was revised and used to collect necessary data. The results showed that the extent of practices was very high and the extent of implementation challenges was moderate. There was no significant difference on the extent of practices in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM when assessed collectively by divisions in terms of the four HR systems such as Recruitment, Selection and Placement, Learning and Development, Performance Management System and Rewards and Recognition. Moreover, results showed that there was significant difference on the extent of challenges in the implementation of the said program when assessed by divisions in three HR systems. Recruitment, Selection and Placement was highly significant (p -value=.005), Learning and Development (p -value=.030) and Performance Management System (p -value=.037) were significant, while, Rewards and Recognitions (p -value=.147) was not significant. On the other hand, there was no significant difference on the extent of challenges in Recruitment, Selection and Placement which result was attributed to uniform guidelines imposed by the government and the implementing agencies are mandated to follow. The research qualitatively elicited several opportunities in the implementation of PRIME-HRM.

Keywords –civil service, gender and development, PRIME-HRM, strategic human resource management

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of service excellence is one of the main goals of almost all government organizations. The Department of Education (DepEd) as the oversight agency for all basic education institutions in the country and being one of government agencies which implemented its employee rationalization plan (RatPlan), is bound to deliver the best services through its teachers, administrators and non-teaching staff. The efficiency and effectiveness of the services the DepEd offers to the public largely depend on the performance of its human resources.

Human resources are indispensable in this government organization [1]. Human resources or

employees are one of the most important assets of an organization as they contribute to its growth and success [2]. Hence, proper management and development of the human resources are big challenges but fulfilling tasks for every manager of the organization. Human Resource Management (HRM) has a very vital function in the achievement of any organizational goals like that of DepEd.

Human Resource Management (HRM) is the function within an organization that focuses on the recruitment of, management of, and providing direction for the people who work in an organization [3]. It is a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an

organization's most valued assets - the people working individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives [4]. In dynamic workplaces, there had been a lot of issues that posed challenges in human resource management in which DepEd is not an exemption.

HRM in the Philippines must keep track of the progresses in human resource management and development and must get ahead of the traditional HRM to strategic HRM. Human Resource Management in Philippine education institutions has gone a long way. But to keep up with the development of the organization, regular assessment, monitoring and evaluation of the HRM practices, programs and activities must be taken into consideration. For government agencies, like DepEd, this pertains to civil service.

Article IX of the 1987 Constitution has established the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and has entrusted the administration of the civil service. The Commission is constitutionally mandated to promote morale, efficiency, integrity, responsiveness, progressiveness, and courtesy in the Civil Service.

The CSC is also tasked to strengthen the merit and rewards system within government agencies, integrate human resource development programs for all levels and ranks, and institutionalize a climate conducive to transparency and accountability. To be able to fulfill their commissioned tasks, the CSC develops programs to integrate competence in the human resources of the country to achieve their vision of becoming a Center of Excellence for Human Resource and Organizational Development. One of the many programs of the CSC is the PRIME-HRM or the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management. The PRIME-HRM assesses an agency's human resource management competencies, systems and practices toward HR excellence through three steps: Assess, Assist and Award. The program's main goal is to develop the agency's maturity level from Transactional HRM to Strategic HRM [5].

With the integration of the PRIME-HRM on all local and national government agencies including the Department of Education, there has been a great challenge on the competence of the HRMO to handle the implementation of this program. Considering the DepEd's unique organizational structure, the implementation of the PRIME-HRM does not only involve the HRMO, rather it involves a whole lot of personnel who are in-charge of administration and educational supervision [5].

The PRIME-HRM also reflects the performance of the whole division as to their HR practices in general. The Civil Service Commission, pursuant to CSC Resolution No. 1200241 dated February 1, 2012 adopts the guidelines on the implementation of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) as stated in Memorandum Circular No. 3, s. 2012.

The PRIME-HRM is a program that incorporates and enhances the Personnel Management Assessment and Assistance Program (PMAAP) and the CSC Agency Accreditation Program (CSCAAP). It is a mechanism to continuously capacitate agencies in the performance of their human resource management functions; recognize best practices in the numerous areas of human resource management; and serve as a venue for exchange and development of expertise in human resource management in the Philippine public service [5].

PRIME-HRM is a program to inculcate meritocracy and excellence in the public service human resource management through a program of reward, recognition, empowerment and continuous development. Specifically, the program aims to: 1) assess the human resource management practices and capabilities of agencies; 2) serve as search mechanism for best practices in the human resource management; 3) promote and serve as a venue for exchange and development of expertise in the area of human resource management between and among government agencies; 4) empower agencies in the performance of human resource management functions; and 5) promote and reward excellent human resource management practices.

The components of PRIME-HRM are the Comprehensive HRM Assistance, Review and Monitoring (CHARM), the Continuing Assistance and Review for Excellent Human Resource Management (CARE-HRM) and the Special Program for Evaluation and Assessment as Required/ Requested (SPEAR).

PRIME-HRM shall be used as a tool to recognize agencies with best practices in human resource management. Agency initiated innovations, enhancements or remarkable development in HR management program and system shall be given recognition to motivate agencies to aspire for excellence.

Recognition/status are conferred on agencies according to level of proficiency and maturity vis-à-vis the standards set by the Commission. Proficiency levels are hierarchically categorized into basic, intermediate, advanced and superior. Accordingly, maturity levels are tiered into regulated, accredited, deregulated and center of excellence in HRM with the end goal of elevating the

HR public sector to a level of excellence for good governance and efficient public service.

Each recognition level or status has implication primarily to the granting of authority to take final action on appointments [5].

The state of PRIME-HRM study in the country currently includes on onsite assessment of 236 DepEd offices, online self-assessment of 346 previously revalidated/accredited agencies, and online self-assessment of 3,126 agencies. The overall maturity level of HRM of these agencies is Level I (Transactional/Regulated) and the overall competency level of HRMOs is also Level I (Basic) [6].

At present, majority of the DepEd divisions particularly in Negros Occidental are still in Level I – Regulated statuses. Thus, the extent of their implementation of PRIME-HRM befits investigation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study was to determine the extent of practices and challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM of the 8 DepEd schools divisions in Negros Occidental, Philippines.

Specifically, this study determined the extent of practices and challenges in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM of the 8 schools divisions when taken as a whole and individually in terms of 1) Recruitment, Selection and Placement, 2) Learning and Development, 3) Performance Management System, and 4) Rewards and Recognition. This study also determined the significant differences on the extent of practices as well as the extent of challenges in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM as assessed by schools divisions in terms of the 4 aforementioned systems. The study further elicited opportunities brought about by the implementation of the PRIME-HRM. Related hypotheses were tested in this research.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research method used in this study was Mixed-Method Research. Mixed-method research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. Mixed-method research allows the researcher to triangulate the methods by directly comparing statistical results with qualitative findings for “corroboration and validation purposes” [7]. A survey questionnaire was used to determine the extent of practices, challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM of the select divisions in Negros Occidental. The survey results were

corroborated through interviews, focus group discussion and casual interaction with the respondents.

As a methodology, mixed-method involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. The philosophical assumption of this study was: PRIME-HRM as a civil service program had been properly implemented and had strengthened human resource management practices in DepEd.

The respondents of the study were the 108 division personnel composed of Schools Division Superintendent (SDS), Assistant Schools Division Superintendent (ASDS), Administrative Officers (AO), Curriculum Implementation Division (CID) Chief, School Governance and Operations Division (SGOD) Chief, (Senior/ Junior) Education Program Specialist in Human Resource Development (HRD) and the Public Schools District Supervisors (PSDS) of the 8 city divisions in Negros Occidental, Philippines. The personnel of a Level II-accredited division served as the dry-run respondents of the study instrument.

In coming up with the sample, the researcher considered the following: 1) agreement of the divisions to the research; 2) size or number of personnel of the divisions; and 3) CSC recognition/status of the divisions which are all Level I.

In this investigation, a survey questionnaire was used by the researcher to gather the necessary data. It consists of four parts. The Part I contained the respondent’s profile information such as position held, length of service, educational attainment and division maturity level. Part II and III were the parameters on the extent of practices and extent of challenges which were adapted from CSC PRIME-HRM, Annex 2. It was slightly revised by the researcher to collect the needed data to meet the research objectives. Part IV were open-ended questions regarding the opportunities of the division as the PRIME-HRM is implemented. From the dry-run test the research instrument gained a statistical result of .976 which means it has a very high degree of reliability.

The data were collected and analyzed using mean, ranking, frequency, and standard deviation. The interpretation of the mean scores were based on the scale/range such as: 3.26 - 4.0 -Very High Extent; 2.51 - 3.25 –High Extent; 1.76 - 2.5 –Moderate Extent; 1.00 - 1.75 – Slight Extent. The significant differences on the extent of practices and challenges were computed using ANOVA which interpretation was based on the alpha level of 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The extent of practices in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM of the select divisions in Negros Occidental when taken as a whole in terms of all the four HR systems: Recruitment, Selection and Placement, Learning and Development, Performance Management System and Rewards and Recognition was very high (m=3.3814).

In terms of Recruitment, Selection and Placement, all 8 divisions had very high extent of practices. Among the parameters under this HR system, the one which marked the highest mean score with (m=3.7113) was ‘evaluating candidate qualifications vis-à-vis specific qualification standards (QS). As affirmed by the respondents during interviews and focus group discussion (FGD), non-observance of this guidelines might cause disapproval of appointments by the CSC so they were left with no choice but to abide. This means that policies and guidelines are mandated and seem ministerial.

On the other hand, the one with the lowest mean score (s=3.3299) was ‘formulating and championing gender responsive strategic recruitment, selection and placement policy linked to other HR systems. Per respondents confirmation during FGD, gender and development (GAD) mechanisms for hiring personnel were still reluctantly observed. In support to this finding are pieces of vacancy publications which gave preference to either sex (male or female) for a particular job item.

In Learning and Development, 6 divisions marked very high extent while 2 divisions scored high extent of practices. The parameter of practices under this HR system which obtained the highest mean score (m=3.6186) was ‘establishing direction in the implementation of learning and development programs by approving policy guidelines for the institutionalization of learning and development programs’. According to the respondents, it being in the policy-making stage was already in place, however, the implementation was not yet full-blown.

All 8 divisions had very high extent of practices in Performance Management System. Under this HR system, the one which gained the highest mean (m=3.5979) was ‘applying national policies on GAD in performance management systems of government organizations’ and the one with the lowest mean (m=3.3196) was ‘leading the calibration and deliberation meetings of the performance management team (PMT)’. In support to these findings, the respondents said that when it comes to national policies (with reference to GAD), they religiously put up with, otherwise, it might

Table 1. Extent of Practices and Challenges in the Implementation of the PRIME-HRM

Division	Practices			Challenges		
	Mean	SD	VI	Mean	SD	VI
Recruitment, Selection and Placement						
A	3.3052	.53440	VHE	2.1494	.80889	ME
B	3.4909	.46583	VHE	1.5333	.56131	SE
C	3.4711	.52980	VHE	1.3884	.34995	SE
D	3.3455	.30844	VHE	2.3182	1.0269	ME
E	3.2792	.43884	VHE	2.3117	.93577	ME
F	3.4394	.45424	VHE	1.0606	.11010	SE
G	3.3636	.64710	VHE	2.1250	1.1009	ME
H	3.7025	.31252	VHE	2.2397	1.0271	ME
Mean	3.4161	.48689	VHE	1.9475	.91163	ME
Learning and Development						
A	3.3312	.60261	VHE	1.9545	.84362	ME
B	3.3212	.58197	VHE	1.6606	.69699	SE
C	3.4793	.44553	VHE	1.7355	.61986	SE
D	3.2091	.43714	HE	1.9545	1.0919	ME
E	2.9286	.56849	HE	2.6039	.76027	HE
F	3.4091	.40144	VHE	1.2576	.46503	SE
G	3.4205	.57675	VHE	1.9318	.99669	ME
H	3.6364	.48447	VHE	2.3140	1.0510	ME
Mean	3.3299	.55303	VHE	1.9719	.89683	ME
Performance Management System						
A	3.5397	.54058	VHE	1.8968	.86118	ME
B	3.4593	.51924	VHE	1.6000	.68725	SE
C	3.5758	.52073	VHE	1.5657	.58469	SE
D	3.3667	.60644	VHE	2.3222	1.0216	ME
E	3.2937	.52226	VHE	2.3651	.97395	ME
F	3.4444	.57521	VHE	1.1111	.27217	SE
G	3.4236	.65448	VHE	1.9931	1.0089	ME
H	3.7071	.41655	VHE	2.2323	1.1259	ME
Mean	3.4719	.54339	VHE	1.9301	.92481	ME
Rewards and Recognition						
A	3.1786	.58366	HE	2.2679	.88505	ME
B	3.3833	.62583	VHE	1.6833	.81540	SE
C	3.3182	.43432	VHE	1.9091	.79272	ME
D	3.1500	.51640	HE	2.2750	1.0236	ME
E	3.0893	.57685	HE	2.1429	.85886	ME
F	3.4583	.51031	VHE	1.0000	.00000	SE
G	3.2969	.82269	VHE	2.0781	1.1281	ME
H	3.7045	.47194	VHE	2.0909	1.2003	ME
Mean	3.3067	.60650	VHE	1.9897	.95805	ME
Grand Mean	3.3814	.50370	VHE	1.9594	.63973	ME

have implications to performance rating and budget approval by the oversight agencies (DepEd Central Office, DBM, etc.). Moreover, they admitted that their calibration practice was still very relaxed.

In Rewards and Recognition, 5 divisions had very high extent while 3 had high extent of practices. Among the parameters under this HR system, the only practice which was implemented at a high extent ($m=3.1753$) was 'explaining customized policies and provisions on rewards and recognition programs to all officials and employees; and consulting the Division GAD focal/point person on how to make the program gender responsive'. Obviously, still majority of the respondent-divisions had already their customized programs on rewards and recognition, however, many were still on information dissemination stage and full implementation of such is wanting.

The overall result of 'very high extent' of implementation was attributed to the fact that the respondent-divisions were still in 'regulated statuses'. These divisions were subjected to regular monitoring and assistance by the Commission. In terms of proficiency, the respondent-divisions understand 'basic' HR principles and can perform tasks with assistance and directions. Obviously, the surveyed agencies were implementing at the very high extent the basic context of PRIME-HRM.

Further, the result was ascribed to the self-assessment-nature of this study which also served as its limitation.

Generally, the results on the extent of practices would mean that all the respondent-divisions have been doing their best to implement the guidelines set forth by the CSC in all four HR systems included in the PRIME-HRM.

Moreover, the extent of challenges experienced in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM of the 8 divisions in when taken collectively in 4 systems: Recruitment, Selection and Placement, Learning and Development, Performance Management System and Rewards and Recognition was moderate extent ($m=1.9594$).

In terms of Recruitment, Selection and Placement, 5 divisions marked moderate extent of challenges while the other 3 divisions had slight extent. In Learning and Development, 1 division had great extent; 4 divisions had moderate extent and 3 divisions had slight extent. In terms Performance Management System, 5 division scored moderate extent while the other 3 marked slight extent of challenges. In Rewards and Recognition, 6

divisions had moderate extent and 2 had slight extent of challenges.

Specifically, Recruitment, Selection and Placement system has a mean of 1.9475 of which the parameter with the highest mean or the one posing more challenges was 'performing structured interviews based on competency-based job description'. As affirmed by the respondents, the selection committees usually lacked technical members who can assess specific competency of the applicants or interviewees.

Learning and Development system had a mean score of 1.9719. Among the parameters with the highest mean was 'maintaining a comprehensive database of competency-based learning and development activities, historical learning and development plan programs/interventions, employee IPPD, learning and development analytics. According to the respondents, the database is a work in progress.

Performance Management System gained a mean score of 1.9301, among its parameters, the one with the highest mean was 'setting direction in the implementation of policies, systems and procedures'. Per FGD result, establishing strategic directions is already given topmost priority by majority of the divisions.

Rewards and Recognition system had a mean score of 1.9897. Among the parameters, the one with the highest mean was 'applying rewards and recognition policies on GAD geared toward continual improvement and deeper engagement of women and men employees'. Consistent with the other results, GAD policies seemed not streamlined yet. This had been affirmed by the majority of respondent-divisions.

The results would mean that the implementation of PRIME-HRM posed not much challenges. A moderate extent of challenges is congruent to the result of 'very high extent of implementation' of the basic context of PRIME-HRM being in similarly regulated divisions. However, there are some significant areas e.g. GAD, competency-centered hiring, etc. which demand for prompt attention by the implementers. Relative to GAD, for instance, it remained a challenge to discount preference between male and female applicants/employees on a particular job e.g. driver, mechanic-teacher, and other gender-stereotyped job positions.

The results affirm a study that showed that the issues and challenges in the implementation of the HRM practices in all systems included like Recruitment and Selection, Training and Development, Performance Appraisal, Compensation and Benefits and Employee Relations. The previous study mentioned top 4 issues and

challenges encountered in the implementation of the HRM practices which are similar to the findings of this present study such as: 1) training brochures for employees, 2) clear reward system for high performer, 3) compensation and benefits to respond to the present economic crisis, and 4) regular follow-up for measuring what participants learned from the training [8].

There was no significant difference on the extent of practices in the implementation of PRIME-HRM when assessed by divisions collectively in terms of the 4 HR systems. This result was attributed to the uniform guidelines imposed by the government to which the implementing agencies have the obligation to follow.

Table 2. Significant Difference on the Extent of Practices in the Implementation of the Four PRIME-HRM Systems

Sources	F	p-value	VI
Recruitment, Selection and Placement	.930	.488	NS
Learning and Development	1.919	.076	NS
Performance Management System	.656	.708	NS
Rewards and Recognition	1.227	.297	NS

There were significant differences on the extent of challenges in PRIME-HRM implementation when assessed by divisions and when taken individually per HR system such as: Recruitment, Selection and Placement was highly significant and Learning and Development and Performance Management System were significant. Moreover, Rewards and Recognitions was not significant.

The null hypothesis that there is no significant difference on the extent of practices in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM of the divisions in Negros Occidental when assessed by divisions in terms of the four HR systems is accepted.

Table 3. Significant Difference on the Extent of Challenges in the Implementation of the Four PRIME-HRM Systems

Sources	F	p-value	VI
Recruitment, Selection and Placement	3.183	.005	HS
Learning and Development	2.349	.030	S
Performance Management System	2.260	.037	S
Rewards and Recognition	1.595	.147	NS

The envisioned opportunities of the divisions in the implementation of the PRIME-HRM are the following: a) the DepEd as model government institution, b) support

by the local/ national government, c) recognition of HRM practices by other agencies, d) exchange of HR expertise with other agencies, e) possible scholarships/ study grants, f) HR citations in the local and national level, g) possible proposals on HR projects and programs, h) assurance of services of competent human resources, i) DepEd as the model for quality HR services, j) international HR recognitions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

All the human resource management practices in the PRIME-HRM in terms of Recruitment, Selection and Placement, Learning and Development, Performance Management System and Rewards and Recognition were implemented at a very high extent. This can be attributed to the fact that the division personnel and district supervisors who have HR functions performed their tasks with maximum competence primarily as a form of compliance, while in Regulated Status.

With the very high extent of PRIME-HRM, the respondents experienced slight to moderate extent of challenges or problems throughout the implementation, thereby, eliminating the likelihood of deterrence to the delivery of HR services in the organization, thereby, assuring the possibility of elevating the HR public sector to a level of excellence for good governance and efficient public service. The results also pave the way towards strengthening and integrating human resource development programs in all government agencies.

The results further validated the basic philosophical assumption of this study that PRIME-HRM, as a civil service program, had been properly implemented and had, in any way, strengthened human resource management practices in DepEd.

The implementation of the PRIME-HRM provides a lot of opportunities for the DepEd/school divisions such as but not limited to becoming model government institution, getting support from the local/ national government, gaining recognition of HRM practices by other agencies, and exchanging HR expertise with other agencies. Most importantly, the respondent-divisions had the opportunity to concretize PRIME-HRM as a mechanism to continuously capacitate agencies in the performance of human resource management functions through the Assess-Assist-Award strategy.

It can be implied from the results that the respondent-divisions, with the very high extent of implementation of the basic context, have a long but easy way to reaching the apex of the PRIME-HRM which is the Seal of Excellence in HRM. Being the highest recognition conferred on institutions, any of the respondent-divisions

must have been conferred Center for Excellence and/ or played pivotal role in the development and innovation of various HR areas [5].

Henceforth, the recommendations:

On Recruitment, Selection and Placement. The heads of the division may review the interview process to be grounded on applicants' competencies since it is very important in the selection of qualified candidates/ applicants.

On Learning and Development. Heads of every division may consider redesigning performance improvement interventions on workplace development and performance aligned with agency strategic requirements for core positions.

On Performance Management System. The heads of each division may review their practices in applying national policies on GAD in performance management systems of government organizations. They may benchmark from other divisions inside or outside the province which performs well on this practice.

On Rewards and Recognition. Further review on the implementation initiatives of customized policies and provisions on rewards and recognition programs to all officials and employees; and consult the division GAD focal/point persons on how to make the program gender responsive.

Since, majority of the respondent-divisions have not yet reached to the point that innovative and best practices in HRM are evident, they may think-out-of-the-box in order to level up. They may introduce more innovations and best practices as encouraged by PRIME-HRM. A changed effort on human resources management and more research are needed to develop new strategies and innovations in the implementation. A strategic management of human resources is vital in institutionalizing meritocracy and excellence as advocated by the CSC.

This study had its limitation for being primarily self-assessment in nature. Thus, it may be recommended to conduct further study utilizing third-party assessment and/corroborating the results of this study with the actual evaluation results by the Civil Service Commission.

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