

# The Relationship of Prime-HRM Implementation on Employee Work Performance of Prime-HRM Level II (Bronze) Agencies in General Santos City

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**Abstract**—The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of implementation of Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) and its correlation to employee work performance in government agencies of General Santos City. Descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving 335 respondents coming from GSCWD, DepEd, and LGU-GSC through the use of survey questionnaires and key informant interviews. Descriptive statistics, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis, and Spearman Rank Correlation tests were used to analyze quantitative and thematic analysis was used to explore qualitative responses. Results indicates that PRIME-HRM practice is relatively high across all HRM functions, especially recruitment, selection and placement, and that this is positively and significantly associated with employee work performance. Work quality, efficiency, and timeliness were highly rated and there were no significant differences among demographic factors. Challenges on capacity gaps as well as technological resistance, lack of information and resource limitations are identified. The research finds that PRIME-HRM has a significant impact on increasing work performance among employees across their demographic background but it is recommended that there should be ongoing communications, training and resource support for the continued enhancements. These results suggest for policymakers and HR practitioners to build meritocracy systems and to boost the productivity of the public sector.

**Index Terms**—PRIME-HRM, work performance, recruitment, selection and placement, learning and development, performance management, and rewards and recognition.

## 1. Introduction

### A. Background of the Study

One of the prominent initiatives of the Philippine Civil Service Commission (CSC) is the accreditation program pursuant to the implementation Phase of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM). This initiative seeks to professionalize and institutionalize HRM systems in government offices with the following four key (HRM) areas: (1) recruitment, selection and placement (2) learning and development (3) performance management (4) rewards and recognition. The PRIME-HRM underscores the importance of promoting a system of meritocracy and excellence to promote a more effective, efficient and transparent HR system. In addition to improving employee management, the program

aims to ensure that these HR systems strengthen overall performance, in turn enhancing delivery of better public service (Domer, 2024; Inarda, 2020).

Through the years, the Philippine government has continually implemented reforms to develop Human Resource Management (HRM) in the public sector. HR policies and procedures are prescribed to help government agencies to design and manage HR processes successfully. Periodic assessments are conducted to give a complete picture of HRM practices in the public service, evaluate compliance of agencies to Civil Service rules and standards and gauge employee satisfaction with HR systems (CSC Assessment Report on the State of HRM in the Philippines, 2012). Knowledge on the role of PRIME-HRM on the installation of HR systems in the local government units (LGUs) provides a perspective on the manner HR operations of an agency are congruent with CSC regulations and benchmarks (Egcas and Lacuesta, 2018). The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has commended various agencies in General Santos City for their devotion to the PRIME-HRM. They are the General Santos City Water District (GSCWD), Department of Education (DepEd) – Schools Division of General Santos City and the Local Government Unit (LGU) of General Santos.

The General Santos City Water District (GSCWD) is a government-owned and controlled corporation that provides potable and reliable water supply to the residents of General Santos City to meet their service needs. GSCWD aims to achieve strategic management, excellent HRM practices, and operational efficiency. By embracing PRIME-HRM, it earned the Bronze Award in 2018, equivalent to Maturity Level II across the GSC Water District's four core HRM systems by 2025.

The Department of Education (DepEd) Schools Division of General Santos City has been conferred the Maturity Level II (Bronze Award) of the Enhanced Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) – National Capital Region on December 17, 2020. The four primary areas covered by this recognition are Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP), Learning and Development (L&D), Performance Management (PM), and Rewards and Recognition (R&R). In 2018, the Local Government Unit

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(LGU) of General Santos achieved the CSC PRIME-HRM Level II Maturity Accreditation (Bronze Award), the highest level of accreditation for government agencies in the SOCCSKSARGEN Region (HRMDO | Happy HR, 2024).

Since receiving the conferment, there has been no study conducted to evaluate the extent of implementation of PRIME-HRM systems in these agencies, specifically the degree to which HR systems are being practiced and how in turn this has influenced employees' work performance. Also, there is no study on how these agencies implement PRIME-HRM as well as the awareness of employees that their agencies are PRIME-HRM Level II accredited. Therefore, this study will center on the agency's adoption of PRIME-HRM mechanisms and processes. The findings of this study will contribute to the increasing body of literature regarding the implementation of PRIME HRM and may inform strategic decisions to improve work performance and improved service delivery in a public sector organization.

### B. Research Hypotheses

*Ho1:* There is no significant relationship between the implementation of PRIME-HRM and work performance among employees.

*Ho2:* There is no significant difference in work performance when grouped according to demographic profile.

### C. Research Design

This study utilized a mixed methods approach that incorporates both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Quantitative research provided a scientifically robust and measurable method for analyzing the relationships between variables. The researcher employed a descriptive correlational research design to assess the extent of PRIME-HRM implementation across the four core systems and work performance levels, as well as to investigate the connections between PRIME-HRM implementation and work performance. This approach focused on elucidating variable relationships and identifying potential correlations (Lopez, J.R. 2024), aligning with the study's objective to ascertain the correlation between PRIME-HRM systems and employee work performance.

The qualitative research design will allow the researcher to delve deeper, gaining insights from the employees about the impact of PRIME-HRM Level II accreditation on their work performance. A qualitative research design aims to capture depth human experiences, perceptions and behavior allowing researcher to uncover insights that cannot be addressed using statistical tools (Alam, 2024).

Table 1  
Distribution of respondents

Agency	Population	Percentage	Sample Size
GSCWD	232	11%	38
LGU	1,505	75%	249
DepEd	282	14%	47
TOTAL	2,019	100%	334

## 2. Results and Discussion

The demographic characteristics of respondents in terms of sex, length of government service, and rank/level are described

in this section. These factors place the workforce composition in perspective and may have implications for organizational behavior, leadership structures and policy implementation in the government system.

Table 2  
Demographic profile of the respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Female	200	59.7
Male	135	40.3
Total	335	100.0
<b>Length of Government Service</b>		
More than 15 years	62	18.5
11 - 15 years	59	17.6
6 - 10 years	94	28.1
1 - 5 years	99	29.6
Less than year	21	6.3
Total	335	100.0
<b>Rank/Level</b>		
Executive/Managerial	20	6.0
Supervisory	79	23.6
Rank and File	236	70.4
Total	335	100.0

For sex, the table above shows that the percentage of the respondents who are female is 59.7% and the remainder (40.3%) are male. These data appear to suggest that the women employees in the government offices outnumber the men. This data exposes that women staff outnumber in the government offices covered by the survey. The gender imbalance mirrors the growing presence of women in public administration, especially in administrative, clerical and service functions. This finding is consistent with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2020) where women involvement in governance has been increasing gradually, but their participation in top decision-making positions has been limited. This is a trend that will have an impact on the areas where gender is crucial for policy delivery and service provision. Where gender perspectives are critical to policy implementation and service delivery.

Regarding length of service in government, the percentages are very close with the largest percentage reporting 1 to 5 years of service at 29.6% and the next highest is 11 to 15 years of service, 28.1%. Meanwhile, 18.5% have more than 15 years of service, 17.6% have 6-10 years in government service, and only 6.3% have been in government service for less than a year. Such a distribution indicates that the staff is a combination of fairly new and medium to long-tenured employees. Early-career employees may signal continued hiring or turnover, while mid-to long-tenured employees can indicate organization stability and retained institutional knowledge. These findings are consistent with those of Dessler (2021) in a study which argues that the tenure of an employee influences job performance and commitment of an employee. A mix of new and experienced staff is best for knowledge transfer, innovation, and the long-term stability of government operations.

With reference to their rank or level, a majority of the respondents, or 70.4%, are nonsupervisory or rank and file in function, 23.6% supervisory and only 6.0% executive or managerial. This distribution is also in line with standard

Table 3  
Level of implementation of PRIME-HRM of the respondents

Indicator	WM	Description
<b>Recruitment, Selection and Placement</b>		
The agency posts vacant positions using appropriate channels or platforms (e.g. CSC bulletin of vacancies, agency website, social media, etc.)	4.67	Fully Implemented
The agency ensures equal opportunity in recruitment and attracts applicants regardless of gender, civil status, age, disability, ethnicity, religion, etc.	4.50	Fully Implemented
The agency evaluates applicants based on approved job descriptions and qualification standards (work experience, education, training, and eligibility).	4.45	Often Implemented
The agency uses standardized assessment tools (e.g., written tests, panel interviews, behavioral event interviewing) to evaluate applicants' competence and qualifications based on job requirements.	4.53	Fully Implemented
The agency uses fair and inclusive selection criteria and process, ensuring equal opportunities for all applicants.	4.35	Often Implemented
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.50</b>	<b>Fully Implemented</b>
<b>Learning and Development</b>		
The agency orients employees on the Learning and Development (L&D) systems and processes.	4.43	Often Implemented
The agency provides L&D equal opportunities to all employees.	4.40	Often Implemented
The agency provides training that is relevant to the employee's job functions.	4.39	Often Implemented
The agency uses L&D assessment methods to assess participant's learning (e.g. knowledge check-ins, feedback mechanisms, recap sessions)	4.40	Often Implemented
The agency uses methods/tools to identify training needs of employees (e.g. Training Needs Assessment (TNA), Individual Development Plan (IDP))	4.32	Often Implemented
The agency develops customized learning materials and training aids to support the delivery of L&D programs.	4.32	Often Implemented
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.38</b>	<b>Often Implemented</b>
<b>Performance Management</b>		
The agency orients employees of the importance of performance management systems and processes.	4.36	Often Implemented
The agency uses approved performance indicators for the individual-target setting process.	4.44	Often Implemented
The agency aligns the individual targets with the agency's mandate, goals, and targets.	4.45	Often Implemented
The agency validates employees' self-rating individual performance review and evaluation process.	4.42	Often Implemented
The agency provides individuals and offices performance tracking tools and processes.	4.26	Often Implemented
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.39</b>	<b>Often Implemented</b>
<b>Rewards and Recognition</b>		
The agency orients employees on Rewards and Recognition policies, programs, and processes.	4.30	Often Implemented
The agency uses the result of the performance evaluation as inputs in the agency's Human Resource plan and rewards and incentives.	4.25	Often Implemented
The agency develops Rewards and Recognition programs that recognize employee's innovative ideas and exemplary behavior.	4.26	Often Implemented
The agency has an active and functioning PRAISE (Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence) Committee.	4.42	Often Implemented
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>Often Implemented</b>
<b>Over-all Mean</b>	<b>4.39</b>	<b>Often Implemented</b>

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Fully Implemented, 3.50-4.49 Often Implemented, 2.50-3.49 Partially Implemented, 1.50-2.49 Less Implemented, 1.00-1.49 Not Implemented

organizational structures in the public sector, in which a wide base of workers is employed in the field, served by less supervisors, and an even smaller number of administrators. The low percentage of executives implies a hierarchy restricted at the top and that can place limits on strategic leadership and decision-making efficiency. This information may suggest the requirement of capacity-building programs and succession planning to allow talented and knowledgeable individuals to move into a higher position in the future. Also, according to recent OECD (2024) findings, well-arranged remuneration and job classification systems are crucial for maintaining such hierarchies, since often, designation levels correspond to responsibility, authority and income, which in turn affect the motivation and performance of employees.

In addition, a systematic review of Hammerschmid et al. (2023) emphasizes the growing number of roles at the highest levels of public administration, with top managers become drivers of policy making and innovation, although they work within very strict political, as well as administrative boundaries. The review stressed that, while the proportion of the public service that is comprised of executives is quite small, their leadership is vital to meeting the demands of the complex administrative challenges of today.

Additionally, the hierarchical nature evident in this article

supports the arguments of Moynihan and Pandey (2021) that information communication in local government is influenced by organizational arrangement. According to their research, flatter structures produce quicker communications, while steeper hierarchies may hinder responsiveness, innovation, especially when managerial roles are dependent on few individuals.

The relatively small proportion of respondents in executive roles is also in line with the Welsh Government (2025) findings that leadership roles in the public sector are both few in number and non-diverse. This suggests that there may be obstacle in the promotional ladder and may necessitate more inclusive leadership development and succession planning.

In terms of leadership, Magno and Llorin (2023) argued that adaptive leadership styles work better in a public organization at all levels and that strategic training and policy reform need to be practiced with supervisory and the executive roles to facilitate governance. The predominance of rank-and-file levels of public employees as indicated in this study further underscores the call for concrete steps to improve upward mobility, training and leadership in the public administration. Strategic investment into supervisory and management tracks can also help to close the operational-strategic gap, enhance the implementation of policy and cultivate a more responsive and

capable bureaucracy.

The demographic profile shows critical characteristics of employee composition in the government agencies included in the survey. Female domination among staff indicates the necessity for gender-sensitive policies and leadership development for all. The variety in lengths of service demonstrates the potential for mentorship and capacity building, but particularly for early career employees. The high concentration of rank-and-file workers emphasizes the importance of strong supervisory management and discipline and communication systems from higher levels to lower ones.

#### A. Level of Implementation of PRIME-HRM

In recruitment, selection and placement, it was found that the respondents perceived that the agency advertises vacant posts through the appropriate channels or platforms like CSC bulletin of vacancies, agency website, social media, etc (M=4.67) and uses standardized assessment tools (e.g., written tests, panel interviews, behavioral event interviewing) to assess the applicant's competency and qualification in relation to the job requirements (M=4.53). Both of these indicators have been exploited in full. They are aware that the agency applies fair selection criteria and conducts a fair selection process, giving all applicants an equal opportunity (M=4.35). A mean of 4.50 is indicated as the fully implemented score. It means the agency has very high degree of compliance in recruitment, selection and placement.

This finding is consistent with Gamage (2014) that structured recruitment, including online job advertisements and standard instruments, improves transparency and overall hiring quality. Satisfaction and performance were greater in organisations with formal recruitment systems. Additionally, Ekwoaba et al. (2015) noted that companies with clear standards for recruitment and standardized testing (e.g., interviews, written examinations) achieved better implementation of human resource development activities, as

well as a better fit of employees' objectives with those of the firm. According to Obi et al (2020), public agencies that applied transparent and inclusive hiring processes, such as releasing announcements on official posts and in the CSC bulletin, were more likely to get public confidence and draw high-calibre applicants.

On learning and development, respondents indicate that the agency orients its employees on the Learning and Development (L&D) systems and processes (M=4.4319358977). They perceived that the agency offers L&D equal and open access to all employees (M=4.40) and the agency evaluates the learning of participant using L&D assessment modes for example knowledge check-ins, feedback mechanisms, recap sessions (M=4.40). They mentioned that the agency utilizes tools/methods to determine employee training needs such as training needs assessment (TNA), individual development plan (IDP) (M=4.32) and develops tailored learning materials and tools for the delivery of L&D programs (M=4.32).

With regard to performance management, the respondents are aware that the agency links individual targets to the agency office mandate, goals, and targets (M=4.45) and utilizes agreed performance-indicators for setting performance targets for individuals (M=4.44). They also know that the agency has tools and a process for tracking performance of individuals and offices (M=4.26). These are referred to as often implemented. The calculated average of 4.39 is deemed as often implemented. This is, therefore, higher level of implementation on performance management.

Regarding rewards and recognition, survey respondents confirm that the organization maintains an active and effective PRAISE (Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence) Committee, and ensures that employees are briefed on Rewards and Recognition policies, programs, and procedures. Moreover, the agency leverages performance evaluation outcomes to inform the Human Resource plan and

Table 4  
Level of work performance of PRIME-HRM

Indicator	WM	Description
<b>Work Quality</b>		
Employees demonstrate thorough and updated knowledge/skills in the job responsibilities and agency operations.	4.30	Agree
Employees consistently exceed job expectations and surpass the standards set for their role.	4.12	Agree
Employees significantly exceed the required work output, while ensuring minimal errors.	4.17	Agree
Employees demonstrate the ability to work independently, showing a high degree of initiative with less supervision.	4.27	Agree
Employees consistently uphold excellent customer service, ensuring a low level of complaints.	4.31	Agree
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.23</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Work Efficiency</b>		
Employees efficiently utilize their time and resources to meet work expectations and achieve the desired output.	4.21	Agree
Employees implement innovative policies, and use resources/technology efficiently to maximize productivity.	4.21	Agree
Employees suggest innovations to improve operations or streamline procedures.	4.17	Agree
Employees effectively present and communicate complex or technical information in a clear and accessible manner, ensuring it is easily understood.	4.21	Agree
Employees actively seek opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills while sharing relevant information with co-workers.	4.21	Agree
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Work Timeliness</b>		
Employees respond to queries and requests within the required timeframe.	4.32	Agree
Employees complete their tasks within the given deadlines, requiring minimal supervision.	4.25	Agree
Employees are using their time and resources efficiently to meet work expectations and deadlines.	4.30	Agree
Employees act promptly to address and resolve clients' needs.	4.38	Agree
Employees submit reports and required information or data on or before the set deadline.	4.31	Agree
<b>Mean</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Over-all Mean</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Strongly Agree, 3.50-4.49 Agree, 2.50-3.49 Partially Agree, 1.50-2.49 Disagree, 1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree

reward and incentive structures. The average score of 4.31 indicates often implemented, signifying a robust rewards and recognition system within the organization.

Overall, the average score of 4.39 indicates often implemented, demonstrating a high level of adherence to PRIME-HRM practices.

### B. Level of Work Performance of PRIME-HRM

On work quality, the respondents agree that employees consistently uphold excellent customer service, ensuring a low level of complaints ( $M = 4.31$ ) and they demonstrate thorough and updated knowledge/skills in the job responsibilities and agency operations ( $M = 4.30$ ). They also agree that employees consistently exceed job expectations and surpass the standards set for their role ( $M = 4.12$ ). The computed mean of 4.23 is described as agree. This means that the respondents have high level of work performance in terms of work quality.

This result aligns with the study of Brillantes and Fernandez (2011), who found that institutionalized merit and competence-based HR systems in government agencies significantly enhance employee professionalism and the overall quality of public service delivery. Such systems encourage employees to adhere to high standards and promote continuous improvement, which is evident in the present findings.

Moreover, on work efficiency, the respondents agree that the employees efficiently utilize their time and resources to meet work expectations and achieve the desired output ( $M = 4.21$ ) and they implement innovative policies, use resources/technology efficiently to maximize productivity ( $M = 4.21$ ), they effectively present and communicate complex or technical information in a clear and accessible manner, ensuring it is easily understood ( $M = 4.21$ ), and actively seek opportunities to expand their knowledge and skills while sharing relevant information with co-workers ( $M = 4.21$ ). They also agree that employees suggest innovations to improve operations or streamline procedures ( $M = 4.17$ ). The computed mean of 4.20 is described as agree. This means that the respondents have high level of work performance in terms of work efficiency.

This finding supports Llorin's (2017) assertion that HR maturity, as advanced through the PRIME-HRM framework, cultivates a culture of innovation and resource optimization in

public institutions. Advanced maturity level agencies will have greater strategic planning and productivity decision-making capability, which is consistent with the high efficiency scores found in this study.

Moreover, in work timeliness, the participants reported that the staff responds to and resolves clients' issues in timely manner and they reply their inquiries and demands in exact time. They are also deliver their works on time and with little or no supervision. The calculated value of 4.31 is referred to as Agree. This implies that the respondents are very efficient in their work timing.

This is consistent with Mendoza and Rivera (2019) who stressed that responsiveness and timely delivery of public services are important determinants of citizen satisfaction and confidence on public organizations. These are the key performance measures advocated by PRIME-HRM, indicating the program's success in realizing timely and responsive work behavior among employees.

Overall, the calculated average of 4.25 is classified as agree. This shows that the respondents have relatively very good work performance. This also implies that personnel in the PRIME-HRM system are high performers in quality, effectiveness and timeliness overall. These results corroborate the Civil Service Commission (2020) accounting that high performing PRIME-HRM mature agencies have significantly superior employee performance and public service outcome.

### C. Relationship Between Level of Implementation of PRIME-HRM and the Level of Work Performance Among Employees of GSCWD, DepEd, and LGU-GSC

The normality test of the implementation for PRIME-HRM and work performance of GSCWD, DepEd and LGU-GSC employees use Kolmogorov Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk test proved that the data are not normal. Hence, Spearman Rank Correlation is used to measure the relationship between implementation of PRIME-HRM and work performance among employees of GSCWD, DepEd, and LGU-GSC.

A Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was computed to evaluate the association between the degree of PRIME-HRM implementation and work performance levels among GSCWD, DepEd, and LGU-GSC employees. The analysis revealed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between

Table 5

Relationship between level of implementation of PRIME-HRM and the level of work performance among employees of GSCWD, DepEd, and LGU-GSC

Variables Correlated	r	r <sup>2</sup>	p-value	Extent of Relationship	Remark
Level of Implementation of PRIME-HRM and Level of Work Performance among Employees of GSCWD, DepEd, and LGU-GSC	.559	.312	.000	Moderate	Significant

Table 6

Major themes and sub-themes on the challenges encountered during the implementation of PRIME-HRM and their potential impact on employee work performance

Major Theme	Subtheme
Capacity and Competency Gaps	Lack of Trained Personnel and Expertise Resistance to Technological Change Unequal Access to Learning and Development
Communication and Awareness Issues	Inconsistent Information Dissemination Limited Employee Awareness
Process and System Complexity	Technical and Bureaucratic Challenges Continuous Improvement and Sustainability Resource Constraints
Employee Engagement and Motivation	Improvement Suggestions

PRIME-HRM implementation and work performance levels, with  $r(335) = .559$ ,  $p = .000 < .05$ . This correlation explains 31.2% of the variance in factors related to professional fulfillment. 68.8% of the remaining variations are attributed to other factors. These outcomes indicate that the extent of PRIME-HRM implementation notably impacts the work performance of GSCWD, DepEd, and LGU-GSC employees.

The findings underscore the strategic importance of PRIME-HRM as a framework for enhancing employee work performance within the public sector in General Santos City. Investing in and diligently implementing the various components of PRIME-HRM appears to yield tangible benefits in terms of employee output and effectiveness. The study also provides empirical evidence that can inform decision-making processes related to human resource management practices. Leaders and policymakers in these organizations can leverage these results to prioritize and allocate resources towards strengthening PRIME-HRM initiatives.

Moreover, the 31.2% explained variance suggests that a substantial portion of work performance can be attributed to the level of PRIME-HRM implementation. This highlights the potential for further improvements in overall organizational performance by focusing on enhancing and sustaining the PRIME-HRM system. Though a significant relationship exists,

the unexplained variance (68.8%) indicates that other factors also play a crucial role in influencing work performance. These could include individual employee characteristics such as skills, motivation, experience; organizational culture, leadership styles, availability of resources, and the specific nature of tasks. Future research could explore these other contributing factors.

The findings of this study align with a growing body of research that highlights the positive impact of effective human resource management practices on employee performance as consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between these systems and various organizational outcomes, including employee performance (Combs et al., 2006; Jiang et al., 2012). This is also supported by Guest (2017) that positive and supportive work environment can contribute to higher employee morale and productivity.

The above table present the major themes and sub-themes generated that summarizes the challenges faced by organizations and potential impact on employee performance in Implementing PRIMEHRM.

#### D. Major Theme 1. Capacity and Competency Gaps

The first major challenge generated was on the capacity and competency gaps of the employees. This is further elaborated into lack of trained and expert personnel in PRIMEHRM, the resistant of people to technological changes, and unequal learning and development among employees. The following sub-themes will be discussed in detail below.

##### 1) Sub-Theme 1 Lack of Trained Personnel and Expertise

An important barrier noted by a number of informants is the lack of a critical number of adequately trained personnel with the skills required to be able to successfully apply the PRIME-HRM tasks. This gap is highly noticeable in processing complex transactions, such as submission of reportorial

requirements of the Performance Management System (PMS) and review and calibration of performance rating standards.

As an example, INFO01 stated that *"One of the problems is the reportorial requirements for PMS, where there are no trained staff or expertise to concentrate on it. The establishment and calibration of the standard matrix for the IPCR rating is long overdue discussion which remains unresolved."*

This unavailability of skilled personnel results in bottlenecks and delays which affect the efficient operation of performance evaluation processes. INFO06 was also concerned with the uneven distribution of knowledge, leading to a lack of competence within and between departments *"I think one challenge to awareness is the lack of consistent information dissemination across all departments since ADWYHR is reaches every office just once in a year of implementation. Employees may forget or may not be aware of the initiative unless they are directly involved in HR or required to attend specific briefings."*

In the absence of consistent training and capacity development schemes, employees are unlikely to be able to meet the technical requirements of PRIME-HRM, an issue that may have implications for performance appraisal success and could negatively impact employee motivation and productivity.

##### 2) Sub-Theme 2 Resistance to Technological Change

One key issue in the successful rollout of PRIME-HRM is staff resistance to new technologies. A number of participants reported that certain employees have difficulty adjusting to computerized systems including the HRIS and employee portals on the web. This resistance has prevented them from taking full advantage of the utilities of system automation.

For instance, INFO02 said, some workers *"cannot stand alone while using the employee portal,"* pointing to an inability to navigate new digital tools independently. This digital literacy gap not only hinders the speed of HR procedures but it can also create tension for employees who struggle to adapt.

This resistance can translate to inefficiency, or errors, in day-to-day tasks, such as leave applications, performance submissions, which now had to be done through online sources.

This challenge can be addressed by providing focused training and support that guides individuals to be more comfortable and competent in working with the new technologies to achieve the desired improvements in HR management.

##### 3) Sub-Theme 3 Unequal Access to Learning and Development

Inequality of learning and development access among employees was another issue raised by some participants. Although PRIME-HRM promotes ongoing capacity development through regular trainings, the availability of resources and facilitators has constrained the extent to which all staff have equal opportunity for technical or skills development.

For example, INFO02 highlighted that *"the challenge to acquire equal learning and development initiatives specifically on technical trainings were not equally given to the employees due to limited availability of learning service provider."* This



discrepancy impacts the ability of employees to develop their skills and stay up to date with changing HR practices and technologies.

Differences in learning opportunities can result in discrepancies of skills for the labor force and inconsistent job performance and organizational effectiveness. Overcoming this challenge requires conscious efforts to make sure that all staff have equal access to growth opportunities, and therefore collectively strengthening the capacity of the workforce to implement PRIME-HRM.

#### *E. Major Theme 2. Communication and Awareness Issues*

Effective communication and awareness among the employees are important for a successful PRIME-HRM implementation. Yet, problems arise when information regarding the program are not being communicated widely in all departments or when employees have little knowledge of PRIME-HRM goals as well as its benefits. These barriers to communication and understanding can limit employee engagement and involvement and ultimately the success of the initiative. These challenges are further explored in the following subthemes.

##### *1) Sub-Theme 1 Inconsistent Information Dissemination*

Lack of effective communication on PRIME-HRM has been identified as a challenge by most of the respondents as information about PRIME-HRM is not always well communicated between different departments and offices. The HRMO might be giving orientations and awareness programs, however the outreach is occasionally insufficient.

For instance, INFO06 mentioned that the annual initiative, “*A Day with your HR*”, that visits every office only once a year, which may not be enough to keep employees updated about the PRIME-HRM policies. Because it is infrequent and rare, this minimal communication causes some employees to forget important information, or even be unaware of the program if they are not directly involved with HR.

This inconsistency in dissemination of information can lead to lack of knowledge and also participation resulting in low effectiveness of PRIME-HRM implementation.

##### *2) Sub-Theme 2 Limited Employee Awareness*

Low awareness of PRIME-HRM among employees is also one of the major hurdles for its implementation. A number of respondents observed that a common perception among staff who are not directly working in HR functions is that they do not know what PRIME-HRM is and how it benefits them.

For example, INFO05 indicated that some *workers “don’t even know what PRIME-HRM is”* which demonstrates a lack of understanding that in turn inhibits full engagement with the program. Their relatively low level of awareness can influence the way employees perceive PRIME-HRM as an obligation that they have to fulfil rather than an instrument to help ensure a positive and progressive work life for them.

#### *F. Major Theme 3. Process and System Complexity*

The adoption and execution of PRIME-HRM also encounters problems due to complexity of the processes and systems. The technical and extra bureaucratic hurdles are a

challenge for some workers. These related challenges are further discussed under the following subthemes.

##### *1) Sub-Theme 1 Technical and Bureaucratic Challenges*

A common issue mentioned by the respondents is related to the complexity of the technicalities and bureaucracy of the PRIME-HRM processes. The procedures and terminologies of the PRIME-HRM are somewhat challenging and confusing to the staff, which hinders smooth implementation.

For instance, INFO06 reported that some personnel found the technical terminology and added documentation overwhelming and thought the procedures were “*very technical*.” The participant adds that “*added layers of documentation can feel bureaucratic, especially the need to provide proof of performance during performance rating*.” This additional paperwork may discourage prompt and accurate compliance.

##### *2) Sub-Theme 2 Continuous Improvement and Sustainability*

Sustaining and continual improvement of PRIME-HRM implementation presented a significant challenge according to the respondents. Although PRIME-HRM programs and systems have been successfully implemented and has led to change, maintaining the new and improved conditions will take sustained effort and continued attention in the future.

INFO03 emphasized the importance of revisiting PRIME-HRM on a regular basis, “*The main challenge really is consistency and continuous improvement. It is very important that PRIME-HRM is not just being established but also revisited on an annual basis to which I think will become a challenge for the team*.”

Similarly, INFO06 reported the role of policy in facilitating practice and highlighted resource barriers, “*The conferment of PRIME-HRM Level II accreditation brought improvements in policies and practices, including standardization and data-based assessments. However, lack of necessary resources remains a barrier for continuous improvement*.”

In addition, INFO02 noted that automations and system innovations have enabled the HR to focus on strategic activities associated with ongoing improvement, “*System automation was a milestone that gave HR personnel the opportunity to focus on strategic initiatives to improve continuously in managing human resources*.”

Despite these developments, achieving sustainability continues to face its challenges, including resource constraints, employee involvement, and ability to adjust to changing needs of organization.

##### *3) Sub-theme 3 Resource Constraints*

Resource constraints were identified as a key challenge for the successful implementation and sustainability of PRIME-HRM. Respondents from different organizations described how insufficient resource - whether financial, people, or technology - hampered the ongoing development of HR systems and inhibited equal access to development opportunities.

According to INFO02, “*employees were not equally offered training and development due to lack of learning service providers*,” emphasizing that inadequate resources limit equitable capacity building opportunities. This inequity has a direct impact on the motivation and performance of employees

who did not have access to upskilling opportunities.

INFO04 also recognized insufficient resources as a challenge to accommodate change in new processes and systems, *“There’s always a need for adoption of new processes/systems for continuous improvement, but maybe one reason or barrier in terms of improvement in an organization is the lack of the necessary resources.”* This demonstrates how a lack of resources can hamper efforts to modernize, impeding the organization’s ability to keep pace with HR demands.

Furthermore, INFO03 stressed that resources are vital to maintain PRIME-HRM’s learning and development; performance management; and rewards programs year-round.

#### G. Major Theme 4. Employee Engagement and Motivation

Employee engagement and motivation are key considerations affecting the success of PRIME-HRM. Issues in these areas can shape how employees understand and take part in the program. The next subthemes describe what engagement gaps were observed, and what could be done to increase employee engagement.

##### 1) Sub-theme 1 Improvement Suggestions

Respondents suggested several concrete recommendations to increase the awareness, involvement, and adherence of PRIME-HRM, which included the concept of sustained communication and recognition, and building capacity.

INFO06 proposed building on awareness activities other than once-a-year program *“A Day with Your HR”*, so that each office would no longer receive an awareness visit just once a year. They recommended communication to be more continuous and regular to avoid employees from forgetting or even not knowing about PRIME-HRM programs.

Another significant recommendation was to motivate the performers with rewards. A number of informants emphasized the need to recognize the time and effort employees who have made an effort on PRIME-HRM. Regular award and recognition ceremonies were perceived as an effective way to boost morale and stimulate involvement.

Some of the respondents also emphasized the need for continuous training and capacity development to address capacity gaps. INFO02 stated that availability of technical training should be equitable, even where learning service providers are few, while INFO04 emphasized that new processes and systems must be continually implemented in order to maintain improvement.

In general, these recommendations are indicative of an integrated process, combining communication, recognition, and capacity-building, in order to enhance employee engagement and to leverage the potential implementation of PRIME-HRM.

### 3. Conclusions

Based from the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

The research established a positive significant relationship between the adoption of PRIME-HRM and employee work performance, this rejected the first null hypothesis. This confirms that successful execution of PRIME-HRM is associated with better work performance of the employees in

the organizations under study.

On the other hand, significant difference in work performance did not exist in terms of demographic factors including sex, length of service, and rank thus accepting the second null hypothesis. This implies that employee performance is uniform among these demographic groups in PRIME-HRM context. In general, these observations highlight the value of sound practices of PRIME-HRM in improving employee performance, irrespective of demographic disparities among employees of GSCWD, DepEd, and LGU-GSC.

#### A. Recommendations

In the light of the findings from the data, the researcher recommends to:

1. Employees are encouraged to engage in lifelong learning and training related to technology literacy and positional skill sets. Considering the level of service provided to ensure timely, high-quality work, staff should seek out training to be able to function independently on new systems to improve efficiency and minimize the need for supervision.
2. Managers and administrators need to invest in capacity-building programs that emphasize digital literacy and technical competency skills to overcome resistance to change in technology and uneven access to learning efforts. They also need good communications plans to support sustained and frequent sharing of PRIME-HRM information which can raise employees' awareness and motivation in all departments.
3. Other government departments might consider following these PRIME-HRM practices to ensure fairness and transparency in recruitment, appraisal and rewards. Since demographic variables had no significant effect on productivity, such systems may enable fair treatment and might help to sustain performance across their workforce.
4. The Civil Service Commission may consider expanding the coverage of awareness campaigns to increase employee knowledge and interest. Continuing to assist agencies in customizing capacity-building approaches to their staff may additionally enhance standard use of PRIME-HRM.
5. Further research could investigate broad set of other individual and institutional factors that determine the performance of employees other than the implementation of PRIME-HRM strategies include individual motivation, leadership and organizational culture. Examining the interactions of these variables with demographics may provide further understanding on the enhancement of work productivity in governmental organizations.

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