Challenges on Human Resource Management: The University of Eastern Philippines Experience

BY

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Abstract

This study investigated the challenges to human resource development in the University of Eastern Philippines. The research work is a descriptive study employing qualitative method for data collection and analyses. It was found out that in the recruitment, selection and placement, staffing workforce plan and recruitment plan which documents "primarily based on the consolidated and summarized reports/ recommendations submitted by the different units and colleges of the university" are existing. Nevertheless, flaws manifest with the failure to fill in vacant plantilla/regular positions that resulted to the hiring of "too many part-time lecturers" in lieu of the shortage of regular faculty members. The hiring of part-time lecturers "shows accommodation" as they even lack master's degree and specializations. On training and development, the following problems were found: inefficiency with the "loss of documents" like application for scholarship, "trainings are given less importance" with scarcity in training opportunities, "sending to seminars not in their field of specialization", and "priority list is disregarded" in the scholarship program. Regarding performance management, "mismanagement of performance evaluation" is evident as "Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR) are already signed by supervisor or peers" giving the faculty members to evaluate themselves and get higher ratings. On rewards and recognition, "promotion could also fill the vacancies. However, the "accumulation of vacant positions" in the university shows that there is a "delay of filling-up of vacant plantilla positions". Faculty members are also "deprived of opportunities of being promoted under chain promotion" aggravated by the "change of priorities by the management" as promotion is not one of the priorities. The study concludes that with the influx of enrollees in the university, there is a shortage of regular faculty members manifested by the hiring of numerous part-time lecturers. The learning and development (L & D) program in the university is not beneficial as training and seminars are sometimes not fit with the attendees' field of specialization making it unusable for one's subject/course. The performance evaluation has to be strictly followed to get the real individual performance of a faculty member. This will affect the performance management system if not rectified. The implementation of Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (PRAISE) is irregularly and the loyalty award is the only commonly given hence, will not serve as a retaining and motivation factor to well-performing faculty members.

Keywords: Human Resource Development, Faculty Development Program, Human Resource Management, Personnel Management, Recruitment, Selection and Placement, Talent Sourcing, Learning and Development, Performance Management, Rewards and Recognition

1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of all aspects of Human Resource Management is on developing a superior workforce so that the organization and its individual employees can accomplish their work goals in service to clients. It is the framework for helping organizations' workforce develop their skills, knowledge, and abilities through employee training, career development, performance development, mentoring, coaching, tuition assistance, and other activities which improves organizational effectiveness and performance. In essence, HRD is an HRM approach.

Applied effectively, human resource development is a key way to attract and retain talent to your organization and also provides the means to identify and prepare employees for advancement ensuring organization's future leadership as experienced and well-trained.

A strong Human Resource Development (HRD) program can also improve company productivity and profitability while

increasing employee satisfaction. HRD is actually one of the most significant opportunities that employees look for when they are considering taking a new position. It helps create an environment where employees feel that their organization is investing in them, which creates a more loyal workforce and makes them amenable to change when they're exposed to new skills, information, and practices on a regular basis.

Of all the factors that contribute to organization performance, the human element is the most fundamental. Managers across the public, private, and non-profit sectors are increasingly recognizing that employees are their organization's most important assets and that the most significant source of competitive advantage comes from having the best systems in place for attracting, motivating, retaining, and managing their organization's human resources.

In an environment of increased competition spurred by globalization, one of the principal challenges of public personnel management is to motivate the employees under the condition of limited budget, demand for efficiency and organizational performance, decreased prestige, and increased scrutiny. In an era of low budgets, it is difficult to attract the cream of the crop when the organizations cannot afford to offer a competitive salary. In an age of globalization, there are sufficient opportunities for talented people to find jobs outside government.

Motivating the employees in the public sector is a challenge when they are attracted by the opportunities in the private sector. The dedication to public service motivates public sector employees. They believe that they can make a difference to the lives of people in their society. Public servants are motivated by the internal dynamics of the organizations. Rapid promotion and increasing salaries can motivate but must be quick rather than complex rigid system of promotion based on grading and classification. It is particularly difficult to recruit qualified people when public employees no longer the respect and prestige once enjoyed no longer exists.

Another challenge is to help other employees adapt to technology leading to a need for continuous training in new technology and to maintain continuity and preserve a degree of specialization in public service. Governments are the largest employer in many countries but faces a growing challenge in efforts at recruitment and retention. There is scarcity of people qualified to deal with present-day technology. Government needs to pay an attractive salary in order to recruit skilled people. It is therefore competing directly with the private sector to recruit the best people.

Pride in one's job influences worker performance. The constant projection of a negative image of public service complicates recruitment and retention in the government services. In previous decades, one of the major attractions for public sector jobs is the tenure and protection enjoyed by civil servants. With the rise of the contractual employment, the public servants no longer enjoy the security formerly associated with the job. The tenure system protected civil servants form the arbitrary loss of jobs and political

ramifications. The loss of this system has also led to an erosion of the commitment and loyalty of public servants.

In the Philippine context, human resource management (HRM) has shifted from its "traditional, micro-focused role" to a "macro-strategic paradigm in which individual HR functions such as selection, training, compensation, and performance appraisal are aligned not only with the organizational strategy but also with one another". It is strategic when individual performance is linked to the achievement of organizational goals. Consequently, it is also a move toward ASEAN integration and HR global trends. The ultimate goal is for government services to have an impact in the lives of Filipino men and woman by shifting to Strategic HR and building a strong, competitive, and highly motivated workforce of civil servants.

The University of Eastern Philippines had just celebrated its centennial anniversary. It is dubbed as first state university of the Visayas, providing world-class services to its clients. However, with all the accolade, the researcher is very keen in pursuing this study to thoroughly explore the extent of human resource development environment of the university to create a motivational force that induces individuals to perform meaningful public, community, and social service.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to identify the challenges related to human resource development program encountered by the employees of the University of Eastern Philippines in terms of the following:

1.1. Recruitment, Selection, and Placement
1.2 Learning and Development
1.3 Performance Management
1.4 Rewards and Recognition

3. METHODOLOGY

The University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) established in 1918, currently with three campuses, is located three kilometers from Catarman, the capital town of the Province of Northern Samar. The province is one of the provinces of the Philippines in the Eastern Visayas region approximately 732.72 kilometers southeast of Manila.

This research work is a descriptive study attempting to identify the challenges encountered by the employees on human resource development program of the University of Eastern Philippines system. The nature of the study demands for a pure qualitative method and used the very common qualitative techniques such as key informant interview, focus group discussions, and review of secondary data for data collection and analyses.

The key informants consisted of the Supervising Administrative Officer (SAO) of the Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) of the main campus, the two (2) HRMO designates of the satellite campuses, to represent the university administration.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the faculty members to participate in the focus group discussion (FGD) to validate

the information given by the Supervising Administrative Officer and HRMO designates. The selection was based on seniority. length of service, and rendered at least 10 years of service in the university.

Same series of open-ended questions for the semi-structured interview was used in this study to interview the key informants and in the focus group discussions (FGDs).

The data collected from the key informants were analyzed using thematic analysis, the six-step approach developed by Braun and Clarke.

4. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Recruitment, Selection, and Placement

It was found out that the university has an existing staffing workforce plan and recruitment plan and which document is "primarily based on the consolidated and summarized reports/ recommendations submitted by the different units and colleges of the university."

However, those plans were never used as vacant plantilla or regular positions had not been filled up since 2018. Most of the "hiring at present are for part-time lecturers instead of regular faculty" said the participants of an FGD. The problem with part-time lecturers became serious with the hiring of applicants "who are not master's degree holder" and who are even "not honor graduates" or with special qualification such as to hold General Education (GE) courses as mandated by the commission on Higher Education (CHED). The hiring of unqualified part-time lecturers visibly "shows accommodation" for those who would just like to be employed. The university accumulated "too many part-time lecturers" which reached to 230 as of February 2021 to compensate the lack of regular faculty members.

Learning and Development

Some of the challenges on Learning and Development (L & D) of the university as stated by FGD participants were office inefficiency because of reported "loss of applications for scholarship applicants due to designations of in charge to other positions." Applicants has to again resubmit their applications but has to note that "priority list is disregarded" sometimes in scholarships opportunities in the university.

"Trainings are not given significance as compared to scholarships opportunities." A participant of an FGD in the main campus revealed that she was told to attend a webinar regarding topics "not in their field of specialization" or current work and assignment.

This contradicts the Civil Service Commission (CSC) through MC 19 s. 2005 which provides that the selection of participants in training and development programs shall be based on actual needs for specialization and enhancement of competence, taking into consideration organizational priorities.

Performance Management

On performance management, there is "mismanagement of performance evaluation" as the performance of every faculty member is not evaluated seriously. The "Individual Performance Commitment Review (IPCR) are already signed by supervisor or peers" making the faculty themselves rate on behalf of the supervisor or peers. This indicates that there is leniency in performance evaluation by the supervisor and negated the findings of the study of Mathis & Jackson (2011) that HRD needs assessment is very important to know what the problem is and needs to be improved. The training, expertise, and essential needs are analyzed and diagnosed.

Rewards and Recognition

As part of rewards and recognition, "promotion could also fill the vacancies" vacated through retirement and resignation. Workforce planning allows for a more efficient and operative workforce and helps ensure that replacements are available to fill important vacancies (Sinclair, 2004). The "accumulation of vacant positions" in the university negated the study of Kapur (2020) that talent planning is a comprehensive strategy that structures how a company plans for hiring, retaining, and developing their current and future employees

With the vacancies of plantilla or regular positions in the university, this shows that there is a "delay of filling-up of vacant plantilla positions" and faculty members are also "deprived of opportunities of being promoted under chain promotion" aggravated by the fact that there is "change of priorities by the management" and promotion is not one of the priorities.

Rewards and some incentives requested by the university were "approved in principle pending submission of some conditions to the UEP Board of Regents" said the HRMO. He added that the "conditions have already met, only that the new administration has another perspective" other than PRAISE. It can be deduced that PRAISE is not a priority at present by the management. This opposes the findings in the study of George (2019) that sound human resource program helps the management to anticipate personnel shortages and surpluses and develops ways to avoid or correct HR problems before they become serious.

Key informants and participants in FGD disclosed that the "loyalty award is the common award" granted since the last awarding of university-level awards and incentives in the centennial celebration of the university in 2018. However, FGD participants in the main campus argued that even so, the loyalty award is still given irregularly because "it is not given when the same becomes due." This is settled in the findings of Torrington et al. (2005) that as time passes, the link in the decision-makers mind between activities and rewards fades. Even the most experienced managers find it difficult to undertake fair and objective appraisals of their employees' performance. Subjective judgments are often taken into account, leading to perceptions of bias.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The following are the conclusions and implications based on the findings of this study:

The staffing workforce and recruitment plans are not implemented as planned effecting shortage of regular faculty

members. Lacking in regular faculty members, the university resorted to hiring of part-time lecturers, some of whom have deficient in expertise and specialization.

Training and seminars are sometimes not fit with the attendees' field of specialization, therefore making it unusable for one's subject/course.

The performance evaluation has to be strictly followed to get the real individual performance of a faculty member. This will affect the performance management system if not rectified.

The implementation of Program on Awards and Incentives for Service Excellence (PRAISE) is irregular being implemented only during the centennial celebration and the loyalty award is only one commonly given. It will not serve as a retaining and motivation factor to well-performing faculty members.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. The vacant plantilla/regular positions shouldbe immediately filled-up to minimize the hiring of part-time lecturers. the orientation of the university structure, system, and process.
2. Trainings and scholarships should be allocated and available to all faculty members.
3. The university should conduct a re-orientation on the use of performance evaluations.
4. Other awards and recognitions should be given to deserving faculty members.

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