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PRIME HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT MODEL AMONG SUCs IN SAMAR ISLAND

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Abstract: This study explored the implementation of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) across State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Samar Island. It aimed to assess the extent of implementation of four PRIME-HRM core systems—Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP); Learning and Development (L&D); Performance Management (PM); and Rewards and Recognition (R&R)—and identify institutional best practices to inform a context-specific HRM model.

A mixed-methods explanatory sequential design was used. Quantitative data were gathered from 648 respondents using validated tools, while qualitative data were obtained through focus group discussions guided by the Appreciative Inquiry 4D model (Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny). Thematic analysis was employed in the qualitative phase to extract institutional strengths.

Quantitative results showed that all four PRIME-HRM components were "Much Implemented" (MI), with PM and RSP receiving the highest mean scores. Qualitative data revealed six emergent themes: (1) a clear and development-oriented performance evaluation system, (2) meritocratic and inclusive recruitment practices, (3) effective implementation with continuous PRIME-HRM advancement, (4) supportive and structured L&D systems, (5) collaborative and participatory HR governance, and (6) technology-enabled and data-driven HRM transformation. These themes emphasized not only compliance with Civil Service Commission standards but also institutional values of transparency, equity, empowerment, and innovation.

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative findings revealed that Samar Island SUCs possess foundational HRM systems with high implementation levels, supported by collaborative governance and forward-looking digital strategies. However, gaps in system automation and structured evaluation persist. The study proposes an enhanced HRM model for SUCs that integrates strategic leadership, inclusive practices, and digital infrastructure to elevate HR maturity levels and achieve long-term PRIME-HRM sustainability.

Keywords: PRIME-HRM, Human Resource Management, State Universities and Colleges (SUCs), Appreciative Inquiry, HRM Best Practices

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1. INTRODUCTION

State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) are key actors in shaping the higher education landscape of the Philippines. They perform four core functions: instruction, research, extension, and production (Commission on Higher Education [CHED], 2016). As institutions mandated by Republic Act No. 8292 to promote research and extension, SUCs also align their programs with CHED Memorandum Order No. 52, s. 2016, which emphasizes evidence-based interventions for societal development. Given this mandate, SUCs must be equipped with robust systems—particularly in human resource management (HRM)—to ensure their performance aligns with national education and development goals.

PRIME-HRM measures institutional maturity across four core systems: Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP); Learning and Development (L&D); Performance Management (PM); and Rewards and Recognition (R&R). These are assessed through four maturity levels: Transactional (Level 1), Process-defined (Level 2), Integrated (Level 3), and Strategic HRM (Level 4). According to the CSC (2023), as of the latest data, out of 112 SUCs in the Philippines, only one has achieved Maturity Level IV, 12 have reached Level III, while the majority remain at Levels I and II. On Samar Island, none of the four SUCs have attained Levels III or IV. Most remain at Level II, with notable gaps in automation, policy alignment, and strategic HR practices (CSC, 2023).

Hence, this study investigates the perceived implementation level of PRIME-HRM among SUCs in Samar Island and explores existing gaps using a mixed-methods approach. The results aim to serve as a basis for crafting responsive HRM models to support SUCs in attaining higher maturity levels. Ultimately, this research contributes to the national goal of professionalizing human resource systems in higher education institutions, thereby enhancing public service quality and organizational excellence.

2. OBJECTIVES

This study developed a human resource management model for SUCs in Samar Island.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following:

1. Determine the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Samar Island regarding:
1.1 PRIME-HRM level;
1.2 SUC level;
1.3 ISO Certifications;
1.4 AACCUP level of accreditations; and
1.5 COPC (number of programs that have been awarded for COPC).
2. Determine the profile of the respondents based on:
2.1 Executive and middle leaders
2.2 Full-time faculty
2.3 Researchers and extension workers; and
2.4 Administrative personnel.
3. Determine the extent of implementation of the existing HRM system in the following areas:
3.1 recruitment, selection and placement;
3.2 learning and development;
3.3 rewards and recognition; and
3.4 performance management.
4. Evaluate the extent of implementation of the HRM system.
5. Explore the best practices of the participants regarding the implementation of the PRIME-HRM System.

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3. METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods explanatory sequential design was used. Quantitative data were gathered from 648 respondents using validated tools, while qualitative data were obtained through focus group discussions guided by the Appreciative Inquiry 4D model (Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny). Thematic analysis was employed in the qualitative phase to extract institutional strengths.

Research Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire demonstrated good psychometric properties in this study. The internal consistency, measured by Cronbach's alpha, was .953, indicating that the items within the instrument are measuring a similar construct. Test-retest reliability, assessed by Pearson, showed an r=.279 correlation, suggesting that the instrument provides stable results over time. Furthermore, the instrument demonstrated good construct validity, as evidenced by using Product Momentum Correlation. These findings support the use of the instrument for the evaluation of the extent of PRIME-HRM Core Systems in the four (4) SUCs of Samar Island.

The researcher used questionnaire as data gathering instrument for this study.

Questionnaire

The is a structured tool and consists of four parts. Part I of the questionnaire will consist of items about the SUCs-respondents' profile which will include their PRIME HR level, SUC level, ISO Certifications, AACCUP level of accreditation and COPC status and profile of the employees. This will be a combination of supply type and checklist wherein the respondents will be tasked to fill in the needed information on the blank spaces provided and/or will have to place a check mark (/) on the appropriate line spaces in each item.

Part II of the questionnaire was a 10-item checklist about the human resource officers-respondents' perception on the extent of implementation of PRIME-HRM. This will require the respondents to check the appropriate column of their responses using the following 5-point scale: 5 for Very Much Implemented 4 for Much Implemented, 3 Implemented, 2 for Less Implemented and 1 for Least Implemented.

For qualitative phase, the questionnaire was composed of three (3) parts, part one is the preliminary questions about the respondents' knowledge and role on the implementation of PRIME-HRM in their institution, the second part are the main questions which is the body wherein the respondents were asked as to the extent of implementation of PRIME-HRM Core systems. Lastly the third part, respondents were asked to give some recommendations to strengthen the PRIME-HRM level of their institution. Guide questions for the conduct of focus group discussion were also prepared to confirm the extent of implementation the PRIME-HRM systems particularly on their best practices and involvement in the said system.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discussion based on the collected data on the human resource management model development and validation among states, universities, and colleges (SUCs) in Samar Island. It includes both quantitative and qualitative results. Furthermore, an integrative discussion offers a richer interpretation of the research findings.

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Profile of the State Universities and Colleges in Samar Island

This section presents profile of SUCs in terms of PRIME-HRM level, SUC level, ISO Certifications, Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP) level of accreditations, and number of programs awarded for Certificate of Program Compliance (COPC).

PRIME-HRM Level of SUCs in Samar Island

This section presents the findings on the current Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) level of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Samar Island. The data indicate the level of compliance of each SUC in terms of human resource maturity as assessed by the Civil Service Commission (CSC).

The findings show presents the profiles of four state universities in Samar Island, explicitly detailing their PRIME-HRM levels, SUCs levels, ISO certifications, AACCUP levels, and the number of programs with Certificates of Program Compliance (COPC). The results indicate that all universities maintain a PRIME- HRM level of II-this level states that the agency's RSP policies and/or processes are customized to agency's requirements and include specific guidelines in the application of equal employment opportunity principles, this status also describe how the agency's RSP policies and processes meet its recruitment, selection and placement requirements, suggesting a similar baseline for human resource management capabilities. Each institution's ISO certifications are categorized as recertified, demonstrating compliance with international standards.

Table 1
Profile of Four State Universities in Samar Island

SUCs	PRIME-HRM Level	SUCs Level	ISO Certifications	AACCUP Level	Number of Programs with COPC
SUC A	II		Recertified		16-20
SUC B	II	III II III	Recertified		More than 20
SUC C	II	III	Recertified		16-20
SUC D	II		Recertified	⊃OD	More than 20

This means that these universities previously achieved ISO certification and is now going through the process of renewing or maintaining that certification. This means that universities are sustaining on-going commitment to quality, audit and compliance process, significant impact on stakeholders and continuous improvement focus.

The AACCUP levels demonstrate variability, with one university (SUC C) achieving level IV while others range from III to Center of Development (COD). This accreditation level meets high standards in instruction, research, performance, and extension services. These characterizes full administrative and financial autonomy, excellence in research and extension, well-developed instructional methods, strong industry and stakeholder linkages, internationally recognized quality standards, excellent faculty and advanced facilities and strong institutional stability and sustainability.

The number of programs with COPC fluctuates, as two universities offer more than 20 programs, while the others range from 16 to 20. These findings suggest that, although the overall quality of management practices among the universities is consistent, differences in AACCUP levels

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may indicate varying standards of academic program quality and institutional effectiveness. A greater emphasis on attaining higher AACCUP levels and expanding programs with COPC may enhance these institutions' educational offerings and overall reputation.

Profile of the Respondents

This section presents the demographic and professional profile of the respondents who participated in the study. The respondents were categorized into four groups: executive and middle leaders, full-time faculty, researchers and extension workers, and administrative personnel.

As shown in table 2, the participants of the study were composed of 132 (20.37%) executives and middle managers, followed by 331(51.08%) full time faculty members, then 41 (6.33%) researchers and extension workers and 144 (22.22%) administrative personnel. This further shows that 648 respondents were involved in the study. Data saturation was met in the 9th key participants of the study for qualitative phase.

Table 2
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Participants of the Study

Respondents	f	%
Executives and Middle Managers	132	20.37%
Full time faculty	331	51.08%
Researchers and extension workers	41	6.33%
Administrative Personnel	144	22.22%
Total	**648**	**100%**
Participants for Qualitative	**9**	**100%**

Further, total stratified sampling was utilized in the quantitative part of the study while purposive sampling for qualitative phase of the study. Inclusion criteria were set to identify the Key participants in the study. Inclusion criteria are the following: must be involved in the four systems in the PRIME-HRM, involved during the application of their institution's PRIME-HRM award, and consented to participate in the study.

The profile of respondents highlights the diverse composition of SUC personnel in Samar Island, each contributing uniquely to institutional operations and development. The representation of executive and middle leaders, faculty, researchers, and administrative staff ensures a comprehensive understanding of HRM practices across various functional domains. These insights serve as a crucial basis for formulating policies and strategies that address the specific needs and challenges of each group within the proposed HRM model.

Consequently, Table 3 presents the frequency distribution of respondents across four state universities, categorized by work classification. A total of 648 respondents were analyzed, with the highest representation in the Full-Time Faculty category (51.08%), followed by Top Management and Middle Managers (20.37%), Administrative Personnel (22.22%), and Research and Extension Personnel

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(6.33%).

SUC A had the highest proportion of Top Management and Middle Managers at 29.4%, while SUC B reported the most significant percentage of Full- Time Faculty at 51.6%. Notably, SUC C displayed a lower representation of Top Management at 15.1% compared to the other institutions. Administrative Personnel were significantly represented across all universities, with SUC A and SUC C showing similar percentages at 25.6% and 34.9%, respectively.

Table 3
Frequency Distribution on the Profile of Respondents to their Work Classification

Work Classification	SUC A		SUC B		UC C		UC D		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Top Management and Middle Managers	47	29.4	39	24.5	22	15.1	24	13.1	132	20.37
Full-Time Faculty	61	38.1	82	51.6	60	41.1	128	69.9	331	51.08
Research and Extension Personnel	11	6.9	8	5.0	13	8.9	9	4.9	41	6.33
Administrative Personnel	41	25.6	30	18.9	51	34.9	22	12.0	144	22.22
Total	**160**	**100.0**	**159**	**100.0**	**146**	**100.0**	**183**	**100.0**	**648**	**100.0**

These findings imply a strong presence of Full-Time Faculty among the surveyed institutions, suggesting that these roles are essential to the universities' operational success and institutional framework. The lower percentage of Research and Extension Personnel may indicate a need for improved research program activities to hire additional staff, which could impact institutional advancement. The varied distribution of management roles highlights potential areas for strategic workforce development and resource allocation.

Extent of Implementation of the Existing PRIME-HRM System

This section presents the extent to which the existing Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) system is implemented across key functional areas. The assessment covers the following domains: recruitment, selection and placement; learning and development; rewards and recognition; and performance management. Assessing these areas provides valuable insights into the strengths and gaps in HRM practices within SUCs in Samar Island.

Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP). The level of implementation of the Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP) component of the PRIME-HRM System among four State Universities in Samar Island. The overall mean ratings for all statements fall within the range of 3.50 to 4.49, which corresponds to "Much Implemented (MI)". This suggests that while the core policies and processes of RSP are in place and actively practiced across the universities, there is still room for enhancement towards full institutionalization.

During the triangulation, the participants stated "*We have the manual from the CSC that is being followed by the HRMO, wide dissemination of vacancies like facebook, website and posters"*

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"The recruitment and selection, so as the placement they are following the protocol and procedure based on our manual, this is managed by the HRMO"

Learning and Development

The level of implementation of the Learning and Development (L&D) component of the PRIME-HRM Systems among the four SUCs in Samar Island. The overall mean ratings for all statements falls between 3.50 to 4.49 which is categorized as "Much Implemented" (MI). This indicates a reasonable consistency among respondents regarding their perceptions of L & D practices.

During the triangulation, the participants stated that *" We have faculty dev't, Program like Study leave, PLAN A,B, C, to get, stipend, amount for dissertation, thesis assistance and allowances, P 40,000 for dissertation, for PLAN C, our faculty members were given privilege to avail travel on official time every Monday and Friday for classes outside in our city*

"The university offers a lot and is doing efforts to accommodate all employees as to L&D demands. Of course, all trainings possible for career/professional development—catering to the four core functions."

Rewards and Recognition

The mean and standard deviation of Rewards and Recognition (R&R) for SUCs, the overall mean score of 4.05, classified as "Much Implemented" (MI), with a standard deviation of .89, reflects a generally positive view of R&R practices among respondents.

During the triangulation, the participants stated that "*I Salute to the institutional policy, vertically alignment is very important, they are following the guidelines from the CHED Memorandum*

Group A state that: *First we have the SULO award with different categories like, research, extension, instruction and even for JO, best academic manager, they are motivated because of cash incentives, but in research…we also have best faculty but as a full-time faculty he cannot earned points in other areas like research and extension, but there were designated*

Performance Management. For the implementation of PRIME-HRM System in four SUCs in Samar Island concerning Performance Management (PM). The overall mean score of 4.12, categorized as 'Much Implemented" (MI), with a standard deviation of 0.88, indicates a generally positive perception of PM practices among respondents. Notably, the highest mean score (4.29, MI, SD=.021) corresponds to the agency's use of a prescribed form, such as the Individual Performance Commitment and Review (IPCR), for recording comments and recommendations about employee performance. This suggests a structured approach to performance evaluation that encourages transparency and feedback. A study by Armstrong & Taylor (2020) suggested that standardized documentation enhances fairness and consistency in performance reviews.

During the triangulation, the participants stated " ***There is really fairness we have a definite questionnaire, in line with the CHED policies, indicators taken are in line with NBC. evaluation of the student, peer and supervisor.***

SUCs Best Practices in the Implementation of the PRIME-HRM System

The quantitative findings revealed that the implementation of PRIME-HRM core systems in the four SUCs on Samar Island is generally at the Much Implemented (MI) level, with some areas

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categorized as Very Much Implemented (VMI). Among the core HR systems, Performance Management (PM) and Recruitment, Selection, and Placement (RSP) received the highest ratings, indicating strong adherence to Civil Service Commission (CSC) guidelines and institutional policies. However, areas such as Learning and Development (L&D), while positively rated, demonstrated a need for further enhancement, particularly in structured training programs and leadership development.

Given these findings, the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) research design was utilized in the qualitative phase to explore the strengths and successes of the current HRM implementation. Appreciative Inquiry, as a strengths-based approach, focuses on what works well in an organization rather than identifying deficiencies (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 2012). By employing the 4D model (Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny), this study captured the best practices or strengths of the SUCs based on the perspectives of HR officers, administrators, and personnel.

These best practices were presented in thematic analysis, theme 1- transparent and development-oriented evaluation system, theme 2- meritocratic and inclusive recruitment and selection process, theme 3- effectively implemented and continuously advancing PRIME-HRM systems, theme 4- supportive and structured learning and development system, theme 5- collaborative and participating HR governance system and theme 6- technology-enabled and data driven HRM transformation.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

Based on the triangulation of findings, the study concludes that while SUCs have well-established HRM practices, there is room for enhancement in Learning and Development (L&D), HR digitalization, and sustainability strategies. The PRIME-HRM 4D Framework effectively captures the strengths, aspirations, and strategic innovations needed to achieve a higher PRIME-HRM accreditation level.

1. All of the SUCs in Samar Island belonged to PRIME-HRM Level II; in terms of SUC Level, majority of the SUCs were Level III, they all underwent ISO and with current status of recertified, as to the level of AACCUP, majority of the SUCs belonged to level III while the others were level IV and classified as Center of Development. As to number of programs with COPC, two SUCs with 16-20 programs, while the other two SUCs had more than twenty (20) programs.
2. The implementation of PRIME-HRM Core systems gives equal opportunity to all: executive and middle managers, research and extension personnel, Full-Time Faculty members and non- teaching personnel. They are all recipients of the different programs related to the PRIME-HRM systems. The varied distribution of management roles highlights potential areas for strategic workforce development and resource allocation.
3. The extent of implementation of the PRIME- HRM systems are evident among SUCs in Samar with a mean score from 3.82- 4.40 and rated as Very Much Implemented.
4. A structured approach to transparency and evaluation, meritocratic and inclusive recruitment practices, governance collaboration, supportive and structured learning development system, accreditation efforts and continuously advancing PRIME-HRM systems.
5. The best practices that were explored by the participants during triangulation are considered as themes were transparent and development-oriented performance evaluation system, meritocratic and inclusive recruitment and selection practices, effectively implemented and continuously advancing PRIME-HRM Systems, supportive and structured learning and development system, collaborative and participating HR Governance System and technology-enabled and data-driven HRM transformation.

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Recommendations

To address the identified areas for improvement and sustain PRIME-HRM accreditation in SUCs, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen Leadership Development Programs – Develop structured training and mentorship programs to prepare employees for future leadership roles.
2. Implement an HR Information System (HRIS) – Digital transformation should be prioritized to automate recruitment, performance tracking, and training management.
3. Expand Learning and Development (L&D) Opportunities by increasing budget allocation – Encourage international training programs, competency-based training, and flexible learning formats to enhance professional growth.
4. Enhance Employee Recognition and Rewards Systems – Institutionalize continuous performance-based incentives to improve motivation and retention.
5. Regularly Review HR Policies for Compliance and Best Practices – Conduct scheduled policy audits and stakeholder consultations to ensure alignment with evolving HRM standards.
6. Strengthen PRIME-HRM Accreditation Efforts – Establish a dedicated accreditation team to oversee and facilitate continuous PRIME-HRM improvements.
7. Encourage Collaborative HR Governance – Foster an inclusive decision-making approach involving HR officers, faculty, and administrators to create a shared responsibility for HRM success.
8. The SUCs may aspire to increase the PRIME-HRM level to practice E-HRM and integrate digitization on different programs and system.

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