

Awareness of Hospital Employees on Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM): Input for a Capacity Development Program

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Abstract- As an initial foundation for a capacity development program, this study evaluated hospital staff members' knowledge of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM). It utilized a descriptive-correlational design with 100 Department of Health employees chosen by proportional stratified random sampling from a Level II general hospital in Eastern Pangasinan. The data analysis employed Spearman rank-order correlation and weighted mean. The results showed a high degree of awareness regarding importance, with a weighted mean of 4.42, and benefits, with a weighted mean of 4.34, which were both interpreted as "Always." The importance of PRIME-HRM in strategic decision-making, enhanced customer service, employee satisfaction, and organizational transformation was widely acknowledged by respondents. Recognition of best practices, meritocracy, and training incentives were among the lower-rated indicators, indicating that these aspects were not as visible. It showed a high level of awareness of PRIME-HRM, emphasizing its role in efficient human resource management and public service. To improve awareness and implementation even more, a capacity development program is advised.

Indexed Terms: Awareness, Excellence, Hospital, Human Resource, Meritocracy

I. INTRODUCTION

In public sector organizations where capacity building, institutional excellence, and service delivery are crucial, human resource management (HRM) is becoming more widely acknowledged as a strategic lever for organizational performance (Afshari et al., 2026; Wang et al., 2024). To convert traditional personnel systems into strategic Human resource functions that support meritocracy, competency development, and ongoing improvement in government agencies, the Civil Service Commission established the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM). To improve the maturity of HR systems across key human resource domains, including hiring, learning and development, performance management, and rewards and

recognition, the program incorporates evaluation, support, and award mechanisms (Belandres and Crisobal, 2021). PRIME-HRM has been examined in a variety of Philippine contexts, including local government units in Palawan, identifying adoption challenges and transitional needs toward strategic HRM (Padon & Segundo, 2025) and Department of Education offices demonstrating high implementation and employee satisfaction (Roman et al., 2025). Additionally, research indicates that workforce performance and institutional responsiveness are positively correlated with successful PRIME-HRM implementation (Tubiano & Echalar, 2025).

Strategic human resource frameworks similar to PRIME-HRM have been associated globally with better organizational outcomes, employee commitment, and service excellence across industries, illustrating the transition from transactional personnel systems to integrated, data-driven HR management (Puwardi, et al., 2024). According to Zukowicka-Surma and Fritzsche (2023), these strategic Human resource initiatives improve accountability and transparency while coordinating human resource systems with organizational objectives, which boosts institutional performance and capacity for innovation (Belandres, 2016).

As hospitals endeavor to professionalize human resource procedures and develop the capacity to meet changing public health demands, PRIME-HRM has become more important in the Philippine healthcare system. Recent accomplishments, for instance, East Avenue Medical Center's Bronze level maturity for the Human Resource Excellence Award, demonstrate how PRIME-HRM supports system integration and standardized HR procedures that eventually enhance employee development and service delivery (Lam, 2026). Nonetheless, there are still gaps in employees' knowledge and understanding of PRIME-HRM's fundamental values, especially its merit-based HR governance and transparency. This study attempts to provide evidence-based insights necessary for

improving capacity development interventions that reinforce HR competencies and institutionalize excellence in public health HRM by assessing the degree of awareness of PRIME-HRM among Department of Health human resource personnel in a Level II general hospital in Eastern Pangasinan.

The Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) has been shown to have advantages, but there are still a number of gaps that need to be looked into. Although research from around the world highlights the connection between strategic human resource frameworks and better organizational outcomes, employee engagement, and service quality (Boubrik, 2025; Domer, 2024; Kailay and Paposa, 2024), these conclusions are mainly generalized and fail to take into consideration local contexts, especially in Philippine healthcare facilities. According to studies conducted locally, hospitals and government organizations using PRIME-HRM have improved service delivery and attained greater HR maturity (Dargahi et al., 2025; Ferede, et al., 2025).

There is, however, minimal empirical evidence on human resource staff members' awareness of the program's tenets, advantages, and workings. The majority of current research concentrates on institutional performance or implementation outcomes rather than employee comprehension, which is essential for successful adoption. Targeted capacity development initiatives are hampered by the lack of research on how human resource staff members' professional and demographic characteristics affect their awareness. By filling this gap, public hospitals can fully institutionalize meritocracy and excellence, improve human resource competencies, and increase program visibility.

II. METHODOLOGY

To characterize the variables and investigate the relationships that naturally emerged between and among them, this study employed a descriptive-correlational research design. The Conrado F. Estrella Regional Medical and Trauma Center, a Level II general hospital in Eastern Pangasinan that implemented the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM), employed human resources staff from the Department of Health (DOH). The study used proportional stratified

random samplings to select 100 respondents at random from the entire population to guarantee sufficient representation of the hospital staff. The Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient (Spearman r) was used to measure the strength and direction of association between variables to ascertain the relationship between the respondents' profile and their level of awareness of the PRIME-HRM program. The computed values were then appropriately interpreted. The study specifically aimed to ascertain the respondents' awareness of PRIME-HRM's significance and advantages in institutionalizing excellence and meritocracy in human resource management.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Level Awareness of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM)

In line with the data, respondents had a positive perception of PRIME-HRM's crucial role in enhancing institutional effectiveness and public service delivery and had a firm understanding of its significance in promoting workforce productivity, excellence, meritocracy, and strategic human resource management.

Table 1: Weighted Mean of the Level Awareness of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) in terms of Importance

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1.Promotes meritocracy and excellence; ensures that public service is built on merit, recognizing and rewarding excellence in HRM and selecting the best people for positions.	4.37	Always
2. Enhances public services delivery; improves employee	4.45	Always

experience, leading to better customer experience and more efficient public service delivery.				responsive and transformational agency that is better equipped to fulfill its mandate.		Always
3. Elevates HRM competencies; provides a framework for government agencies to assess their HRM systems and practices against global standards, identifying gaps and areas for improvement.	4.39	Always		8. Provides managers with the insights needed for informed and strategic decision-making, aligning HR with organizational goals by improving data management and streamlining HR processes.	4.48	Always
4. Encourages continuous development and empowerment; includes mechanisms for continuous development, empowerment, and exchange of expertise.	4.43	Always		9. Provides agencies with the opportunity to experience higher employee performance and improved customer satisfaction.	4.42	Always
5. Fosters a productive and satisfied workforce; helps agencies create a more motivated, satisfied, and productive workforce by investing in their employees and ensuring fair practices.	4.45	Always		10. Enhances transparency and accountability at all levels of management by clarifying performance metrics and organizational policies.	4.37	Always
				Average Weighted Mean	4.42	Always
6. Recognizes best practices; serves as a mechanism to identify, recognize, and promote best practices in human resource management among government agencies.	4.34	Always				
7. Supports a transformational agency; integrates HR systems that contribute to a more	4.45					

The results showed that respondents consistently gained a high level of awareness regarding the significance of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM), as indicated by the overall average weighted mean of 4.42, which is interpreted as "Always." This implies that staff members firmly believed the program was an essential tool for enhancing organizational performance and human resource systems. "Provides managers with the insights needed for informed and strategic decision-making" (4.48) was the indicator with the highest rating, followed by "improving public service delivery," "fostering a productive and

satisfied workforce," and "supporting a transformational agency", all at 4.45.

These results are consistent with the study of Belandres (2016) and Esmailpour and Rezaei (2024) in human resource management, especially studies by Zukowicka-Surma and Fritzsche (2023), which highlight how data-driven HR practices and strategic HR alignment with organizational goals greatly enhance organizational outcomes and decision-making quality. To elaborate, Domer (2024) emphasizes the increasing significance of HR analytics in improving managerial decision-making and workforce productivity, while Sahbi and Belguidoum's research shows that HR systems operating as strategic partners directly contribute to organizational transformation and competitiveness (2023). Further supporting the respondents' strong appreciation of PRIME-HRM's strategic value are recent empirical studies (2022–2025) in public sector management that show integrated HR frameworks improve citizen-centered service delivery, strengthen institutional resilience, and foster innovation capability (Belandres, 2018; Boubrik, 2025; Ferede, et al., 2025; Kailay and Papos, 2024; Vivier, et al., 2024; Wang, et al., 2024).

The lowest rate indicators, on the other hand, were "recognizes best practices" (4.34), "promotes meritocracy and excellence," and "enhances transparency and accountability" (4.37), even though they were still interpreted as "Always." Even though these scores are still high, their comparatively lower ranking implies that respondents might think these aspects are less observable or tangible in day-to-day operations. Studies in organizational behavior and governance, such as those by Al-Maaitah, et al. (2025), who stressed that merit-based systems need ongoing institutional commitment to fully embed, corroborate this observation.

Furthermore, Boubrik (2025) pointed out that organizational culture has an enormous impact on how employees internalize values such as accountability and transparency, which frequently calls for long-term adjustment. Additionally, accountability mechanisms are often seen as abstract unless they are directly connected to quantifiable results and everyday practices, according to Sahbi

and Belguidoum (2023). Additionally, Lam (2026) indicates that although meritocratic policies and transparency initiatives are essential to ethical governance, their perceived efficacy depends on employee involvement, leadership reinforcement, and clear communication.

Ultimately, the findings confirm that employees generally recognize PRIME-HRM as a transformative framework that enhances institutional capacity, encourages evidence-based management, and supports long-term organizational development. This is in line with changing scholarly viewpoints in strategic HRM and public sector reform.

Table II: Respondents' Level Awareness of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM) in terms of Benefits

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Develops and improves recruitment, selection, placement, learning and development, performance management, and rewards and recognition systems of agencies.	4.31	Always
2. Empowers agencies to perform HRM functions more effectively and efficiently, supporting their mandates	4.33	Always
3. Serves as a mechanism to identify and disseminate best practices in human resource management across different government agencies	4.33	Always
4. Awards and	4.35	

recognizes agencies for achieving certain maturity levels in their HR systems and for their commitment to excellence.		Always		
5. Authorizes agencies with a bronze award to approve appointments, subject to post-audit	4.40	Always		
6. Entitles awardees to receive discounts on training courses and conferences offered by the Civil Service Commission.	4.29	Always		
7. Increases the reach and visibility of agency programs and projects via announcements on the CSC website.	4.33	Always		
8. Contributes to improved public service delivery by elevating public sector human resource management.	4.33	Always		
9. Promotes a management culture that fosters public accountability and creates a positive work environment where employees feel valued.	4.40	Always		
10. Ensures that happy and valued employees provide better service to the public by focusing on employee experience.	4.37	Always		
Average Weighted Mean	4.34	Always		

advantages of the Program to Institutionalize Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM), as indicated by the overall average weighted mean of 4.34, which is interpreted as "Always." This implies that employees generally acknowledged the program's value in improving organizational outcomes and fortifying human resource systems in the public sector. "Authorizes agencies with a bronze award to approve appointments, subject to post-audit" and "promotes a management culture that fosters public accountability and creates a positive work environment" (both at 4.40) were the indicators with the highest ratings, followed by "ensures that happy and valued employees provide better service to the public" (4.37).

The program's capacity to decentralize HR authority, foster accountability, and improve employee experience, all of which improve service delivery, was especially valued by respondents, according to the results. The study of Belandres (2018) and Esmaeil and Rezaei (2024) highlighted the importance of employee-centered practices and empowering HR systems as key factors influencing organizational performance, which supports the findings. In a similar study, Dargahi et al. (2025) noted that organizations that prioritize employee engagement and well-being typically see increases in output and service quality. Additionally, research by Afshari, et al. (2026) shows that workers are more devoted and driven to support organizations' objectives when they feel appreciated. Delegated HR authority and recognition-based systems improve institutional efficiency, agility, and innovation in government agencies, according to Sahbi and Belguidoum (2023).

However, even though they were still interpreted as "Always," the lowest-rated indicators were "entitles awardees to receive discounts on training courses and conferences" (4.29) and "develop and improve recruitment, selection, placement, learning and development, performance management, and rewards systems" (4.31). These were followed by a number of indicators that were tied at 4.33, such as empowering agencies, sharing best practices, raising program visibility, and enhancing service delivery. In comparison to more concrete organizational and

The results showed that respondents consistently showed a high level of awareness regarding the

employee-centered outcomes, these comparatively lower scores imply that respondents may view these benefits as indirect, long-term, or less immediately felt. Wang et al.'s research supports this, pointing out that basic HR systems such as hiring and training frequently happen in the background and may not always be fully appreciated by employees unless they have firsthand experience (2024). Purwadi, et al. (2024) also clarified that it takes time for systemic changes in HR procedures and knowledge-sharing systems to affect employee perceptions and organizational culture.

While capacity-building programs and interagency learning are crucial for long-term public sector reform, Kailay and Papos (2024) show that their perceived value may fall short of more obvious incentives such as recognition, empowerment, and immediate workplace improvements. Overall, the findings confirm that PRIME-HRM is widely regarded as a useful framework that strengthens public service delivery, fosters a positive organizational climate, and increases HR autonomy. This is similar to changing academic viewpoints on strategic HRM and governance reform.

IV. CONCLUSION

The respondents' awareness of PRIME-HRM was consistently high. They showed a thorough understanding of the program's importance in advancing excellence, meritocracy, and strategic human resource management. In a similar vein, they recognized the program's advantages, such as increased worker productivity, organizational effectiveness, and public service delivery quality. These findings showed that staff members appreciated PRIME-HRM's contribution to improving HRM procedures in addition to being knowledgeable about it.

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