



HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN CIVIL SERVICE SECTOR OF BENISHANGUL GUMUZ REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

This study was examined HRM practice in civil service sector bureaus of Benishangul Gumuz regional state (BGRS) in Ethiopia. Human resource management is the process of managing human talents to achieve organization's objectives. The target population of the study was employees of civil service sector bureaus in BGRS. Among 35 bureaus 11 bureaus were selected by using stratified sampling technique and through simple random sampling technique 317 employees were selected as a sample from the total population of 1796. Among the distributed 317 questionnaires only 304 were returned with valid and complete response and then the data analysis was conducted with 304 respondents. Both primary and secondary data sources were used, primary data was collected through questionnaire from employees, whereas secondary data collected from journals, reports, documents and books. The data collected via questionnaire was analyzed by statistical analysis such as descriptive and inferential statistics using ANOVA and independent sample t-Test. The finding revealed that HRM practices were found to be poor in the civil service sector bureaus in BGRS. Moreover, the result indicated that, there is no significant difference in the employee's perception of HRM practices regarding demographic variables such as gender, age, education level, marital status and work experience.

Introduction

Human resource is the most important resource to affect production performance in organizations (Stone, 2008). Human resource management (HRM) is defined as a management function within organizations that is concerned with people and their relationships at work (Vincent and Joseph, 2013). According to Gurbuz (2009) HRM practice is a set of policies and practices which boost up the firms human capital to contribute in the achieving of business objective. Employees have expectations regarding human resource management practices, including recruitment, selection, training and development, and motivation in their organization and the role of HRM has an important effect on HRM practices (Antila and Kakkonen, 2008).

Effective human resource management can identify each employee's knowledge, skills and attitudes that motivate employees to use their knowledge and place them in appropriate positions in order to achieve the organization's effectiveness and efficiency. The success of any organization is dependent on the quality and efficiency of its human resources (Mensch, 2014). The role of HRM effectiveness creates a sustained competitive advantage in promoting an organization's overall performance (Richard and Johnson, 2001). HRM influences employees' attitudes and behavior such as intent to leave, levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Lee and Heard, 2000).

Besides, a sound human resource management practices enhances employees' job satisfaction and ultimately the job satisfaction of the employees contributes the organizational performance, so, it is crucial for the organization. On the other hand, improper utilization of human resource leads to employee dissatisfaction and poor organization performance. Nyameh and James (2013) in their study indicated that HRM practice in the civil service sector is inefficient and ineffective and cannot achieve management objectives and resulted in poor performance in the public organizations in Nigeria.

Moreover, Berhanu (2014) studied HRM practice in selected civil service bureaus of Addis Ababa city government in Ethiopia revealed that, promotion, performance assessment and reward system were not performed well as perceived by employees. Also, to some extent the current wage structure and the minimum requirement criteria set by the civil service agency

hinders sectors effort to attract the best candidates. Similarly, selection is often distorted by interference. The findings also showed that there is inadequacy of training, unequal access for training and improper need assessment. So, poor HRM practice reduces employee's satisfaction towards their organization and ultimately affects organization performance.

In fact, many studies have been conducted on HRM practices. However, most of the studies focused on private organizations and public enterprises in India. So far a few studies were done on HRM practices in Ethiopia, but the studies were conducted on HRM practices in the civil service sector of Ethiopia in general and at Benishangul Gumuz Regional State (BGRS) in particular used descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation and quantitative research approach only. Therefore, this study was examined HRM practices in civil service sector bureaus of BGRS, Ethiopia, by employing mixed research approach, which was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Review of Related Literature

HRM is defined as the process of managing human talents to achieve organization's objectives (Haslinda 2009). Besides, HRM is a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization's most valued assets the people working there who individually and collectively contributes to the achievement of the objectives (Armstrong, 2006). HRM activities can influence an organization's performance through improvement of employees' skills and quality through the increase of employee motivation. Moreover, the growth, development and expansion of the organization are highly dependent on their employee's performance. Haquec, Islam, Chowdhur, Akhter & Rahman (2013) reported that employees' performance is related with the satisfaction of employees. Mahmood, (2013) noted that satisfied employees are more motivated and hardworking than dissatisfied employees.

Various empirical studies have been conducted on HRM practices for instance, Mekuria and Hadgu (2015) assessed the merit based HRM practices in case of civil service sector bureaus of Tigray national regional state Ethiopia in relation to recruitment, selection and promotion. The finding of the study shows that, there was a merit distortion and lack of neutrality to attract qualified, experienced, competent and effective civil servant and the recruitment and selection

committee lacks the knowledge and experience in the recruitment, selection and promotion procedures.

A study by Eyoel, Tagesse and Admasu (2015) on training and development practices in the Gedo Zone in Ethiopia showed that, there is poor needs assessment, lack of training policy and system, insufficient resources allocation and management support. Also, Worku (2017) indicates in his study that the attention given to employee welfare measures and facilities in Ethiopia public enterprise was weak and insufficient. Chauhan and Patel (2014) studied HRM practices and job satisfaction in the context of hotel Industry in India and found that recruitment and selection, working condition and carrier growth were positively and significantly affect job satisfaction of employees in the hotels.

Furthermore, Chekol (2015) revealed that poor recruitment and selection practice, insufficient training and development program, weak employee performance appraisal system and human resource planning in public organizations in Ethiopia. Another study by Tegene (2008) on HRM practices in the civil service sector in Southern Nationality, Nation and People regional state in Ethiopia found that the performance evaluation, promotion, reward system and training were practiced weakly in the region.

Different researchers were tried to identify the HRM practices forexample, Tessema and Soeters, 2006) identified five HRM practices such as recruitment and selection techniques, training and development, performance appraisal, social security and planned strategic needs. Yeganeh and Su (2008) also, proposed that most common HRM practices are recruitment, selection, training and development, compensations, reward and recognition. In this study the following human resource management practices were included.

Recruitment is the process of generating a pool of capable people to apply for employment to an organization and selection is the process by which managers and others use specific instruments to choose from a pool of applicants a person or persons more likely to succeed in the job given management goals and legal requirements (Bratton and Gold 2007).

Training and development is a techniques use to transfer to the employee's relevant skills, knowledge and competence to improve employee's performance on current jobs and future assignment.

Compensation is a financial and non-financial reward granted to employees in return for their contribution (Mary et al. 2015).

Employee welfare is a corporate commitment reflected in the expressed care for employees at all levels, underpinning their work and the environment in which it is performed (Cowling and Mailer, 1992).

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to assess HRM practices in the civil service sector bureaus in BGRS, Ethiopia.

Specific Objectives

- To examine the extent of HRM practices in the civil service sector bureaus of BGRS.
- To identify whether there is a significant difference in the employees' perception of HRM practices across demographic variables (gender, age, education level, marital status and work experience) in civil service sector bureaus of BGRS.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of HRM practices in civil service sector bureaus of BGRS?
2. Is there a significant difference in the employees' perception of HRM practices regarding demographic variables in the civil service sector bureaus of BGRS?

Materials and Methods

This section deals about the materials and methods which contains study area, research type, research approach, population, sample size and sampling techniques. Besides, data source and data collection instruments, method of data analysis were presented in this part. This study is about employees' perceptions of HRM in the civil service sector bureaus; it is descriptive research in type that used mixed research approach. Both primary and secondary data sources

were used. The primary data were gathered through questionnaire on a five-point scale that was adopted from the previous studies by (Teseema and Soeters, 2006 and Saxena and Tiwari, 2009). Whereas, the secondary data was collected from various sources such as journals, books, reports, records, internet and documents.

This study was conducted in Benshangul Gumuz Region (BGRS) specifically at Assosa. BGRS is one of the 9 states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia which lies in the North West part of Ethiopia. Assosa is one the capital city of BGRS. The Region is located in the North-West part of the country. It stretches along the Sudanese border between 9.170 and 12.060 N. The Western Eastern limits are given by the longitudes 34.100 and 37.040 E, respectively. The Amhara, Oromiya and Gambella states are bordering the region in the North East, East and South respectively. It shares international border with South Sudan and Sudan Republic in West.

The region is administratively divided in to three Zones, 19 Woredas, one special Woreda and one City Administration. The three zones are setup to create a link between the region and the Woredas. BGRS has 35 regional civil service sector bureaus. The regional bureaus are found in Assosa where the regional civil service sector bureaus have established to execute economic and social affairs. Accordingly, the population of this study was 1796 employees (civil servants) in the regional bureaus.

Stratified sampling method was employed to select the bureaus and the respondents. First, stratified random sampling methods were used to select 11 bureaus from 35 bureaus classified under three sectors (social, economic and administrative). The sampled bureaus of this study were Health, Education, Public Service, Communication Affairs, Agriculture, Trade and Transport, Finance and Development, Water Development, Regional Council, Justice and Administrative and Security Affairs.

The target population of this study was employees of civil service sector bureaus in BGRS. The total population was 1796 among this 317 employees were selected by using Khotari (2004) sample size determination formula. In order to check the reliability and validity of the instruments reliability test was conducted and the Cronbath's Alpha value was found to be 0.82, which was in the accepted range. Moreover, to verify the validity of the instruments the

questionnaires were evaluated by Assosa university instructors and the comments of the instructors were incorporated in the instruments. Then 317 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents only 304 questionnaires were returned with valid response. So based on 304 respondents the data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 20. Both descriptive (percent, frequency, mean and standard deviation) and inferential (ANOVA, t-test) statistics were employed.

Results and Discussion

This part is about the result and discussion which include descriptive statistics analysis and independent sample t-test and one way Analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Descriptive Analysis

The mean score indicates the average perceived value of respondents towards the items and the standard deviation measure the dispersion of the individual observations from the mean. The researcher used a five point Likert scale (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree) average mean score of 3 implies a moderate tendency on that practice. A score above 3 indicates existence of a reasonably good level of HRM practice, whereas a score below 3 shows a poor degree of existence of HRM practice.

Research question 1: What is the extent of HRM practices in civil service sector bureaus of BGRS?

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for HRM practices

S. no	Variables	Mean	Std. dev
1	Recruitment and Selection	2.81	0.58
2	Training and Development	2.34	0.71
3	Compensation	2.58	0.77
4	Employee Welfare	2.70	0.69
	Overall mean	2.61	0.50

Survey of the researchers, 2018

The results of the descriptive analysis in table 1 indicated that the mean value of recruitment and selection practice was (Mean= 2.81 and Std. dev = 0.58), which is below an average mean value

on a five point Likert scale, this implies that the employee's perception towards the recruitment and selection practice is poor due to inappropriate assignment of candidates to a job, unfair recruitment practice and delay to recruit job applicants to filling vacant position in the bureaus.

The finding of this study is supported by Atnafie (2016) in his study on recruitment and selection practice of administrative employees in Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church found that the recruitment and selection practice was weak in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church. Besides, Chekol (2015) in his study indicated that poor recruitment and selection practice in public sector organization in Ethiopia.

Furthermore, the results of this study revealed that employees evaluated the training and development practice at (Mean= 2.34 and Std. dev = 0.71), it is below average mean value and indicates existence of poor training and development practice in the bureaus. Such poor performance of training and development practice might happened due to inadequate training opportunities, insufficient training need identification, poor content of the training and lack of adequate facilities required to provide trainings. The finding of this study is supported by Lemma (2016), Eyoel et al. (2015), Chekol (2015), Tegene(2008) reported that weak training and development practices in the public sector organizations in Ethiopia.

The result also shows that the mean value of compensation practice was (M= 2.58 and Std. dev. = 0.77), which is below the average mean value, this signifies that the perception of employees towards the compensation practice in the bureaus was low. The reason for existence of poor compensation practice might be associated with unfair compensation system, inadequate compensation and the employee's contribution and effort did not match with the benefit that provided by the organization. The finding of this study is consistent with the study by Matino (2018) studied the effectiveness of employees compensation measured by customer satisfaction: in the case of private banks of Ethiopia Snnpr Wolaita Sodo branches found that there was poor compensation practice in the private banks.

The finding also indicated that employees evaluated welfare practice at (Mean= 2.70 and Std. dev=.69), this implies that the welfare practice in the bureaus are found to be weak and indicating there is poor employee welfare practice in the bureaus. The problems contributed to

the poor practice of employee welfare were unfair treatment on matters related to employee welfare and inadequate welfare facilities in the bureaus. This finding is supported by the study Worku (2017) revealed that the attention given to employee welfare measures and facilities in Ethiopia public enterprise was weak and insufficient.

Independent Sample t-Test Analysis

Independent sample t-Test is used to establish whether two means collected from independent samples differ significantly (Field, 2005). In this study independent sample t- Test was used to identify whether a significance difference exists in the employees’ perception of HRM practices with regard to gender and marital status. Prior to analysis, the assumptions of an independent sample t-Test were verified. The normality was checked with the examination of scatterplot and the assumption was confirmed. Besides, the homogeneity was assessed by Levene’s test of variance; the results were not significant, verifying the assumption of equality of variance.

Research question 2: Is there a significant difference in the employees’ perception of HRM practices regarding demographic variables (gender, marital status, age, education level and work experience) in the civil service sector of BGRS? The perception of the group is said to be different if p (significant level) is less than 0.05 for t-Test.

Table 2: Independent sample t-Test for HRM practices across gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std. dev	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t	df	Sig
HRM practices	Male	176	2.60	.517	-.352	302	.725
	Female	128	2.62	.490			

Survey of the researchers, 2018

Table 2 above indicates that male group has mean value of HRM practices (Mean= 2.60 and Std. dev= .517); whereas, the female group has mean value of HRM practices (Mean= 2.62 and Std. dev= .490). This shows that both male and female groups scored almost similar mean values of HRM practices and it shows that the employees’ perception of HRM practices do not varies with

respect to gender of employees in the bureaus. Furthermore, the finding of the independent sample t-Test, shows no significant difference in the employees' perception of HRM practices regarding male and female employees, $t(302) = -.350, p = .725$. This implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of males and females regarding HRM practices in the civil service bureaus of BGRS.

Table 3: Independent sample t-Test, HRM practices across marital status

Variable	Marital Status	N	Mean	Std. dev	t-test for Equality of Means		
					t	df	Sig
HRM practices	Married	195	2.61	.473	-.735	302	.463
	Unmarried	109	2.63	.559			

Survey of the researchers, 2018

Table 3 shows that married and unmarried groups have mean value of HRM practices (Mean= 2.61, Std. dev= .473) and (mean=2.63, Std. dev= .559) respectively. This signifies that both married and unmarried groups scored almost similar mean values of HRM practices and indicates that employees do not have different perception of HRM practices based on marital status in the bureaus of BGRS. Moreover, the finding of the independent sample t-test, indicates there is no significant difference in the employees' perception of HRM practices with regard to married and unmarried employees, $t(302) = -.735, p = .463$. This shows that statistically significant difference was not found between married and unmarried employees towards their perception of HRM practices in the civil service sector bureaus of BGRS.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

ANOVA is a data analysis procedure that is used to determine whether there are significant differences between more than two groups of samples at a selected probability level. A one way ANOVA was used to identify whether there is a difference in the employees' perception of HRM practices across demographic variables (such as age, education level, and work experience). The perception of the group is said to be different if p (significant level) is less than 0.05 for ANOVA.

Table 4: ANOVA for HRM practices based on age

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
HRM Practices	Between Groups	6.843	4	1.711	7.244	.351
	Within Groups	70.609	299	.236		
	Total	77.451	303			

Survey of the researchers, 2018

The results of ANOVA in table 4 revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the age groups of the respondents in relation to their perception of HRM practices, $F(4, 299) = 7.244, p = .351$, suggests that employee's perception regarding HRM practices do not significantly vary in terms of age at 0.05 significance level.

Table 5: ANOVA for HRM practices regarding level of education

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
HRM practices	Between Groups	5.998	4	1.449	6.275	.243
	Within Groups	71.453	299	.239		
	Total	77.451	303			

Survey of the researchers, 2018

Table 5 shows that there was no statistically significant difference between the different education level of the employees with regard to their perception of HRM practices, $F(4, 299) = 6.275, p = .243$, indicating that statistically significant difference was not found between the different education level of employees with respect to their perception of HRM practices at 0.05 significance level.

Table 6: ANOVA for HRM practices based on work experience

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
HRM practices	Between Groups	5.918	5	1.184	4.931	.389
	Within Groups	71.533	298	.240		
	Total	77.451	303			

Survey of the researchers, 2018

As shown in table 6 above, the result of ANOVA indicates that there was no statistically significant variation between employee's work experience with regard to their perception of HRM practices, $F(5, 298) = 4.931, p = .389$. In general, the result indicates that there was no statistically significant difference in the employees' perception of HRM practices regarding demographic variables (gender, marital status, age, and education level and work experience) in the civil service sector of BGRS.

Conclusion

This study was conducted to examine HRM practices in civil service sector bureaus of BGRS. The finding of this study indicated, recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and employee welfare practice were found to be at poor level in the bureaus. Also, the result revealed that existence of weak HRM practices in the civil service sector bureaus. Moreover, the finding indicated that there was no significant difference in perception of male and female towards HRM practices in the bureaus.

Besides, the result of this study shows that there was no significant difference in the employee's perception of HRM practices in terms of age, education level, marital status and work experience in the bureaus. Generally, it was indicated from this study that poor recruitment and selection training and development, compensation and employee welfare practice in civil service sector bureaus of BGRS.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher forwards the following recommendations to the management of the bureaus. The finding indicated that recruitment and selection practice has been perceived to be low by the employees (civil servants) in the civil service sector bureaus of BGRS. The management should ensure the assignment of right person to right job. Besides, the result of this study revealed that there is delay to recruiting candidates for vacant position in the organization; this will create work stress on existing employees. So, the management should recruits immediately positions are declared vacant to public in order to reduce the existing employee's work stress and enhance satisfaction and performance.

Training and development practice has been poorly evaluated by the civil servants in the civil service sector bureaus in BGRS. The management should provide need identification based training so as to help employees to fill their knowledge and skill gap and improve performance. The finding also indicated that some employees are not willing to attend training because of their personal reason. Therefore, manager should do follow up to employees to attend training seriously and try to learn more from the programs as well come back with the fresh knowledge and skill to the organization and accelerate the process of achieving the organization's objectives.

Furthermore, the compensation practice has been perceived to be low by the civil servants in the civil service sector bureaus. Therefore, the management of the bureaus should reward employees in proportion to the excellence of their job performance, provide fair compensation to employees. Besides, the management should give recognition and appreciation for best performing employees by providing incentives to facilitate job satisfaction for instance, giving bonus, thank you letter, house allowance and verbal appreciation. The finding also revealed that employees of the bureaus were not comfortable with regard to employee welfare practice in the civil service sector bureaus of BGRS. To satisfy employees, the management should provide fair treatment on matters related to employee welfare facilities, adequate welfare services, give chance to employees to discuss with their immediate supervisor regarding employee welfare issues and making easily accessible welfare facilities to all employees.

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