

Human Resource Management Practices for Academic Achievement of Private Secondary Schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

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Abstract: *The effectiveness of human resources management practices plays a vital role in private secondary schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It helps to promote safe, harmonious, equitable and flexible workplaces for all our employees in running smoothly and effectively school operations. These practices can create workforces whose contributions are valuable, unique, and difficult for competitors to imitate. The human resource management practices reflect the employee beliefs and principles as well as maintaining acceptable relationships between management and employees. Nowadays, private secondary schools are focusing on structural, operational, and school's strategic changes with the purpose of improving academic performance. However, this paper has been reviewed over the period of five months from January to May 2019 to highlight two main areas from the discussion, it mentioned the need to enhance the human resource functions which include the recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, and employee relations. And it also outlines the need to strengthen human resource management practices for employee performance to lead to academic achievement through increasing student enrollment, enhancing student learning development, and achieving student learning outcomes. The paper sought out to create clear human management structures, procedures, and policies for effective implementation. For other researchers should look at the relationship between human resource management practices and employee performance. The other studies should also establish a model of human resource management strategies for school performance. This paper would be important academic sources and for principals to improve upon human resources management framework for student academic achievement at school levels. It also benefits for secondary schools both public and private, and educational institutions over Cambodia and global perspective.*

Keywords: *Human Resource Management, Academic Achievement, Private Secondary Schools,*

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I. Introduction

The success of private secondary schools is believed to rely mainly on the effectiveness of its human resources management practices, all the process of getting work done through the coordinated of other people depends on human resources management. Over the years, researchers, school owners, and school principals have suggested many human resource management practices to be in place to enhance school performance through improvement of employees' skills and ability, and productivities and academic achievement to support the mission and objectives of the schools. These practices include an emphasis on employee recruitment and selection procedures based on fit with the school culture, thought about training and development for staff capacity building to improve their performance, competitive compensation, and benefits, fairly performance appraisal to improve productivity, and employee relations for good working conditions and satisfaction. David and Issahaku (2013) addressed that human resource management strategies support as guiding principles for enhancing educational quality delivery. It is, therefore, the effectiveness of human resource management practices can contribute to academic achievement through increasing of student enrollment, enhancing student learning development and achieving student learning outcomes to reach the school goal (MoEYS, 2018).

II. Human Resource Management Practices for Academic Achievement

Human resource management is vital in improving school performance through academic achievement in private secondary schools. The school principals play important roles in managing human resource more effectively, the poor of human resource management practices will lead to the poor performance of an employee. These cannot be attributed to the education of quality and success of the schools. According to Francis Briggs (2013), managing human resources in secondary school is of great importance in the attainment

of quality education delivery. When there is the effectiveness of human resource management functions framework, it can motivate all staff and especially, the teachers play a vital or crucial role in enhancing the student learning development and student learning outcomes. Another researcher, Bell (2012) addressed that an education institution success is measured by its academic performance or how well the students meet the standards set out by the local government, higher institutions of learning, job market requirement and the institution itself. Agabi (2003) pointed out that academic achievement through student enrolment may rise or fall depending on employee performance and the quality of teachers. However, human resource management practices such as teacher motivation, working conditions, teacher professional development, remuneration, teacher performance, influence on academic performance through student enrollment, student learning development and student learning outcomes to improve school performance (Gitonga, 2012). Unfortunately, in recent years, the performance of private secondary school has steadily declined. The school principals are facing difficulties in the effective ways of managing human resource to promote academic performance through retaining the students, reducing student drop out and it cannot attract numbers of student for enrollment. Apart from this, it needs a complete revamp of the progress of student learning development and the student learning outcomes to meet education quality and the expectation of the school goals.

However, Cambodia has committed to pursuing the Education for All (EFA) goals to reduce poverty and promote the general secondary education to help young people develop the mental and physical with qualities that will enhance their employability. To reach these goals, the Cambodian Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MoEYS) has developed its strategic plan including human resource strategy to improve school management and quality of education (MoEYS 2014). Currently, the private secondary schools in Cambodia is organized in two levels: lower secondary school and upper secondary school and it is affiliated with MoEYS to overview all aspects of education with the assistance of semi-autonomous to ensure education standard and academic quality. The first one is lower secondary school lasts three years and is the last mandatory cycle. Upon completion of this cycle, pupils sit a national exam to gain access to upper secondary; and the second is upper secondary, lasting three years, and the last level of general education. At the end of this cycle and have specialized in either social sciences or exact sciences, pupils sit the national baccalaureate exam, which entitles them to university admission. Thus, the quality of learning depends on the class of its teachers. They are the spirit of the school that turns out learning results, and its high quality to the school. It is, therefore, this paper is reviewing the current practices of human resources management practices for academic achievement in private secondary schools.

III. Human Resource Management Practices in Private Secondary Schools

According to E. D. Nakpodia (2010), there is the significance of human resource management strategy in relation to students' academic performance. However, the school principals are responsible for human resource management functions which include the recruitment and selection, training and development, compensation and benefits, performance management, and employee relations to strengthen school management and education quality. Human resource management practices have often been referred to as high-performance work practices (Moses A, 2004). In the private secondary school presently are facing in managing of the human resource of how to ensure the effectiveness of recruitment and selection procedures to hire a qualified employee to fit with the school objectives, to build staff capacity through training and development, to provide competitive compensations and benefits package to motivate the employees to perform the job well, to strengthen the performance management system for fairly employee appraisal, and to promote employee relations for employee engagement and satisfaction. The limitations of those functions cause the employee performance and productivities are not targeted, and it can not contribute to academic achievement. These significant goals can be reached through the effectiveness of human resource management practices as below:

- **Recruitment and selection-** It is one of the main pillars of human resource management functions in the schools. The techniques and procedures of recruitment and selection are successful if it fits with the organizational performance (Milikic, 2009). It covers hiring new talent to be based on plans and strategies aligned with the school objectives. It addresses the need to recruit staff at both the national and international levels that meet the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity to ensure diversity, equality of opportunity, and non-discrimination of recruitment and selection to ensure that the schools have an adequate supply of human resources at all levels and in all positions at the right time and in the right place. These processes have been practiced to attract qualify an adequate number of teaching, non-teaching staff, and management staff as well. Currently, we don't find these happening because the recruitment procedures are not in place and the school principals who involve in recruiting people to pay attention to school operations. It is important to use the right recruitment and selection approaches that we may find the best talent and qualify staff to perform the right functions in the schools.

- **Compensation and Benefits-** The compensation and benefits packages are one of the major human resource management practices. In one research, Ahmed, Tabassum, and Hossain, (2005) think about the pay and advantage practice are profoundly connected with the organization's performance. Delaney & Huselid, (1996) added that competitive compensation and benefits packages can motivate employees, can make the organization more beneficial. The compensation benefits should be properly managed in order to reward staff in a competitive labor market and equitable manner and be based on merit, competence, responsibility, and accountability. The compensation and benefits seem to be more competitive, it can help to motivate and retain the employee in the schools. Thus, for school management, there is no clear salary scales, compensation, and benefits policy, wage and other benefit sutures for effective implementation these make the schools provide unfair salary and wage to our employees and make them demotivated.
- **Training and Development-** It plays an important role in the human resource management functions to build employee both soft skills and hard skills. According to Werner and Desimone (2012), training and development is a set of systematic and planned activities designed by a school to provide its members with the opportunity to learn specific skills to meet current and future demand. When employees are given the necessary training then there will be training and development which will lead to employee performance. Currently, we found no clear framework of training and development framework to assist employees to develop soft skills, knowledge, and abilities to fit with their current job and future career.
- **Performance management-** It is one of the main functions of human resource management in the purpose to emphasize the importance of clear communication at all levels with regard to the concept of performance appraisal and its modalities, including expectations, assessments and consequences of performance. Each employee of an organization needs to satisfy the apportioned target which is given by the management for accomplishment which eventually enhanced organization performance for a longer tenure (Ali & Opatha, 2008). Through the performance appraisal framework, it is less demanding to screen how an employee performed. Thus, Performance management is a framework where we can manage the performance of an employee. Otherwise, the schools need to improve the performance appraisal system which can help to decide the good performers in the schools. Since there's the limitation of performance management policy is the main factor to the unfairness of the evaluation decision for performance appraisal. The performance of individual employees is not measured accurately. This will affect the process of evaluation because bias, unfairness unreliability and employees' dissatisfaction may occur.
- **Employee Relations-** It is the core of human resource management practices in schools. The working conditions must be encouraged to improve employee relations. The staff well-being policy to encompass staff security occupational, environmental, health and safety standards, medical services, and work-life program in overall protection to safeguard the physical and psychological well-being to ensure the balance between work and family needs (MoSALVA, 1997). These are not strongly focused to promote harmonization, working environment, employee engagement and employee retentions that are challenged in the schools.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

The literature review looks at the process of effective human resource management practices and how these practices relate to student academic achievement in private secondary schools in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The reviewed article facilitated the overview of the principles, procedures, and issues of human resource practices and its actual implementation by the school the principals. From the discussion on the crucial roles that it has to play in the schools for student academic achievement, the human resource management practices are still lacking structures, procedures, and policies for effective implementation for the attainment of quality education delivery to contribute to student academic achievement. It highlighted that the need to enhance the human resource functions which include the recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, compensation and benefits, and employee relations. It stated the need to strengthen human resource management practices for employee performance to lead to student academic achievement through increasing student enrollment, enhancing student learning development, and achieving student learning outcomes. Considering the importance of human resource management to the success for the schools need to create clear human management structures, procedures, and policies for effective implementation. Future studies could look at the relationship between human resource management practices and employee performance. Again studies could also be carried out to establish a model of human resource management strategies for school performance.

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