

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF THE CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL UNIT IN KUMASI METROPOLIS, GHANA

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ABSTRACT: *This study explored the human resource management practices of the Catholic Educational Unit in the Kumasi Metropolis (Ghana) and the challenges of such practices. It was a quantitative research which employed a cross-sectional survey design. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select 375 staff members of the educational unit, out of which 295(78%) responded to the questionnaire administered indicating a high return-rate. Data was analysed quantitatively using Means and Standard Deviations. Additionally, Kendall Ranking method was conducted to identify the major challenges of the human resource management practices of the educational unit. It was established that the Catholic Educational Unit in the metropolis has put in place diverse training and development programmes, appraisal practices, career planning and employee participation practices, rewards and compensation policies to enhance the performance of its staff. Among others, the study concluded that one of the key challenges of the human resource management practices of the educational unit in the metropolis was related to ineffective supervision. The study therefore recommended that the unit should put necessary measures in place for effective monitoring and supervision of its staff. A well-established monitoring and supervision system would encourage the employees to perform better at their jobs.*

KEYWORDS: Human Resource, Human Resource Management, Staff, Catholic Church, Training and Development.

INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest challenges for organisations including those in the educational sector today is the availability of a strong, capable, and motivated workforce. It is perceived that what sets most successful organisations apart is how they manage human resources. The ability to achieve and sustain competitive advantage lies within the workforce. Without exception, what keeps executives up at night are decisions about human resources that are rather difficult and delicate: how to select and develop future leaders, how to reward good performance, or how to control labour costs, while still treating people fairly. The specific challenges depend on the pressures organisations face. Managing human resources is indeed a challenge.

Abdullah (2009) assigned many reasons for the failure of public organizations or educational enterprises to achieve their objectives. These reasons include lack of equipment or logistics, financial constraints, political interference, and lack of clearly defined objectives of the organizations, and inappropriate management of human resource management (HRM). The human resource of the educational sector is considered as the most valuable of all assets of the sector. It is the most important single asset of any institution (Kusi, 2017; Anbuoli, 2016). With

the shift in emphasis from material management to HRM, there is the need for all institutions, including those under Catholic Educational Unit to be conscious of managing staff effectively.

However, over the past years the Catholic Educational Unit as part of the Ghanaian educational sector has witnessed rampant staff agitation for better remuneration, better teaching facilities, better working environment, among others. Despite the introduction of the Single Spine Salary Structure in Ghana, which has increased the salaries of most public and civil servants in the country, the issue of strikes remain unabated. For the past years, the educational sector, including the Catholic Educational Unit has been bedeviled with numerous unrests by teaching staff who want higher salaries and better conditions of service.

Also, the Catholic Educational Unit and the general educational sector are perceived to be handled by ill-equipped and ill-trained teachers that are an antecedent of poor student performance. On this basis, in 2015 the Catholic Bishop of Ho, Most Reverend Francis Lodonu called on the country's education authorities to consider an extension in the duration of training teachers from the current three to four years on the premises that the current system rarely produces teaching staff with the requisite skills and knowledge for higher student performance. The Most Reverend indicated that the insufficiency of the training period of teachers is having a negative impact on the educational system of Ghana. Also, teachers including those of the Catholic Educational Unit always threaten to embark on strike to demand for unpaid salary arrears and allowances. Strike actions by education staff have serious social and economic consequences for the nation.

The rampant agitation of teachers in Ghana, including those in the Catholic Educational Unit, for better improved salaries and better conditions of work, complains about unpaid salary arrears; and the perception that pupils and students are handled by ill-equipped staff leading to poor academic performance raise questions about human resource practices in the education sector. HRM plays a key role in managing people, especially issues relating to employee welfare and motivation, rewards and compensation, reduction of tension among staff, and, if effective, can shape the strategic direction of organizations and ensure achievement of organizational goals (Anbuoli, 2016). This study seeks to assess the HRM practices of the Catholic Educational Unit in Kumasi Metropolis as well as the challenges of those practices.

Researchers have over the years proposed countless varied lists of HRM practices. However, there is no agreement on what or which practice qualifies as an aspect of HRM (Boselie, Dietz & Boon, 2005). The findings of this study would provide the authorities of the Catholic Educational Unit with a better view of the current HRM so that they could determine whether they need to consider alternate practices to improve employee productivity. This implies that the findings could form the basis of HRM policy at the Unit. Also, by identifying the challenges of human resource practices in the Unit through this study, the authorities would be able to identify strategies to address those challenges. The study also contributes to literature on HRM in education, especially the Catholic Educational Unit.

The Concept of HRM

HRM refers to the management of people in organizations. According to Anbuoli (2016), it comprises the activities, policies, and practices involved in obtaining, developing, utilizing, evaluating, maintaining, and retaining the appropriate number and skill mix of employees to accomplish the organization's objectives. HRM aims to ensure that the organization obtains and retains the skilled, committed and well-motivated workforce it needs. This means taking

steps to assess and satisfy future people needs and to enhance and develop the inherent capacities of people; their contributions, potential and employability by providing learning and continuous development opportunities. Becker, Billings, Eveleth and Gilbert and Becker (1996) are of the view that HRM is related to rigorous recruitment and selection procedures, performance-contingent incentive compensation systems, and management development and training activities linked to the needs of various organisations.

HRM has several aims, including maximising employees' contributions in order to achieve optimal productivity and effectiveness, while at the same time achieving the objectives of individual employees and those of the society; supporting the development of firm-specific knowledge and skills that are the result of organizational learning processes; and enhancing motivation, job engagement and commitment by introducing policies and processes that ensure that people are valued and rewarded for what they do and achieve and for the levels of skill and competence they reach (Kusi, 2017; Anbuoli, 2016; Saville & Sik, 1992). To Dessler (2008) HRM aims to develop and implement policies that balance and adapt to the needs of its stakeholders and provide for the management of a diverse workforce, taking into account individual and group differences in employment, personal needs, work style and aspirations and the provision of equal opportunities for all.

The idea of HRM developed from traditional personnel management, or personnel administration, which was typically used to describe the work of the traditional personnel department (Redman & Wilkinson, 2001). This development implied an increased importance of strategic management of human resources as a way to success. The transition from personnel administration to HRM also implied integrating managers at all levels, especially line managers, in this process (Guest, 1991). Brewster and Larsen (2000:2) explain that HRM has become "an institutionalised way of handling the central issues of selecting, appraising, rewarding and developing people" and it focuses "the interplay between people, tasks and organization".

The Catholic Educational Unit in Ghana: Vision and Mission

Naameh(2009) states that the vision of the Catholic Education Unit is to provide education that is based on the gospel values. The Unit is to create opportunities for young people and even adults to achieve their potential through comprehensive religious, culturally-oriented and learner-centered education. Naameh (2009) adds that the Unit provides relevant education to all Ghanaians at all levels to enable them to acquire skills that will assist them to develop their potentials to be productive, to facilitate poverty reduction, and to promote socio-economic growth and national development. The Unit is also tasked to formulate and implement policies to accelerate youth and sports development for the welfare of Ghanaians in order to achieve human development, poverty reduction, national integration and international recognition.

Moreover, the Unit initiates and formulates policy options on education for the consideration of government, and undertake such research as may be necessary for the effective implementation of government policies. It is also the inalienable rights as well as the indispensable duty of the church to watch over the entire education of her children, in all institutions, public or private, not merely in regard to the religious instructions given there, but in regard to every other branch of learning and every regulation in so far as religion and morality are concerned.

The Catholic Church in Ghana is second only to the State in the provision of educational facilities. It provides 25 to 30 percent of educational institutions and can boast of providing education in some of the most deprived areas in Ghana (Naameh, 2009).

The Role of the Church in the Education Provision in Ghana

The Catholic church ensures that all stakeholders in education are to follow the principles and tenets in providing quality education to all who patronize the academic institutions. The establishment of educational institution by the church is to ensure that many of the people who come out of the educational institutions are observed to be people of integrity.

According to Osei-Bonsu (2010), the Church, in its quest for quality education, stresses the need for well-staffed and well-equipped chaplaincies in her academic institutions to cater for the pastoral and spiritual needs of students and staff. The church has made sure that these chaplains serve as the “eyes” of the hierarchy in the education units. They ensure that all the personnel in the schools work up to the standard for which the educational institutions were set up. Again, religious instructions through weekly worship interspersed with Eucharistic celebration (mass) were to be observed as part of the school curriculum. These are some of the ways of ensuring that students and staff are exposed to religious practices and beliefs. Chaplains are encouraged to be deeply involved in the life of their schools and offer the needed pastoral care, guidance and counselling.

Article 2 (3) of Ghana's Education Act of 2008 states that the District Assembly shall provide the necessary infrastructural needs and any other facilities for the education of the population in the area of its responsibility. To augment governments role in making sure that education is accessible to all, especially those of school-going age, the Catholic Education Units have continued to build and equip schools, especially in the rural areas to make such vision of government becomes a reality. The Catholic church in Ghana has several schools at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels and provides relevant infrastructural facilities in such institutions to promote teaching and learning, and sound human development through Christian educational principles.

In the area of human resources, many priests, religious brothers and sisters have been trained to offer all forms of assistance to various levels of education in Ghana. Some of the lay priests have also been tasked in the various sectors of the education units to help nurture people to contribute their quota to national development.

According to Naameh (2009), the human capital is crucial to the development of the nation Ghana. Human resource is the most valuable asset in every organization as their training involves the acquisition, expansion and dissemination of knowledge which forms the basis for social development. The types of education that is provided by the Church equip people with skills, attitudes and the capacity to become productive human resource for the country's development (Naameh, 2009).

HRM Practices

Literature suggests that there is no agreement on what constitutes the core, acceptable and most recognised human resource management practices. Extant literature, however, points out that the practices include recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management and reward scheme, job design and employee involvement (Kusi, 2017; Anbuoli, 2016). Guest (1997) puts forward seven practices namely, selection, training, appraisal,

rewards, job design, involvement and status, and security. Kusi (2017) adds that the subject HRM covers many areas of work, including equal opportunities, career development, and employee motivation.

Challenges of Human Resource Practices

The challenges that confront the practice of HRM in organisations are huge and steep. Major human resource capacity challenges are believed to manifest three-dimensionally as: policy, task/skill/organisation and performance motivation induced (Antwi, Analoui & Cusworth, 2007). Literature also suggests that the pertinent issues include the perceived lack sufficient knowledge and skills on the part of HRM practitioners necessary to implement effective HRM practices at various levels in their organization (Nel, Werner, Du Plessis, Ngalo, Poisat, Sono, Van Hoek & Botha, 2011; Burton, 2003; Jayne, 2002) and HR professionals not being assertive enough to be present in the boardroom to guide human resource programmes to achieve long-term impacts on human resource initiatives. This probably points to a lack of adequate drive and communication to apply strategic human resources management fully (Du Plessis, 2004; Birchfield, 2003). Other challenges identified in literature include inadequate strategic human resource planning, low budgetary provision for training and development, doubtful skills and competencies of HRM practitioners, poor reward management, ineffective supervision, indiscipline, and occupational stress (Onah, 2000). Also, change management, leadership development, human resource effectiveness measurement, organizational effectiveness, compensation, staffing, succession planning, and learning and development (Anyim, Ikemefuna & Mbah, 2011; Rutherford, Buller, & McMullen, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to examine the various HRM practices of the Catholic Educational Unit in the Kumasi metropolis and the challenges of the practices. A cross sectional survey method involves collection of information from a sample that has been drawn from a predetermined population and that the information is collected at a given point in time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). This is in consonance with this study since all relevant data was collected within specified period. Furthermore, for data collected from sample to be representative of the target population, the cross sectional survey design is the appropriate. In this direction, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) asserted that the cross sectional survey enables data on opinions and attitudes of samples to be representative of the target population.

The target population of the study generally constituted all the staff of the Catholic Educational Unit in the Kumasi Metropolis. As at 2016, the Catholic Educational Unit had staff strength of 418 from 20 Kindergartens, 25 Primary Schools, 22 Junior High Schools, 3 Senior High Schools, and 1 College of Education. The sample for the study was 375 employees drawn from nineteen (19) of the schools. A multistage sampling procedure was employed. The first stage involved the stratification of the various schools that constituted the Catholic Educational Unit in the Metropolis. The strata were Kindergarten, Primary Schools, Junior High Schools, Senior High Schools, and College of Education. In second stage, a number of schools were sampled from each stratum through simple random sampling technique, specifically the lottery procedure: 5 Kindergartens, 5 Primary Schools, 5 Junior High Schools, 4 Senior High Schools, and 1 College of Education. Then a simple random sampling, especially the lottery method was employed in the third stage to select a sample of 25 teachers from the Kindergartens, 50 from

the Primary schools, 65 from the Junior High Schools, 165 from the Senior High Schools and 70 from the College of Education.

A structured questionnaire was employed for data collection in this study. The instrument is considered to be the most effective technique that helps gather valid and relevant data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, & Lowe, 2002) in research. The first section of the questionnaire gathered data on human resource management practices of the Catholic Educational Unit, while the second section collected data on challenges of the human resource management practices of Unit. All items or statements were measured through a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Face and content validity of the instruments were established. The face validity of the instrument were granted by some Master of Philosophy (Educational Leadership) students and some colleague lecturers, while the content validity was established by some lecturers at the University of Education, Winneba, who are experts in the field of HRM. The expert comments of the lecturers on the instruments were considered in finalising the instrument.

To establish the reliability, the instrument was pre-tested with 50 teachers selected from the basic, secondary and tertiary levels of the Catholic Educational Unit in Mampong municipality. The schools as well as the respondents had similar characteristics as those in the main study. The data was analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. To test the internal consistency of the item Cronbach's alpha was used and this yielded a high reliability co-efficient of 0.78, which is considered reliable, as intimated by Fraenkel and Wallen (2006).

After permission has had been granted by the authorities of the Catholic Education Unit and the selected schools, and the consent of the target respondents had been sought the questionnaire was administered. Out of the total questionnaires of 375 administered, 295 representing a return-rate of 78% were retrieved. The data collected on responses were fed into the computer based programme, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20 for display and analysis. The data was analysed using Means and Standard Deviations. The Kendall Ranking method was also conducted to identify the major challenges of the HRM practices of the Catholic Educational Unit.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered for the study is presented under human resource management practices of the Catholic Educational Unit as well as the challenges of human resource management practices.

HRM Practices of the Catholic Educational Unit

The various human resource management practices of the Catholic Educational Unit are examined in this section of the study. The major HRM practices examined include training and development, performance appraisal, career planning and employee participation, and compensation and reward, selection and recruitment. The result of the section is presented descriptive in a tabular manner.

Training and Development and Performance Appraisal

One aspect of the questionnaire gathered data on the training and development, and performance appraisal practices of the Unit, which is presented in Table 1

Table 1.1 : Training and Development and Performance Appraisal Practices

Human Resource Practices	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Training and Development					
Management recognises and makes good use of abilities and skills	295	2.00	5.00	4.12	.85
I am encouraged to develop new and more efficient ways to do my work	295	1.00	5.00	4.26	1.01
I have opportunities for personal development	295	1.00	5.00	4.00	.91
Training is provided to enable me to do job effectively and efficiently	295	1.00	5.00	4.06	1.09
There is established system of feedback to know the effectiveness of training imparted	295	2.00	5.00	3.32	.87
Training is imparted based on training need identification	295	1.00	5.00	3.58	.94
Overall Average	295	1.00	5.00	3.89	.95
Performance Appraisal					
Performance of the employees is measured on the basis of objective quantifiable results	295	2.00	5.00	3.58	.75
Appraisal system in our organization is growth and development oriented	295	2.00	5.00	3.64	.80
Employees are provided performance based feedback and counseling	295	1.00	5.00	3.64	.80
The appraisal data is used for making decisions like job rotation, training and compensation	295	1.00	5.00	3.80	.83
The objectives of the appraisal system are clear to all employees	295	1.00	4.00	3.68	.93
Mean of Means	295	1.00	5.00	3.63	.82

Source: Filed data 2017

The data in Table 1 shows that the majority of the staff surveyed in the unit agreed that the management of their respective schools recognises and makes good use of abilities and skills as shown by mean response value of 4.12. The table further indicated that they were encouraged to develop new and more efficient ways to do their respective work which had a mean response value of 4.26. Based on this finding, it is therefore imperative that employers provide an opportunity for their workforce to learn, as proactive development schemes will not only improve the capabilities of their team but also motivate staff and subsequently engender a more loyal employee set (Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen & Moeyaert., 2009).

The respondents agreed that they are offered opportunities for personal development as shown by the mean response value of 4.00. Many of the world's most successful organizations are aware that the provisions they make for training and development activities lie at the heart of their ability to attract and retain the best employees for their organisation (Bassi & Buren,

1999). Employees consider training, education and development as crucial to their overall career growth and goal attainment and will be motivated to remain and build a career path in an organization that offers them such opportunity (Samuel & Chipunza, 2009). According to Steel, Griffeth, and Hom (2002), empirical data shows that lack of training and promotional opportunities were the most frequently cited reasons for high performers to leave the various organizations.

The mean response value of 4.06 in the table suggests that the respondents agreed that the management of the Catholic Educational Unit provides staff with training programmes to enable them work effectively and efficiently. Training and development is actually perceived to make employees feel recognised for their strengths, and it creates possibilities to develop their qualities (Kyndt et al., 2009). The study by Bradley, Petrescu and Simmons (2004) reports that an increase in high-performance work practices is as a result of training which is converted to a decrease in employee turnover in organization.

However, the respondents fairly agreed that the Units has an established system of feedback to know the effectiveness of training imparted on staff as shown by the mean response value of 3.32. The training and development regiments or programmes are agreed by the surveyed respondents to be imparted based on the training and development need identification of the staff as shown by the mean response value of 3.58.

The data in Table 1.1 shows that the respondents agreed that the educational unit measures employee performance on the basis of objective quantifiable results as shown by the mean response value of 3.58. The appraisal system of the catholic educational unit is agreed by the respondents to be growth and development oriented as shown by the mean response value of 3.64. The respondents indicated that the employees of the Units are provided performance-based feedback and counselling (Mean= 3.64). The table points out that the Unit uses appraisal data for making decisions regarding job rotation, training and compensation with mean response value of 3.80. The objective of the appraisal system is clearly defined to employees as shown by their mean response value of 3.68.

Generally, the overall mean response value of 3.89 shows that the Catholic Educational Unit has in place varying forms of educational regiments or programmes for their staff at various educational levels.

Career Planning and Employee Participation

The data on career planning and employee participation practices of the Catholic Educational Unit in the Kumasi Metropolis is presented in Table 2.

Table 1.2: Career Planning and Employee Participation

Human Resource Practices	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Career Planning					
Individuals in this organization have clear career paths	295	1.00	5.00	3.80	1.05
Employee's career aspirations within the organization are known by his/her immediate superior	295	1.00	5.00	3.85	1.22
Employees in our organization have more than one potential position for promotion	295	1.00	5.00	3.85	.93
Individual and organization growth needs are matched in this organization	295	1.00	5.00	3.38	1.13
Our organization plans for the career and development of employees	295	1.00	5.00	3.80	.95
Overall	295	1.00	5.00	3.74	1.01
Employee Participation					
Employees in this organization are allowed to make decisions related to cost and quality matters	295	2.00	4.00	3.50	.59
Employees in this organization are asked by their superiors to participate in operations related decisions	295	1.00	5.00	3.73	1.11
Employees are provided opportunity to suggest improvements in the way things are done here	295	2.00	5.00	3.63	.74
Mean of Means	295	1.00	5.00	3.61	.81

Source: Field data 2017

The data in Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents agreed that the staff of the educational unit have clear career paths with mean response value of 3.80. The respondents also agreed that the employee's career aspirations within the organisation are disclosed to their immediate supervisors or superiors (M=3.85). Employees consider training, education and development as crucial to their overall career growth and goal attainment and will be motivated to remain and build a career path in an organization that offers them such opportunity (Samuel, & Chipunza, 2009). The surveyed employees further agreed that the staff of the Units have more than one potential position for promotion (Mean=3.85). The surveyed respondents also fairly agreed that individual and the organisations growth needs are matched in the catholic educational units as shown by the mean response value of 3.38. The surveyed respondents agreed that the Catholic Educational Unit has in place defined plans for the career and development of employees with mean response value of 3.80. It is vital for an organization to create an environment in which important information is freely communicated and in which employees are knowledgeable and perceptive of opportunities for further self-development (Vandenberg, Richardson & Eastman, 1999).

The data in Table 1.2 further shows that the respondents agreed that employees of the units are allowed to make decisions relating to cost and quality matters with mean response value of 3.50. The surveyed respondents also agreed that the employees of the catholic educational units are asked by their respective superiors to participate in operations relating to decisions as shown by the mean response value of 3.73. Furthermore, the mean response value of 3.63 suggests that the employees of the educational unit are provided opportunity to suggest improvements in the way things are done. Kipkebut (2010) indicates that employee participation in decision making is among the most important predictors of organisational commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intentions among employees in Kenyan institutions.

Compensation and Reward, and Selection and Recruitment

An aspect of the questionnaire gathered data on compensation, reward, selection and recruitment practices of the Catholic Educational Unit, which is presented in Table 3.

Table 1.3: Compensation and Reward, and Selection and Recruitment

Human Resource Practices	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Compensation and Reward					
In our organization, salary and other benefits are comparable to the market	295	1.00	5.00	2.63	1.20
In our organization, compensation is decided on the basis of competence or ability of the employee	295	1.00	4.00	2.63	.93
The compensation for all employees is directly linked to his/her performance	295	1.00	5.00	2.43	1.05
In our organization, profit sharing is used as a mechanism to reward higher performance	295	1.00	5.00	2.69	1.08
Overall	295	1.00	5.00	2.60	1.07
Selection and Recruitment					
The selection and recruitment systems followed in our organization are highly scientific and rigorous	295	1.00	5.00	3.11	1.22
In our organization, line managers and HR managers participate in selection and recruitment	295	1.00	5.00	3.48	1.20
Valid and standardized tests are used when required in the selection and recruitment process	295	2.00	5.00	3.75	1.03
The placement of new entrants is one as per the organizational needs	295	2.00	5.00	3.54	.83
Overall	295	1.00	5.00	3.47	1.07

Source: Field data 2017

The data in Table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents fairly agreed that the salary and other benefits of the educational unit are comparable to the market with the mean response value of 2.63. The respondents also fairly agreed that the compensational facility of the unit is decided on the basis of competence or ability of the employee as shown by the mean response value of 2.63. However, the respondents disagreed that the compensation for all employees is directly linked to their performance with a mean response value 2.43. The data in table 1.3 also shows that respondents fairly agreed that profit sharing is used as a mechanism to reward higher performance in the educational unit as shown by the mean response value 2.69.

The data in Table 3 clearly points out that the respondents fairly agreed that the selection and recruitment systems followed in the educational unit are highly scientific and rigorous with a mean response value of 3.11. The respondents also fairly agreed that line managers and the HR managers of the catholic educational units participate in the selection and recruitment process (Mean= 3.48); agreed that the unit employs valid and standardised tests in the selection and recruitment process (Mean=3.75). The mean response value of 3.54 further shows that the respondents were in agreement that the placement of newly-recruited workers is made dependent on the needs of the organisation. Carrell (2000) and Grobler (2006) perceive the need for effective and efficient recruitment and selection process by removing obviously unqualified or undesirable applicants. Studies show that organisations that want to fill their vacancy very quickly or who are unwilling to have recruitment processes such as job analysis,

are possibly less discriminating in the quality and quantity of the candidates (Carless, 2007), while organisations who put effort into the process of recruitment turn on more search channels than organisations who do not (Russo, Rietveld, Nijkamp, & Gorte, 2000).

Challenges of the HRM Practices of the Catholic Educational Units

In this section of the study, the data on the challenges of the HRM practices of the unit is presented. The respondents were presented with a list of 20 challenges reported in literature as hindering the effective practices of HRM. The task of each respondent was to indicate their level of agreement to listed factors as challenges to the HRM practices of the unit. Table 4 presents the mean ranks and by extension, the ranks of the challenges as adjudged by the 295 respondents.

Table 1.4: Challenges of HRM Practices of the Catholic Educational Unit

Challenges of HRM	Mean Rank	Rank
Diminishing organizational commitment because of lack of incentives	13.84	1 st
Technological and legal constraints	12.07	2 nd
Poor reward management	11.92	3 rd
Low budgetary provision for training and development	11.79	4 th
Absence of procedural justice system in the organization	11.32	5 th
Difficulty in working proactively to resolve employees resentments	11.09	6 th
Social constraints	10.92	7 th
Low job satisfaction of the employees	10.91	8 th
Inadequate strategic HR planning	10.62	9 th
Occupational stress	10.54	10 th
Doubtful skills and competencies of HR management practitioners	9.99	11 th
Lack of qualified personnel	9.87	12 th
Poor employee retention	9.68	13 th
Political constraint	9.63	14 th
Low job involvement for employees with superior academic background	9.55	15 th
Lack of a system for performance evaluation	9.36	16 th
Insufficient knowledge and skills necessary to implement effective HRM	9.23	17 th
Ineffective supervision	9.09	18 th
inadequate drive and communication to apply strategic HRM practices	8.39	19 th
Shortage of intellectual human resource development professionals to manage training and development activities	8.18	20 th

Source: Field Survey, 2015

The result in Table 4 was obtained following the non-parametric test for k-related samples in SPSS version 20. The level of agreement between the 295 employees of the Catholic Educational Unit was tested using the Kendall's coefficient of concordance since there are three or more respondents or employees.

The data in the Table 4 shows that the highest ranked 10 challenges of the educational unit in the metropolis in the practice of HRM include: (1) diminishing organizational commitment because of a lack of incentives (Mean Rank = 13.84); (2) technological and legal constraints (Mean Rank = 12.07); (3) poor reward management (Mean Rank = 11.92); (4) low budgetary provision for training and development (Mean Rank = 11.79); (5) absence of procedural justice

system in the organization (Mean Rank = 11.32); (6) difficulty in working proactively to resolve employees resentments (Mean Rank = 11.09); (7) social constraints (Mean Rank = 10.91); (8) low job satisfaction of the employees (Mean Rank = 10.91); (9) inadequate strategic HR planning (Mean Rank = 10.62); and (10) occupational stress (Mean Rank = 10.54).

However, the least ranked three challenges of the educational unit in the practice of HRM were ineffective supervision, inadequate drive and communication to apply strategic HRM practices, and the shortage of intellectual human resource development professionals to manage training and development activities.

Table 1. 5: Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance

Test Statistics	
N	259
Kendall's W	0.790
Chi-Square (χ^2)	880.59
Degree Of Freedom	19
P-Value	0.000

Source: Field Data, 2017

Kendall's coefficient of concordance (W^a), testing the null hypothesis that there is no agreement among the surveyed respondents or employees with respect to how challenging the catalogue of problems obstruct the HRM practices of the Catholic Educational Units was rejected at a 1% significance level. The degree of unanimity as measured by the W-statistics is about 79% since the score is zero for random ranking and 1 for perfectly unanimous ranking.

The surveyed employees of the Catholic Educational Units may be said to unanimously agree that the most challenging factors to effective practice of HRM are more related first to the diminishing organizational commitment because of a lack of incentives, and, secondly, to technological and legal constraints, poor reward management, low budgetary provision for training and development, and absence of procedural justice system in the organization. This finding is consistent with Kipkebut (2010)'s that organisational commitment could possibly diminish due to minimal provision of incentives and reward to employees. A survey conducted in United States of America in 2002 also showed that employees were mostly satisfied with intrinsic factors such as the technical aspects of the work and working with new technologies, the intellectual challenge and creativity required to solve complex technical problems, the constant learning and master skills related to new technologies, and a sense of contribution and pride in their accomplishment (Pawlowski, Datta, & Houston 2005) and hence their absence serve as impediment to employee satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, Guest (1997) puts forward the advice that poor reward systems have negative effect on the HRM system of organisations

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To well-equip the recruited employees for better performance, several HRM practices relating training and development programmes, performance appraisal practices, career planning and employee participation practices, compensation, and reward programmes are in place at the Catholic Educational Unit in the Kumasi metropolis. Irrespective of these major HRM practices of the Catholic Educational Unit in the Kumasi metropolis, numerous challenges are also

experienced in the process including diminishing organizational commitment because of lack of incentives, technological and legal constraints, poor reward management, low job satisfaction of the employees, inadequate strategic human resource planning and occupational stress. These challenges could influence negatively the performance of the employees of the Unit. The performance of the employees in terms of retention, effectiveness and efficiency, and productivity are impeded through the mentioned HRM challenges of the Catholic Educational Unit. It is therefore recommended that the Unit should strengthen its policies on monitoring and supervision, reward system, performance appraisal practices in order to mitigate the impact of the challenges on the employees.

The study revealed that there was a diminishing organizational commitment on the part of the staff and attributed the situation to inadequate incentives for them. It is therefore recommended that the Catholic Educational Unit in Kumasi should provide proper, better and effective reward, incentive and compensational programmes for employees. Relatively competitive remuneration facilities should be provided for employees of the educational unit. Higher employee performance should be linked with higher salary and compensational facilities. This system of incentive could enhance the commitment level of the employees of the Catholic Educational Unit.

It emerged from the study that there is lower budgetary provision for employee training and development programmes. Therefore the Catholic Education should ensure that the budgetary allocation for training and development programmes to well-equip employees for better performance is adequate. After employee performance appraisal, performing employees should be encouraged and special development and training programmes should be provided for poor performers. Adequate provision of training and development programmes for employees would enhance employee performance and hence organisational performance.

The study found that one of the key challenges of the HRM practices of the Catholic Educational Unit in the Kumasi metropolis was related to ineffective supervision. There is therefore the need for the Unit to put necessary measures in place for effective monitoring and supervision of its staff. A well-established monitoring and supervision system would encourage the employees to perform better at their jobs.

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