Research Article

Human Resource Management Competencies among Managers of Small And Medium Enterprises In Tangub City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the Human Resource Management (HRM) competencies of small and medium enterprise (SME) managers in Tangub City, Philippines, focusing on five key HRM areas: training and evaluation, career planning and development, reward schemes, recruitment and selection, and appraisal systems. A concurrent mixed-methods approach was employed, combining a quantitative survey of 275 employees and qualitative interviews with 10 participants. The findings reveal significant gaps in HRM competencies, particularly in training and evaluation and career planning, with managers showing a lack of proficiency in these critical areas. These deficiencies are attributed to limited resources, insufficient training, and the managerial overload commonly faced by SME leaders. The study concludes that for SMEs to improve HRM practices and employee satisfaction, managers must pursue targeted training and advanced educational opportunities. This research contributes new insights into the HRM challenges faced by SMEs in developing economies and offers practical recommendations for improving managerial competencies through structured training programs and academic development. The findings provide valuable implications for policymakers, educational institutions, and future researchers aiming to enhance HRM practices in SMEs.

Keywords: *Appraisal System, Career Planning, Managerial Competencies, Recruitment and Selection, Reward Scheme, Training and Evaluation*

Introduction

A person develops and applies competencies- combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes for successful learning, living, and working. Competencies enable individuals to draw and build upon what they know, how they think and what they can do. As a result, the idea of competencies in business becomes more crucial to the efficiency of Human Resource Management. The function of human resources is becoming increasingly crucial in terms of competencies as it clarifies what knowledge small and medium enterprise managers have on the path to becoming human resource practitioners. Daguplo et al. (2020) stated that human resource competencies are knowledge, abilities, and skills are important in determining employee's satisfaction. Human

resource competencies provide a wellstructured and economical viewpoint that is useful for students, recruiters, applicants, and educators.

Therefore, managers need to possess the competencies requirements required to perform their responsibilities. Competencies in human resource are an integrated ability of the power of thought and physical power possessed by individuals (Loude & Fardina, 2020). Vukasovic and Elken (2019), added that a set of competencies that compare distinct academic and professional profiles and transfer knowledge to multiple contexts enables an individual to build a variety of work activities, adjusting as best they can do to potential changing situations in their careers. According to Sedyastuti et al. (2021), an experienced manager is essential to the growth of small and medium enterprises, essential to enhancing corporate performance. Small and medium enterprises play a significant role in the manufacturing industry globally in terms of job creation (Alkhoraif et al. 2019).

Sedyastuti et al. (2021) viewed that small and medium enterprises are commercial endeavors that can increase employment possibilities and offer variety of economic services to the community. Al-Herwi (2019) considered that small and medium enterprises create jobs, create competitive markets, supply activities to help big enterprises, and focus on innovation processes to form the gross domestic product and increase exports. Small and medium enterprises only had managers and supervisors thus the managers also execute the role of the human resource managers such as managing the employee life cycle and administering employee benefit.

Most of the research in the literature or studies evaluated focused on self-assessment from managers on specific human resource practices that they are performing in their organization. There were no probable related literatures or studies evaluated focus on human resource management competencies among managers of small and medium enterprise in Tangub City, and so the researchers of this study decided to conduct this study there upon. The researchers used this study to present human resource management competencies in general, to determine the level of competencies among managers based on the assessment of their employees and determine the recommendations of their employees as to how their managers can improve themselves if they do not possess the human resource competencies suit for human resource practitioners.

With this, the purpose of this study was to determine the Human Resource Management competencies of small and medium enterprises in Tangub City based on the assessment of their employees. Moreover, this study discussed the competencies in general, determined the recommendation of the employees on how to assess the managers if they did not possess (1) training and evaluation, (2) career planning and development, (3) reward schemes, (4) recruitment and selection and (5) appraisal system and present the role of competencies to managers of small and medium enterprises.

Human Resource Management Competencies

Human resource competency refers to the combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that individuals or teams within the field of human resources possess and use to perform their roles effectively. These competencies are essential for individuals to excel in their jobs and contribute to the success of their organizations. Van (2022) emphasizes the importance of HR competency for professionals to excel in their roles and contribute to the organization's objectives. Rakesh et al. (2022) further highlight the significance of this competency in procuring, developing, and retaining a competent workforce. Przystanski (2020) adds that job competencies are integral to discussions about employee performance and growth, and alignment with organizational values is a must for employees.

Training and Evaluation

According to Jehanzeb and Mohanty (2019), training conducted by the organization is a planned procedure to give employees knowledge and technical skills as well as to enhance their behavior in line with the organization's objectives. Lau et al. (2020) added that small and medium enterprises must create training programs that address both the

demands of the business and the needs of their employees. As a result, providing a relevant and practical training enhances the firm's market competitiveness. Saah (2022) study's findings revealed that a lack of training is one of the primary causes of small and medium enterprises' high failure rate, which also explains why these enterprises fail so frequently in most countries. Small business owners and managers, particularly in most developing nations, should consider spending more on training to gather information that would help them establish unique business strategies. Sawaean and Ali (2019) concluded that mangers of small and medium enterprises are advised to pay close attention to innovation development and continuous learning practices to ensure better performance of small and medium enterprises.

Career Planning and Development

The pursuit of growth is a key endeavor of all types of firms, but it is particularly important for small and medium enterprises. Lartey (2021) viewed career planning is the process of identifying one's skills, interests, knowledge, abilities, and goals; finding employment or positions that fit with the stated capabilities and plans the steps and actions providing greater chances of obtaining such positions. The help of a mentor or contributions from the manager are necessary in supporting an employee in the identified career path. Thus, Shaito (2019) stated that career development provides managers with useful support for choosing careers. Career development also encourages open communication inside the company. This supports free communication between employees and supervisors at all organizational levels, including top managers and managers. Rahayu et al. (2019) added that career development has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. This shows that the improvement or better career development carried out by the leadership will be able to improve employee satisfaction.

Reward Schemes

Small and medium enterprises need to have a reward system that supports innovation. Rewards are the most subtle aspects of operating a business; it is something that recognizes a person's contribution, (Mazllami, 2020). Ngwa et al. (2019) revealed that there is a positive link between reward systems and employee performance. This connection gives employers the chance to fine- tune employee behavior toward efficiency and effectiveness by using the reward system as a motivating factor. 5 Lawal and Ojokuku (2022) stated that small and medium enterprises performance is influenced by both financial and non-financial benefits. Their study thus conclude that small and medium enterprises will witness growth when the right reward is given in exchange for job done. Kankisingi and Dhliwayo (2022) proved that some rewards have a more significant influence than others do on innovation performance. Some rewards have a positive influence, some have a negative one. However, the lack of diversity in rewards paid by small and medium enterprises may hinder their innovation success. Ideh (2020) study recommended that small and medium enterprises should put in place reward and recognition systems that are fair and satisfactory to the employees.

Recruitment and Selection

The recruitment and selection of an efficient, confident, and active candidate for the vacant position of a supervisor will be beneficial for the small and medium scale business organizations, (Yusoff et al., 2020). Thus, recruitment and selection of candidates have a positive association with small and medium enterprises' performance. Klepic (2019) stated that recruitment and selection of human resources are very important for small and medium enterprises as well as for large ones. Agwu and Nwoke (2019) recommend among others that small and medium enterprises management should endeavor to carry out a robust recruitment and selection process to ensure that they recruit talents that are valuable, uncommon, inimitable, and not substitutable.

Appraisal System

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Materials and Methods
Research Design and Research Respondents

This study employs concurrent mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative phase involved a survey administered to 275 employees from various SMEs in Tangub City. The survey aimed to assess the managers' competencies across five HRM domains: training and evaluation, career planning and development, reward schemes, recruitment and selection, and appraisal systems. The qualitative phase involved structured interviews with 10 employees, allowing for in-depth exploration of employees' perspectives on how managers could improve their HRM competencies. The respondents of this study are the random employees of small and medium enterprises in Tangub City. The study utilized a sample of 275 respondents randomly selected from a total population of 885 employees of small and medium enterprises in Tangub City. A stratified sampling method is employed to ensure the representation of different strata within the population. The researchers used proportional allocation to get the sample size of the respondents of the study.

Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process

This study employed a two-phase, mixed-methods approach, utilizing an adapted questionnaire for quantitative assessment of HRM competencies and structured interviews for qualitative exploration of employee recommendations. The quantitative phase measured

HRM competency levels of SME managers in Tangub City, while the qualitative phase gathered employee insights for improvement. The quantitative instrument demonstrated good reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.801 to 0.888 across all subscales, as determined through pilot testing with 30 non-participants. For the qualitative phase, instrument validity was ensured through expert review and revisions, focusing on alignment with research aims, and credibility was maintained by acknowledging the subjective nature of participant experiences.

Before the distribution of the questionnaire, the researchers asked permission from the owners of the small and medium enterprises in Tangub City. Thus, each respondent is formally asked for permission. After granted, the distribution of the questionnaires for the small and medium enterprise employees follows. The gathered data was organized in Microsoft excel and interpreted by the researchers. Subsequently, in the qualitative area of the study the researchers conducted a face-to-face interview with the employees of small and medium enterprises in Tangub City. Thus, each participant is formally interviewed with permission, the gathered data is organized in accordance with the purpose of the study for the presentation analysis and interpretation. The researchers provided conclusions and recommendations prior to the result of the study.

Data Analysis

In this study, the researchers used adapted- modified questionnaire from Gunawan et al. (2022). There are quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data's findings. The instrument of this study is divided into two (2) sections. The frequency count and percentage are used to interpret phase 1 of the study instrument objectively. While the other portion of the tool was through examined and studied, weighted mean is used to calculate the average response of the respondents of human resource competencies among managers of small and medium enterprises of Tangub City.

The study outlines the interpretation of numerical values derived from a Likert scale used in the study. A score of 4, representing a mean range of 3.26 to 4.00, indicates that

respondents "strongly agree" with the statement, implying a "very high" level of the measured attribute. A score of 3, with a mean range of 2.51 to 3.25, signifies "agree," suggesting a "high" level. Conversely, a score of 2, ranging from 1.76 to 2.50, indicates "disagree," reflecting a "low" level. Finally, a score of 1, with a mean range of 1.00 to 1.75, denotes "strongly disagree," representing a "very low" level. This framework provides a clear and consistent method for translating numerical data into meaningful interpretations regarding the respondents' perceptions or experiences, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the findings.

For the qualitative data, the researchers utilized thematic analysis to examine the study thoroughly. Thematic analysis identifies, analyze, and report patterns within the data. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020), thematic analysis is a useful, powerful, and flexible method in comprehending experiences, action, or ideas across a data set in rigorous and thoughtful way. From the start of the study, data collection and note-taking coincide, and a sorting process aids project organization in reaching categorical saturation.

Research Ethics.

The researchers secured permission for the respondents to formally conduct the assessment and survey. The respondents are informed ahead of time in conducting the survey to ensure the readiness of the respondents. The data gathered are taken confidentiality and analyzed carefully. For the study's reliability, the researchers asked experts in the field for guidance and consultation. The researchers of this study can guarantee the reliability and validity of its findings. To ensure that the interpretation is credible, the researchers approached their adviser, editor, and statistician experts in interpreting the data collected from the respondents.

Result and Discussion
Table 1
Respondents' Response on the Level of Human Resource Management Competencies in terms of Training and Evaluation

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. My manager/employer assesses my training needs based on my competence.	2.21	Disagree
2. My manager/employer provides training opportunities to extend my skills and abilities needed.	2.29	Disagree
3. My manager/employer organized training programs that are relevant to my changing needs.	2.27	Disagree
4. My manager/employer encouraged me to participate in various seminars and workshops.	2.27	Disagree
5. My manager/employer promotes first the good performers.	2.29	Disagree
6. My manager/employer evaluates me fairly and objectively.	2.28	Disagree
7. My manager/employer evaluates me based on competencies or how well I perform my tasks.	2.30	Disagree
8. My manager/employer ensures that the evaluation data are used for decision-making like promotion, training, and compensation.	2.21	Disagree
9. My manager/employer assists the evaluation system in setting work-related goals.	2.25	Disagree
Grand Mean	**2.26**	**Disagree**

The table above show the level of human resource management competencies in terms of training and evaluation. As seen, all indicators were rated disagree by the respondents. The lowest mean of 2.21 signifies that the respondents disagree that their managers assess their training needs and ensures that the data used for decision making like promotion, training, and compensation. Nevertheless, with the grand mean of 2.26 pointed out that the respondents disagree with the indicators of training and evaluation which also implies that the level of human resource management competencies in terms of training and evaluation is low.

According to Urbancova et. al (2021), managers should conduct training and evaluation to the employees assessed the achievement of objectives set in the employee training are the recommended techniques for assessing the success of the training. Hitka et. al (2020) confirmed that it is important to evaluate the employees after training for effectiveness, thus the training should focus on the goals of the organization. Mehale et. al (2020) added that managers should be aware and use training and evaluation to measure employee performance improvement.

Table 2

Respondents' Response on the Level of Human Resource Management Competencies in terms of Career Planning and Development

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. My manager/employer plans my career path.	2.26	Disagree
2. My manager/employer assists me in identifying my career goals.	2.24	Disagree
3. My manager/employer is clearing the career path and promotion possibilities that there are for me.	2.28	Disagree
4. My manager/employer ensures better career opportunities are available for those who perform well.	2.30	Disagree
5. My manager/employer ensures that career planning and development are strictly linked to employee performance.	2.25	Disagree
6. My manager/employer ensures that the career path is based on the standard of the career ladder system.	2.23	Disagree
Grand Mean	**2.26**	**Disagree**

The table above displays the level of human resource management competencies concerning career planning and development. Unfortunately, all indicators were rated as disagree by the respondents. The lowest mean score of 2.23 suggests that the employees disagree with the idea that their managers ensure their career paths align with the standard career ladder system. Moreover, the overall mean of 2.26 implies that the respondents disagree with the indicators of career planning and development, indicating a low level of human resource management competencies in this area. The particularly low rating in career planning and development may also be attributed to the relatively flat organizational structures typical of SMEs in Tangub City, where limited hierarchical levels reduce opportunities for formal promotion pathways and structured career ladders.

Kumar and Jyothilakshmy (2022) proposed that active managerial involvement in career planning and development can foster a positive attitude among employees towards the organization and contribute to their professional growth. Conversely, Manonmani (2021) noted that while managers may exert considerable effort in designing and overseeing

employee career paths, there is a possibility that these efforts may not result in improved career planning and employee job satisfaction. Kadeeja (2020) highlighted the growing trend of businesses developing and implementing

career planning and development systems for their employees, recognizing that people are an organization's most asset. By providing long-term, stable career opportunities, both the company and its workforce can benefit.

Table 3

Respondents' Response on the Level of Human Resource Management Competencies in terms of Reward Scheme

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. My manager/employer utilizes a compensation system to encourage me to achieve the organization's objectives.	2.41	Disagree
2. My manager/employer recognizes and rewards the employees appropriately and fairly in the organization.	2.41	Disagree
3. My manager/employer utilizes a remuneration system as a mechanism to reward higher performance.	2.40	Disagree
4. My manager/employer ensures remuneration increments offered by the organization are satisfactory.	2.39	Disagree
5. My manager/employer guarantees the well-being of its employees.	2.11	Disagree
Grand Mean	**2.34**	**Disagree**

The table above displays the level of human resource management competencies concerning reward schemes. Regrettably, all indicators were rated as disagree by the respondents. The lowest mean score of 2.11 indicates that employees disagree with the notion that their managers prioritize their well-being. The overall mean of 2.34 further suggests that the respondents disagree with the indicators of reward schemes, implying a low level of human resource management competencies in this area.

Bao et al. (2021) emphasize that reward systems are crucial in motivating employees

for their intrinsic performance and in achieving operational objectives. Rewards play a significant role in employee recruitment, retention, and motivation for both employers and employees. Alexander (2020) noted that factors influencing and encouraging employees' incentives for performance include monetary rewards and recognizing their contributions. Noorazem et al. (2021) also highlighted the importance of employee motivation in an organization's success, as it encourages workers to be more productive and contribute to the overall achievement of organizational goals.

Table 4

Respondents' Response on the Level of Human Resource Management Competencies in terms of Recruitment and Selection

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. My manager/employer places the right person in the right job.	2.40	Disagree
2. My manager/employer ensures that the recruitment and selection process within the organization is fair.	2.41	Disagree

3. My manager/employer ensures that favoritism is not evident in any of the recruitment decisions made.	2.36	Disagree
4. My manager/employer ensures an interview is used during the recruitment and selection process of applicants.	2.49	Disagree
5. My manager/employer ensures that the selection of an applicant is strictly based on his/her merit, desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and education.	2.33	Disagree
Grand Mean	**2.40**	**Disagree**

The table above displays the level of Human Resource Management (HRM) competencies concerning recruitment and selection. Unfortunately, all indicators were rated as "disagree" by the respondents. The lowest mean score of 2.33 suggests that employees disagree with the idea that their managers ensure the selection process is based on merit, desired knowledge, skills, attitudes, and education. The overall mean of 2.4 indicates that the respondents disagree with the indicators of recruitment and selection, pointing towards a low level of human resource management competencies in this area.

Otto (2019) argues that effective recruitment and selection processes contribute to an organization's performance and competitive advantage. Abbasi et al. (2022) assert that the correct employee selection and recruitment are not only vital for business growth but also essential for organizational development. Lievens, Chapman, and Webster (2019) note that while recruitment and selection practices have been in place for some time, the internal and external environments of organizations are constantly evolving, requiring adaptability in these processes.

Table 5

Respondents' Response on the Level of Human Resource Management Competencies in terms of Appraisal System

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
1. My manager/employer ensures our evaluation is routinely performed.	2.30	Disagree
2. My manager/employer ensures that we can formally ask for the evaluation results.	2.30	Disagree
3. My manager/employer always informed me about the standard usage of evaluation.	2.21	Disagree
4. My manager/employer ensures that performance evaluation in the organization undertakes to identify my developmental needs to help me attain my career goals.	2.32	Disagree
5. My manager/employer ensures that I am rewarded based on my performance.	2.31	Disagree
Grand Mean	**2.29**	**Disagree**

The table above displays the level of Human Resource Management (HRM) competencies concerning the appraisal system. Regrettably, all indicators were rated as "disagree" by the respondents. The lowest mean score of 2.21 indicates that employees disagree with

the notion that their managers consistently inform them about the standard usage of evaluation. The overall mean of 2.29 suggests that the respondents disagree with the indicators of the appraisal system, implying a low level of

human resource management competencies in this area.

Aguinis and Tian (2019) argue that many organizations rely on performance appraisal systems, which typically involve an annual evaluation and review, with minimal efforts to provide ongoing feedback and coaching, and little alignment between employee and organizational strategic goals. Daniali (2019)

highlighted that appraisal systems set the stage for an agreement between managers and employees regarding future role-playing and facilitate discussion between them. Effective appraisal systems can help employees understand their performance, identify areas for improvement, and align their efforts with organizational goals.

Table 6

Summary of Mean Ratings of Human Resource Management Competencies among Managers of Small and Medium Enterprises

Factors	Grand Mean	Interpretation
Training and Evaluation	2.26	Disagree
Career Planning and Development	2.26	Disagree
Reward Scheme	2.34	Disagree
Recruitment and Selection	2.40	Disagree
Appraisal System	2.29	Disagree

Table 6 presents the summary of average ratings and is evident that training and evaluation, as well as career planning and development, are the most problematic areas within human resource management competencies.
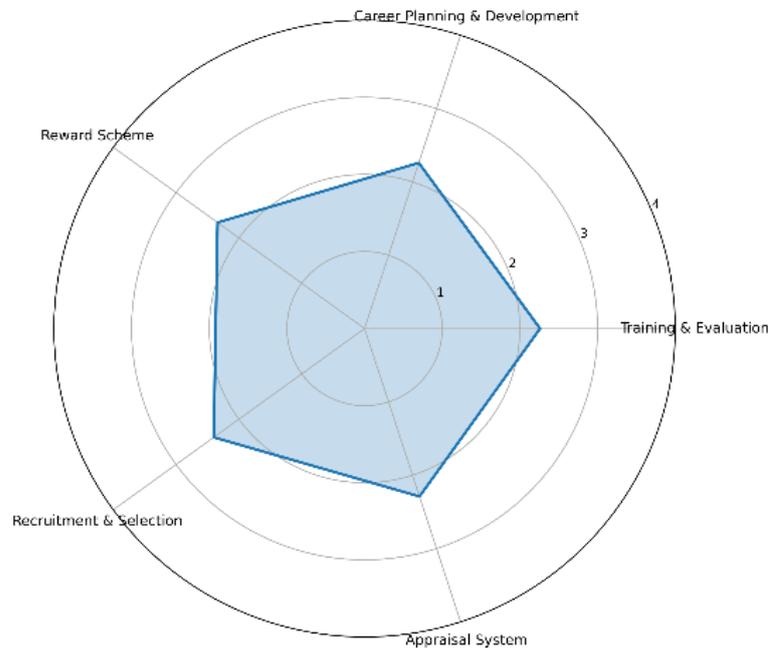
Figure 1. *Radar Chart of HRM Competency Grand Means*

This observation suggests that the level of human resource management competencies among managers concerning these two aspects is relatively low. These two human resource management competencies pose significant challenges among managers of SMEs due to limited resources, tight budgets, and the need for customized strategies to fit a range of skill levels and career paths into smaller organizational frameworks. In addition, the concept of

managerial overload is particularly relevant in the context of SMEs in Tangub City. Unlike large organizations with dedicated Human Resource departments, SMEs often operate with limited personnel, where general managers simultaneously perform operational, financial, marketing, and administrative functions. As a result, HRM responsibilities such as structured training, career planning, and systematic evaluation are deprioritized in favor of daily operational survival. This structural limitation reduces managers' ability to engage in long-term strategic HRM planning.

According to Tien et al. (2021), the primary objective of training and evaluation is to assist management in more efficiently carrying out their responsibilities, duties, and obligations. Similarly, Gunawan et al. (2021) emphasized that training and evaluation play a crucial role in enhancing performance and increasing a manager's productivity by improving, expanding, and refining their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Furthermore, Salleh et al. (2020) stated that effective career planning and development should be implemented by managers, as it enables employees to envision their potential future and maintain a sense of control over their professional journey, ultimately reducing the likelihood of employees seeking to leave their current positions.

The quantitative results showed low grand means in all five HRM competency areas, particularly in Training and Evaluation (2.26) and Career Planning and Development (2.26), both interpreted as "Disagree," indicating low competency levels. These numerical findings are directly supported by the qualitative themes.

The low mean score in Training and Evaluation (2.26) corresponds with the dominant qualitative theme, "Undergo Training Program," where the majority of participants explicitly recommended that managers may attend seminars, workshops, and HR-related training. This suggests that employees perceive the absence of structured training and evaluation systems and believe managerial upskilling is necessary. Similarly, the low rating in Career Planning and Development (2.26) aligns with participants' suggestion that managers pursue advanced studies. Employees'

recommendations for schooling and masteral education reflect their perception that managers lack formal HRM knowledge required to design career paths and developmental systems.

Thus, the qualitative data not only explain but also reinforce the quantitative findings, demonstrating methodological complementarity and strengthening the validity of the study's conclusions.

Suggestions of the Small and Medium Enterprise Employees on How the Managers Can Improve their Human Resource Management Competencies

Below are the responses of the employees of small and medium enterprises to improve their manager's human resource management competencies. Suggestions and observations of employees is crucial for managers as it allows them to assess performance and foster better human resource management competencies. *How can the general managers of small and medium enterprise improve their human resource management competencies as observed by their employees?*

Theme 1: Undergo Training Program

Training plays a vital role in improving the managers or employers human resource management competencies. This opens an opportunity to those managers or employers who has a problem managing employees or enterprise.

Participant 1 stated that *"for me, he should attend a seminar and workshop."*
As stated by Participant 2 that, *"he should take a training, and he can also take a seminar."*
Participant 3 added that *"training is better, because through training, it helps each employee."*
Participant 6 uttered that, *"all I can say is that it is best to- for our manager or for my manager to undergo training."*
Participant 7 added that, *"to improve our employer, he should participate a seminar or workshop."*
Participant 8 stated that *"participate a training."*
Participant 9 said that *"attend trainings and seminars."*

Participant 10 also added that *"attend seminars or training that is aligned with HRM competencies."*

Out of ten participants who answered during the interview, six of them answered that training will improve the managers' or employers' human resource management. Vincent (2020) stated that the most important area of human resource management is training, the term "training" refers to the act of giving instruction through workshops, seminars, and employees should be inspired, challenged, and motivated to fulfill the duties of their position to the best of their abilities. According to Adachi et.al (2019), the findings of their study indicated that the management competency of managers may be effectively strengthened through training. Thus, it may also improve the integrity of managers, which could enhance the work engagement of employees. Hedhili and Boudabbous (2020) stated that training is an integrated instrument in competence management. Moreover, Jungert et.al, (2022) added that training is essential at improving the manager's skills in supporting the basic needs of their team members. Thus, it is important to train managers to become better.

The study of Panagiotakopoulos (2020) revealed that managing training interventions like workshops in small businesses had a positive impact on performance. However, Kapur (2020) stated that seminars are integral part of all types of organizations. Thus, the leaders can benefit in number ways through attending seminars. Thus, Cong and Thu (2020) suggested that SME managers should participate in seminars to equip strategy and knowledge.

According to Grip and Pleijers (2019), managers and professional staff can acquire new knowledge in their field of expertise by participating in workshops. Willgerodt et al. (2020) added that participating in a workshop could help leaders to understand how to communicate more effectively. Moreover, Abdulla et.al (2022) stated that the workshop was designed so that participants would learn and share from each other's knowledge. Thus, the workshop was found to be very helpful in gaining leadership experience.

Theme 2: Pursue Advance Studies

Pursuing advance studies is also a best way to improve more the human resource management competencies among managers of small and medium enterprises.

Participant 2 stated that *"he should take a schooling."*
Participant 4 uttered that, *"our advice to her ma'am is to take a secondary degree course."*
Participant 5 added that, *"he can take a schooling or masteral."*
Participant 6 also added that*, "he should undergo schooling to improve his HRM competencies."*

Out of ten participants who answered during the interview, 4 of them responded that acquiring or advancing educational attainment will help improve their manager or employer's human resource management competencies. According to Poliakova et.al (2021), the ability of a manager to continuously develop professional education is of important. Sandahl (2019) added that it is justifiable to send managers to such course because there is a good possibility that their leadership competencies will improve. Thus, Silva et.al (2019) suggested that continuous learning or acquiring additional knowledge offers a new and challenging solutions to ever-changing workplace.

Conclusion

This study aimed to assess the human resource management competencies of SME managers in Tangub City, revealing that training and evaluation, along with career planning and development, were the most challenging areas. The dynamic workplace, diverse employee needs, and resource limitations within SMEs contribute to these difficulties. The findings highlight the necessity for managers to engage in managerial training programs and pursue advanced education to enhance their HRM capabilities, particularly in recruitment, selection, and career development. The study recommends that managers participate in targeted training, business sectors utilize the findings for strategic development, the local government provide financial support for relevant training, educational institutions offer focused extension services, and students leverage the

research for professional growth. Future research should explore the impact of managerial training and advanced education on HRM competencies. While this study provides valuable insights, it is limited by its specific geographical scope and the reliance on self-reported data. Future investigations could expand the sample size, include longitudinal data, and incorporate objective performance measures to provide a more comprehensive understanding of HRM competencies in SMEs.

Acknowledgement

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