

The influence of job requirements on the role of academic middle managers in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in private higher education

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Abstract

This exploratory study examines the influence of job requirements on the role of academic middle managers (AMMs) in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in private higher education institutions (PHEIs). Literature shows that being able to satisfy the basic requirements for occupying and performing the role of AMM is viewed as very critical to the success of curriculum change in higher education institutions in general and PHEIs in particular. Results of the study showed that AMMs in PHEIs failed to satisfy the basic requirements of their roles which included having received adequate training, having authority over department matters and having been given detailed job descriptions at the start of their roles. This situation affected their ability to effectively perform their role of planning and implementing curriculum change in their departments.

Keywords: job requirements, planning, implementation, authority, experience, adequate knowledge

Introduction

Various studies have shown that job requirements that include being given a detailed job description at the start of a job, having authority over daily routines in the departments, being able to plan and implement curriculum change, having adequate experience in curriculum change, and having received adequate training in curriculum change are very important in enhancing the success of AMMs in their role in curriculum change.

Literature review

There are a number of requirements or factors that contribute significantly to the effectiveness of AMMs in their role in curriculum change if they are satisfied. These factors relate to both the political and the technical dimensions of curriculum change (Morgan & Xu, 2011) and include having adequate training and experience in curriculum change, being able to plan and implement curriculum change, having authority over curriculum change matters and having received detailed job descriptions at start of role. The technical dimension asserts that knowledge and skills as well as their acquisition and their practice, are key to successful implementation of curriculum change. The political dimension asserts that AMMs do not only mediate tensions between funding and curriculum change as potential barriers to effective curriculum change but also filter competing messages from above and below that are concerned with interpreting curriculum policy into practice and hence require adequate authority to effectively perform this role (Wolverton, Ackerman & Holt, 2005). Despite their curriculum change, teaching and scholarship roles, middle managers have to supervise and evaluate staff performances, handle conflicting and competing demands and goals, as well as deal with student problems in their departments (Scott, Coates & Anderson, 2008). Such a boiling pot of demands represents what Sackdanouvong (2013) referred to as middle managers being caught in various positions where they have to seek balance if their knowledge and skills in the planning and implementation of curriculum change is to succeed.

The above is also echoed by Hancock & Hellowell (2001) who argued that middle managers occupy positions in which they have to find a balance between the temporary hierarchy of their administrative position and the on-going collegiality with their peers. The importance of seeking such a balance between the competing demands of teaching staff and those of top management, between education and research, and ultimately between hierarchy and collegiality are issues that middle managers to first and foremost satisfy requirements of the roles if they are to succeed in their roles and responsibilities (Kallenberg, 2007).

Literature according to Magpie Consulting (2013) shows that detailed job descriptions make work more efficient and gives managers a chance to sort out roles and responsibilities, to specify who does what, to eliminate overlaps and to make sure nothing is falling through the cracks. A lack of clear written job descriptions at the start of AMM role therefore leaves room for top management to take advantage of the clarity gap and assigning AMMs tasks which are way outside what is supposed to be the AMMs' mandate. As a result of a lack of clear job descriptions for the AMMs, the role of the AMM in HE has been reduced to that of a generalist that is dependent on the application of policies and rules, with logical, mechanistic and limited authorized decision-making (Foster, 2010; Kogan & Teichler, 2007). Lack of authority over the operations of their departments is therefore one of the challenges which AMMs' fuzzily defined role present to AMMs in HE. Literature shows that the reason why AMMs are not given adequate authority over the affairs in their departments is that they are viewed by the top management as a non-value adding stratum in the organisational structure and are further accused of adding unnecessary costs slowing down decision-making, creating barriers between the organisation and its customers, disempowering employees and of impeding information flow in institutions (Chambers, 2009). Without a detailed job description, AMMs tasks are not clearly defined, and issues such as role ambiguity, role strain, role conflict and role overload occur (Macionis & Linda 2010; Madden, 2013; Ram et al 2011; Vanishree, 2014).

The fact that higher education institutions have engaged and continue to engage in a paradigm shift in their management systems by moving from collegial to more managerial systems (Rasmussen, 2002), is also leading to more pressure on middle managers who are now called upon to manage both the external and internal changes in their organisations' work process (de Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; Rasmussen, 2002; Smith & Winter-Living, 2009), creating further pressure on their ability to effectively plan and implement curriculum change in their departments.

A lack of professional training by middle managers in curriculum planning and implementation has been cited as one of the major barriers to effective curriculum change (de Lima, 2008). Without adequate knowledge of what constitutes curriculum planning and implementation, literature shows that it would be close to impossible for middle managers to effectively lead curriculum change in their departments. (de Lima, 2008). Having adequate training in an area of specialisation gave a manager confidence to effectively carry out his/her duties in HEIs (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Literature shows that employees value training because in a study by Bisbee (2005) on the perception of AMMs on the contribution of training to their performance, 89% of the AMMs felt that training especially on the job training was critical to their success in their roles.

AMMs require adequate knowledge and skill to effectively plan and implement curriculum change in PHEIs. According to Graham and Benoit (2004) the AMM's role requires individuals to fulfill diverse, if not divergent responsibilities and that fulfilling these responsibilities requires a different knowledge and skill set from the one that originally attracted the AMM to assume the role. As a result, literature shows

that the role of AMMs is not one for the weak hearted, little knowledge and skill, as it requires the AMMs to juggle between the role of being manager academics to being managers in an academic environment all at the same time (Graham & Benoit, 2004). Curriculum change process required that AMMs to perform higher order activities such as championing curriculum change alternatives, synthesising curriculum change information, facilitating adaptability during the curriculum change process and also building a community of practice (Floyd & Wooldridge, 2000) and hence requires them to possess higher levels of knowledge of curriculum and curriculum change (Salleh, Yaakub and Dzulkifli (2011).

Inadequate experience is another factor that can significantly affect AMMs in their role in curriculum change. Literature shows that experience is very important for the effectiveness of a manager's job for the reasons given below. Amanchi (1998) cited in Ibukun, Oyenole & Abe (2011) argued that higher levels of experience empower and motivate managers. The above is corroborated by Ibukun et al (2012) who in their study on the influence of experience on leadership effectiveness found that more experienced managers perform better than less experienced managers. Ibukun, Oyenole & Abe (2011) also corroborated the above with their study on the influence of experience on the performance with the findings showing that experience significantly influences leadership effectiveness and that more experienced leaders perform better than less experienced ones. Mason, Aihara-Sasaki & Grace (2013) and Otanga & Mange (2014) also confirmed the above assertion. Fullan (2003) argues that years of experience in working with different curricula helps an experienced middle manager understand and appreciate the educational aims, values and philosophical and historical backgrounds of curricula that a less experienced middle manager. Fullan (2003) further argues that years of translating the educational aims into curricula action plans helps an experienced middle manager, unlike a less experienced one, to understand the aims, values, philosophical and historical contexts of curricula and this according to Feldman (2006) helps such managers plan and implement curriculum changes better in ways that respect the values, philosophical and historical contexts of the curriculum.

A lack of authority by AMMs over departmental operations has a significant bearing on the success or failure of curriculum change (Bennett et al, 2003). According to Davis, van Rensburg and Venter (2014), AMMs are now constrained by the nature of the work environments at their institutions. Davis, van Rensburg & Venter (2014) argue that managerialism that has crept into HEIs has resulted in a tyranny of bureaucracy which translates into disempowerment of AMMs, a culture of conformance over collegiality, a culture of command and control, leaving AMMs with little to know authority over daily routines in departments, all at the cost of innovation and experimentation. Literature further confirms that AMMs are treated in HEIs as unquestioning mouthpieces of top management with no authority to initiate projects (Briggs, 2001).

The above situation has led to a number of authorities concluding that there is now a growing trend that HE has been appropriated by a managerialist ideology that manifests itself in a litany of costly administrative burdens for AMMs at the expense of academic work (De Boer, Geodegebuure & Meek, 2010; Kolsaker, 2008). In their research on the impact of managerialism on AMM role on strategy work in HE, Davis et al., (2014) found that the operational environment of AMMs in HEIs is now mostly characterised by command and control from top management. According to this study, the findings dovetailed with the earlier works of Mintzberg and Hayes which showed that a command-and-control is characterised by top management making all major decisions and imposing those decisions on AMMs and monitoring the implementation of those decisions through the use of elaborate planning, budgeting and control systems (Davis, et al., 2014).

Methodology

The study used a mixed method approach that employed concurrent triangulation. A structured questionnaire and a semi-structured questionnaire were used for data collection from a sample of 162 AMMs out of a total of 280 AMMs in five private higher education institutions (PHEIs) to examine the influence of job requirements on the role of academic middle managers in the planning and implementation of curriculum change. There are five PHEIs in Botswana out of all the 276 private tertiary institutions. PHEIs are categorised as those privately owned tertiary education institutions that offer academic qualifications up to degree level. AMMs that were included in the study were the Deans of faculty, Assistant deans of faculty, Heads of Department, Assistant Heads of Department and Module Leaders. All these PHEIs have head offices located in Gaborone and that is where around 90% of the AMMs are located. The other 10% of AMMs are located in the satellite campuses of these institutions in smaller towns in Botswana. SPSS version 16 was used for data analysis.

Data analysis

This section presents both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics testing hypothesis for the demographic data of the AMM and the other constructs to establish whether demographic variables had an influence on effective planning and implementation of curriculum change by AMMs in PHEIs in Botswana. Previously on a check on normality of data results showed that data was normally distributed and hence the researcher could therefore conduct inferential statistics to test stated hypothesis and ascertain whether the independent variables identified had a significant influence on the dependent variable of the study. A test of normality was first conducted established that data was normally distributed hence non-parametric tests of chi-square were conducted. The following demographic characteristics were investigated: age group, gender, educational level, years of experience, and number of staff in the department (department size).

This section analyses the impact of AMM job requirements on the AMM role in the planning and implementation of curriculum change. Descriptive statistics was used first followed by non-parametric test of Chi – square to test whether there was significant variability in the level of agreement or disagreement on the given statements which describes the AMM job requirements. Hypotheses are postulated and tested one after the other according to research study variables. The hypotheses were tested at 1% significance level which is more sensitive than 5% to enhance its power test. AMM job requirements questions in the questionnaire sought to establish the understanding and ability of AMM to plan and implement curriculum change. The hypothesis are postulated and tested on each item of the AMM job requirements as follows:

Table 1: AMM Job Requirements

AMM job Requirements statements(ranked mean scores)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs	3.06	1.341
Able to effectively plan and implement curriculum change in PHEIs	2.91	1.366
Possess adequate knowledge and skills to effectively plan and implement curriculum change in PHEIs	2.87	1.348
Adequate training on the planning and implementation of curriculum at their institutions	2.48	1.136
Given a detailed job description at the start of my role as middle manager	2.27	1.416
Have full authority on the planning and implementation of curriculum change	2.04	1.093

Results in Table 1 show that AMMs in PHEIs are fairly well experienced in the planning and implementation of curriculum change ($M = 3.06$; $SD = 1.341$) and hence fairly satisfied this job requirement as indicated by the means score above 3 but below 4. However the same AMMs fail to satisfy 5 out of 6 items whose mean scores are less than 3, show that AMMs do not possess adequate requisite skills and knowledge ($M = 2.87$; $SD = 1.348$), authority to effectively plan and implement curriculum change ($M = 2.04$; $SD = 1.093$), did not receive adequate training on curriculum change ($M = 2.48$; $SD = 1.136$) and hence are not able to effectively plan and implement curriculum change ($M = 2.91$; $SD = 1.366$) in PHEIs. Interview results confirm this lack of authority on the part of AMMs as a number of interviews indicated that this is due to the fact that internally, PHEIs institutions are highly controlled by their owner-managers who prescribe what needs to be changed and when, and externally the higher education environment is highly regulated with government regulatory authorities setting stringent regulations on issues of curriculum change and implementation.

As a way of confirming results on Table 1 about AMM job requirements, inferential statistics was used. Non parametric test of Chi – square was used to test whether there was significant variability in the level of agreement or disagreement on the given statements which describe the AMM job requirements. Hypotheses were postulated and tested one after the other according to research study variables. The hypotheses were tested at 1% significance level which is more sensitive than 5% to enhance its power test. AMM job requirements questions in the questionnaire sought to establish the understanding and ability of AMM to plan and implement curriculum change. The hypotheses were postulated and tested on each item of the AMM job requirements as follows:

Hypothesis 1: AMMs were given detailed job descriptions at the start of their role as AMM.

Table 2: Job Description

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
I was given a detailed job description at the start of my role as middle manager	44	27	4	19	10	47.058 ^a	.000

The calculated value of P – Value shows that $P < 0.001$ which is statistically significant, hence the hypothesis that AMMs were given detailed job description at the start of my role as middle manager was rejected leading to the retention of the alternative hypothesis that the AMMs were not given detailed job description at the start of my role as middle manager. The frequency of the negative responses was greater than the positive as many disagreed that they were given detailed job descriptions before the start of the role as middle level managers. This result of hypothesis testing confirms the earlier result in Table 1 which showed that AMMs were not given detailed job descriptions at the start of the roles (item mean score of 2.27 which is very low) and this then means that AMMs were not given adequate guidance on what their roles in PHEIs in general and in curriculum issues including curriculum change in particular was at the start of the roles.

Hypothesis 2: AMMs have full authority on the planning and implementation of curriculum change.

Table 3: Full Authority of Planning and Implementing Curriculum Change

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
I have full authority on the planning and implementation of curriculum change	39	38	12	11	3	54.23	.000

The calculated value of P – Value shows that $P < 0.001$ is statistically significant, the hypothesis was rejected, and this indicates that AMM do not have full authority on the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs. This result of hypothesis testing confirms earlier results in Table 1 that showed that AMM believe that they did not have full authority in planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs (item means score of 2.04 which is very low).

Hypothesis 3: AMM received adequate training on the planning and implementation of curriculum change at their institutions in PHE.

Table 4: Adequate Training

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
I received adequate training on the planning and implementation of curriculum change	23	36	18	24	2	29.476 ^b	.000

As shown in the table the P-Value was statistically significant as ($P < 0.001$) level of significance hence the hypothesis that “AMM received adequate training on the planning and implementation of curriculum change” was rejected. The null hypothesis that AMM did not receive adequate training on the planning and implementation of curriculum change was retained. This result from hypothesis testing confirms earlier results (Item mean score of 2.48) in Table 1 which show that AMM did not result adequate training on the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs. These results then show that if AMMs possess knowledge and skills to effectively plan and implement curriculum

change in their institutions, such knowledge may be based on their prior training and not on the training they received in their institutions or years of experience dealing with curriculum change issues as most of them have more than 10 years of experience in their positions as AMMs in PHEIs.

Hypothesis 4: AMM possess adequate knowledge and skills to effectively plan and implement curriculum change

Table 5: Adequate Knowledge and Skills

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
I possess adequate knowledge and skills to effectively plan and implement curriculum change	20	27	15	28	13	8.990 ^b	.061

The calculated P – value was more than the 0.01 ($P > .06$), this was not statistically significant variability in the possession of knowledge and skills thus the hypothesis was retained, leading to the conclusion that AMM had adequate knowledge to effectively plan and implement the curriculum change. These results from hypothesis testing contradicts earlier results (items with mean score of 2.48 and 2.87 respectively) in Table 1 that AMMs did not receive adequate training on curriculum change in their institutions and also do not possess adequate knowledge to effectively plan and implement curriculum change.

Hypothesis 5: AMM are able to effectively plan and implement curriculum change in PHEIs

Table 6: Effectively Plan and Implement Curriculum Change

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
I am able to effectively plan and implement curriculum change in PHEIs	19	27	17	24	16	4.330 ^b	.363

The findings in the Table show that the calculated $P > 0.01$, this was not statistically significant thus the null hypothesis that AMM are able to effectively plan and implement curriculum change in PHEIs was accepted. These results indicate that AMM were capable of carrying out their responsibility of planning and implementing curriculum change in PHEIs. These results in hypothesis testing contradicts earlier results (item with mean score of 2.91) in Table 15 that AMM are able to plan and implement curriculum change in PHEIs.

Hypothesis 6: AMM have experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs

Table 7: AMM have Experience

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig.
Experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs	16	25	13	33	15	13.882 ^c	.008

The calculated value of P was greater than the level of significance 0.01 ($P = 0.08$). Thus the hypothesis was accepted. Hence it is concluded that AMMs have experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs. These results confirm earlier results (item with mean score of 3.06) that AMMs have experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs.

Results from hypothesis testing above therefore have been able to confirm earlier results (Table 15 the status of AMMs with regards to meeting the requirements of the job of AMM. Hypotheses testing showed that except for having knowledge of the planning and implementation of curriculum change, AMMs overall lack most of the basic requirements as indicated in Table 15 to be able to effectively play their roles in the planning of curriculum change.

The above results from the quantitative phase of this study show convergence with results of the qualitative component. Firstly, 100% of the AMMs interviewed believe that having detailed job descriptions gives them focus and makes their role in the planning and implementation of curriculum change clear and easier. While all the interviewed AMMs indicated that they are given detailed job descriptions at their institutions, they also said that these detailed job descriptions are just paperwork as owner-managers in these institutions hardly follow these job descriptions when assigning AMMs tasks. Some of the comments given by the AMMs who participated in the interviews with regards to job descriptions are as follows:

“Being given a detailed job description is very important in my role as AMM as it gives me direction as to what I am actually tasked to do especially on curriculum issues such as curriculum change”. (BU1)

“I believe that having a detailed job description is central to effectiveness in the carrying out of responsibilities by an AMM and more so in the planning and implementing curriculum change. Once I know my responsibilities as articulated in a job description, I am able to budget my time and see how much time I can give to planning and implementing curriculum for the curriculum change process to be successful”. (L1)

“I certainly believe that having a detailed job description is critical to focusing an AMM on important tasks in the department such as promoting effective teaching, curriculum development, curriculum change and promoting research among other tasks of an AMM”. (G2)

Some of the AMMs however bemoaned the fact that despite being given detailed job descriptions, top managers do not seem to follow these job descriptions when assigning duties to AMM as shown from the following comment:

“At my institution we are given detailed job descriptions at the beginning of the year. These job descriptions are quite clear on what we as AMMs should do in our roles. Unfortunately, on many occasions top management assign to us completely different tasks outside the scope of our job descriptions that we end up wondering what exactly our roles should be in the departments. This has led to us AMMs having too little time to concentrate on curriculum issues such as curriculum development and change in our departments”. (AB1)

With regards to AMMs having full authority on the planning and implementation of curriculum change, all AMMs interviewed agreed that having such authority is important to their success in the planning and implementation of curriculum change as it allows them to experiment and come up with new ideas

to improve the curriculum without having to consult anybody at each point. However all the interviewed AMMs bemoaned the centralised management style in the PHEIs as all decision making in the PHEIs is done by the owner-managers making it difficult for the AMMs to initiate projects such as curriculum change. Some of the comments below highlight the above point:

"I feel that if AMMs are given enough autonomy to initiate and implement curriculum changes in their departments, they will be able to come up with innovative changes to the curriculum for the benefit of students. However, in my institution, there is high centralisation of decision-making and anything an AMM wants to do he/she has to seek authority from top management no matter how small the changes are. This centralisation has caused a lot of rigidity in the way things are done in my institutions and this has in many cases slowed down curriculum change initiatives". (G1)

"AMM have no authority over curriculum issues in PHEIs and this is not happening at my institution alone. I say so because my numerous interactions with other AMMs from other PHEIs have shown that it is the same situation where the owner-managers control everything from information flow to classroom and curriculum activities. I believe that if top management in PHEIs give us AMMs full authority over curriculum issues, we can develop as well as introduce successful curricula as well as successfully review them". (G2)

With regards to having received adequate training on curriculum in general and curriculum change in particular, all of AMMs interviewed felt that receiving such training is very important for enabling AMMs to be able to successfully plan and implement curriculum change in his/her department. Most of the AMMs interviewed indicated that the training on curriculum they received was during their formal trainings at colleges and universities and have not received any training through workshops at the institutions where they are currently working. This is highlighted in some of the comments below:

"PHEIs are business entities which always look at the bottom-line rather than at improving things at the institution. Such institutions therefore view hiring specialists to train staff members on curriculum issues such as curriculum development and curriculum change as a cost and hence most of these institutions do not do this. This is despite the fact that training staff in curriculum issues is critical especially to PHEIs who are introducing and review curriculum on a regular basis". (BA2)

"While I have not heard of or participated in a workshop or training of some sort on curriculum issues at my institution for the last ten years I have been at the institution, I still feel such training is very important in capacitating AMMs and staff in their departments with current knowledge and skills for effectively planning and implementing curriculum change". (L2)

"I have been an AMM at my institution for the past 10 years and have never seen or participated in any training on curriculum change or development at my institution. The knowledge I am using to develop and review curriculum is as a result of my formal training at university as a student. Yes certainly I agree that training on curriculum issues is critical for effective planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs. It is unfortunate that the top management in these institutions do not seem to see the relevance of in-house training of staff on curriculum". (AB2)

"While very important for upskilling staff with knowledge and skills of developing and reviewing curriculum, training of staff in curriculum is lacking at my institution. In fact what seems to be a rule at my institution is that once you are employed, you are supposed to hit the ground running and should

*there be a need for information, an employee should be resourceful in terms oh where and how to get it. This approach is how employees at my institution who include us AMMs go about our duties even in curriculum change, **we find** the information on our own instead of waiting for training which will not come". (BU2)*

Interview results showed that most of the AMMs interviewed feel that they have adequate knowledge of their subject area and also of the curriculum change process. Only one of interviewed AMMs) said that she is leading a department where she has not trained in because of shortage of qualified staff in the area. All the AMMs interviewed however believe that having knowledge of their subject area and of the curriculum change process is important for their successful planning and implementation of curriculum change. Among some of the comments the interviewees gave about the importance of having adequate knowledge of the subject were as follows:

"Having relevant knowledge of the curriculum area gives the AMM confidence to effectively plan and implement curriculum change". (L1)

"Having superior knowledge of the curriculum area gives an AMM an advantage in the planning and implementation of curriculum change". (G2)

"If an AMM has sound knowledge of his area of specialization, it makes him/her be in a better position to understand what curriculum component needs to be reviewed, when and how". (L2)

With regards to having knowledge of what curriculum change is, all AMMs interviewed were able to give clear definitions which showed that they had clear knowledge of what curriculum change is. Among some of the definitions of curriculum change the AMMs gave were the following:

"Curriculum change is the whole spectrum of changes to the curriculum that include content, methodology and materials. It is about reviews of either parts or the whole curriculum". (BU1)

"Curriculum change has more to do with reviews and improvements of curriculum in departments and faculties in line with changes in societal needs". (BU2)

"Curriculum change is about reviewing and improving the curriculum so as to come up with new content or add more content or remove obsolete content as institutions try to respond to the needs of society". (L1)

"Curriculum change is the review of curriculum to ensure it continues to meet the changing needs of society. Such curriculum changes could be about the introduction of technology in the classroom, change of content, assessment, teaching methods and others". (G1)

With regards to ability to effectively plan and implement curriculum change, almost all of the interviewed AMMs indicated that they are able to plan and implement curriculum change. Only one of interviewed AMMs indicated that she was not very comfortable with planning and implementing curriculum change owing to the fact that she never received adequate training in curriculum and also that she is leading a department where she is not a subject specialist. The AMMs who indicated that they are able to effectively plan and implement curriculum change at their institutions based their responses on the fact that they received formal training on curriculum during their days in colleges and universities and that because of most of them have more than 5 years of experience in the planning and

implementation of curriculum change. Of the AMMs interviewed, 80% have more than 5 years' experience as AMMs and 30% have at most 5 years of experience as AMMs and during all these years the AMMs indicated that they were participating in curriculum development and change.

Discussion of findings

AMMs were of the view that their failure to effectively plan and implement curriculum change is as a result of the fact that they were unable to satisfy AMM job requirements due to a number of factors. Literature shows that there are a number of requirements that an AMM is expected to satisfy in order to demonstrate fitness for his/her role. Such job requirements include experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change, ability to effectively plan and implement curriculum change, possessing adequate knowledge and skills to effectively plan and implement curriculum change, having adequate training on planning and implementation, being given detailed job description, and having full authority on the planning and implementation of curriculum change. These AMM job requirements act as guides on how AMMs enact their role in the effective planning and implementation of planning of curriculum change.

AMMs have having inadequate experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change

Results of the study showed that AMMs did not have adequate experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs. Most of the AMMs indicated that while they had many years of experience as AMMs, in terms of experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change, they had 5 or less years of experience which was inadequate. The above results therefore showed that PHEIs either hired or promoted inexperienced AMMs to perform the duties of planning and implementing curriculum change despite literature and previous studies highlighting the importance of experience in a manager's role in managing change. Such a situation led to poor quality curriculum changes as these inexperienced AMMs faced challenges in both the planning and implementation of curriculum change. This was particularly true when taking into consideration the fact that the curriculum change process is a complex process and requires experienced people to manage it. The above was confirmed by a number of authorities in curriculum change who argued that experience was very important for a manager in the management of change as experienced teachers and managers tended to operate from a deeper and more sophisticated knowledge base than the less experienced ones during a period of change (Hudson, 2006; Fullan, 2003; Feldman; 2006; Sergiovanni, 2002).

AMMs are able to effectively plan and implement curriculum change

The key finding on the ability of AMM to plan and implement curriculum change was that AMMs were not effective in the planning and implementing curriculum change in PHEIs. This could be as a result of either lack of formal training in curriculum development and curriculum change or lack of experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change or both as confirmed in earlier results. Both quantitative and qualitative results indicated that most AMMs in PHEIs lacked both formal training and adequate experience in the planning and implementation of curriculum change. Some AMMs indicated that they were coming straight from industry when they were appointed to be AMMs while others indicated that they had 1 or 2 years of experience as AMMs hence lacked the basic understanding of the rudimentary skills of planning and implementing of curriculum change.

Effective planning and implementation of curriculum change was specifically viewed as very critical in PHEIs because these institutions have since the late 2008 been migrating their curricula from franchised programmes to locally developed programmes. Such a state of affairs made it important that AMMs possessed the ability to effectively plan and implement curriculum changes in PHEIs effectively. More so,

the changing societal needs fuelled by the advent of technology among others, required that AMMs were able to effectively plan and implement curriculum change so as to be able to align curricula in their departments with these changes.

The importance of effective planning and implementation of curriculum changes was also highlighted in literature. Literature showed that effective planning and implementation of curriculum change helped AMM to more effectively address local, national and global issues and trends that need to be considered during curriculum change (Luiz, 2006) and hence is a skill AMMs should possess. Effective planning of curriculum change was also viewed as enabling AMMs to successfully assess and respond to unique and diverse curriculum needs of the community within the context of the department's vision and mission (Northern Gateway Public Schools Administration Manual, 2009). French & Raven (2005) also argue that effective planning of curriculum change ensures that AMMs facilitate change and promote innovative ideas consistent with the departmental needs. Northern Gateway Public Schools Administration Manual (2009) further argues that effective planning of curriculum change helps AMMs to be able to analyse a wide range of curricula data to determine progress towards effective curricula change; and also communicate and celebrate department achievements on curricula change to inspire continuous motivation and growth.

AMMs possess adequate knowledge and skills to effectively plan and implement curriculum change

Having adequate knowledge and skills to effectively plan and implement curriculum change is viewed as perhaps one of the core requirements of an AMM role. Results of the study showed that AMMs did not possess adequate knowledge and skills to effectively plan and implement curriculum change in PHEIs. This was a serious setback for PHEIs who are currently involved in the process of changing their curricula from franchised to locally developed ones. Given the changing nature of societal needs and expectations, and also given the competitive nature of higher education at the moment, it was viewed as important in literature that for PHEIs to remain competitive, they needed to ensure that they had staff (AMMs) with adequate knowledge of curriculum development and change who are be able to successfully develop and review curricula in line with societal needs and expectations.

The above was viewed as true because the curriculum change process required that AMMs to perform higher order activities such as championing curriculum change alternatives, synthesising curriculum change information, facilitating adaptability during the curriculum change process and also building a community of practice (Floyd & Wooldridge, 2000). There are a number of studies that showed why having adequate knowledge and skills in the planning and implementation of curriculum change by AMMs was important for the success of their role in the planning and implementation of curriculum change. In their study of the influence of educational qualifications, Salleh, Yaakub and Dzulkifli (2011) found that a person who possessed high levels of knowledge and skill tended to succeed because of high levels of job knowledge (unique skills, intelligence and work methods) than a person with less or no knowledge thus confirming earlier studies that showed that high levels of knowledge and skill had consistently been associated with receptivity to innovation and change and that such managers were more aware of and more receptive to the need for change than managers with less knowledge and skill.

AMMs possess adequate training on the planning and implementation of curriculum change

Training is regarded as one of the most critical interventions in capacitating employees for improved performance in organisations and should be viewed as an investment rather than a cost. It emerged from results that AMMs were not receiving adequate training on curriculum change at the PHEIs where

they were working. During the interviews some of the AMMs indicated that whatever knowledge they had on curriculum development including curriculum change, they received it during their years at colleges and universities as students and was the knowledge they were using to help them plan and implement curriculum change at their current work.

There is no doubt that training is very important for improved AMMs performance and this was also made clear by the AMMs themselves during interviews when they expressed surprise and disappointment that their institutions were not providing any training opportunities on curriculum issues such as curriculum development, implementation and change. Literature showed that having adequate training in an area of specialisation gave a manager confidence to effectively carry out his/her duties in HEIs (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). In their discussion of professional adequacy, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) argued that training developed ability and confidence in AMMs to effectively implement curriculum change in HEIs.

A number of AMMs in the PHEIs commented during interviews that ever since they were employed at the institutions, they never participated in any training on curriculum development in general and in curriculum change in particular. This situation showed that top management in these institutions did not seem to take staff training and development seriously despite its importance in capacitating both staff and AMMs with the much needed knowledge and skills for effective planning and implementing curriculum change. According to results of the interviews, top management in the PHEIs viewed training as a cost and a waste of time rather than an investment hence their seemingly negative attitude towards training.

AMMs were not given detailed job descriptions at start of their roles

The study found that the AMMs were not given detailed job description at the start of their roles as middle managers in PHEIs. This was indeed a big setback as a job description are meant to clarify what exactly an AMM is supposed to do in curriculum department in general and in curriculum change in particular. A clearly articulated job description delineates tasks for AMMs and helps AMMs to effectively plan and prioritise their activities to ensure they are successful. Without a job description that is clear on what an AMM was supposed to do as was the case with AMMs in PHEIs, this study found that most of the AMM activity time was then used for doing mundane non-academic work instead of concentrating their efforts on academic activities such as planning and implementing curriculum changes among others.

The above argument was confirmed by both quantitative and qualitative results. Literature also, according to Magpie Consulting (2013) showed that detailed job descriptions make work more efficient and gives managers a chance to sort out roles and responsibilities, to specify who does what, to eliminate overlaps and to make sure nothing is falling through the cracks. The above statement means that for AMMs in PHEIs to be able to function effectively and perform their roles in the planning and implementation of curriculum change more effectively, they should be given clear and adequate direction through job descriptions. From interviews conducted with the AMMs, results showed that those who were able to receive job descriptions, their job descriptions were not clear or detailed enough to be able to guide them on what exactly their role in the PHEIs was. By failing to provide AMMs with detailed job descriptions, top management failed in their role to clarify what each AMM was responsible for and what was expected of the AMMs.

Literature showed that if then AMMs are put into situations where what they were supposed to do was not clearly defined, issues such as role ambiguity, role strain, role conflict and role overload occur (Macionis & Linda 2010; Madden, 2013; Ram et al 2011; Safaria, bin Othman & Wahab, 2011; Vanishree, 2014). Smith and Erwin (2005) further extended the above argument by asserting that a lack of clear job description puts AMMs in a position where role conception (what an AMM actually thinks his/her role is), role perception (what others in the organisation think the role of the AMM should be) and role behaviour (what the AMM actually does) were not reconciled and role ambiguity arises with the net effect being confusion about what AMMs are expected to do. Symptoms of role ambiguity in the departments include concern over who does what, blaming others for not getting the job done, ineffective communication, questions over who makes what decisions, as well as the creation of and attention to non-essential work to fill time (Smith & Erwin, 2005). When therefore AMMs are put in this situation where they are either not given job descriptions or are given job descriptions that fall short on detail, they would lack focus as well as ability to effectively prioritise their tasks during a change process (Harvard Business School, 2002) as happened to AMMs in PHEIs.

AMMs have no full authority on the planning and implementation of curriculum change.

Results of the study showed that AMMs in PHEIs did not have authority over activities in their department owing to the centralised nature of decision making in PHEIs. It was established in the study that AMMs in PHEIs exhibited an external locus of control over their roles as they had no authority over what they did in the institutions in general and in curriculum change in particular. Different studies showed that having a clear locus of control (internal or external locus of control) over one's duties was critical to the successful performance of the duties. This line of argument was articulated in the works of French & Raven (2005) and also Luiz (2006) who argued that having an internal locus of control meant that middle managers held the belief that events affecting what they do was solely as a result of their own behaviour and actions while middle managers that exhibited an external locus of control believed that events in their activities or roles were primarily determined by fate, chance or other people.

Interviews with AMMs showed that owner-managers of PHEIs centralised and controlled virtually everything from information flow to who did what and when. The interviews further showed that it was very difficult for AMMs in these institutions to initiate anything in their departments, no matter how small without taking time to consult with the owner-managers. In many instances the AMMs indicated during interviews that as a result of lack of authority, they felt that they were reduced to just conveyors of top management views with very little in terms of contributions being allowed from them. AMMs also felt that this was one of the major challenges in PHEIs which was making the performance of their roles in curriculum change very difficult.

Conclusion and recommendations

In the light of the current findings of the study, the researcher concluded that the efforts of academic middle managers to effectively plan and implement curriculum change in their institutions is as a result of their failure to satisfy the basic job requirements of their roles. Most academic middle managers indicated that they failed to satisfy requirements of their roles because they were not given detailed job descriptions at the start of their roles, they were just appointed into their positions in PHEIs yet they did not have adequate training or experience in curriculum change. It is further concluded that AMMs did not have authority over curriculum change issues in their institutions owing to the restrictive nature of

work environments in PHEIs and this affected their ability to effectively plan and implement curriculum change.

It is therefore recommended that for AMMs to be effective in their roles of planning and implementing curriculum change, the work environment in PHEIs needs to be flexible enough to allow more decision making and authority over curriculum matters by AMMs. Top management need to employ distributed leadership so that authority is shared by all people involved in curriculum change. Also AMMs need to be provided with detailed job descriptions at the start of their roles to ensure that they receive adequate guidance in terms of their job requirements. Finally the role of AMMs requires people with both experience and adequate training hence it is recommended that top management in PHEIs need to promote people into AMMs positions who have these attributes for curriculum change to be effectively and successfully done in these institutions.

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