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LEADING CURRICULUM CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN BOTSWANA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR ACADEMIC MIDDLE MANAGERS

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Abstract

This study examined issues and challenges in the leading of curriculum change by AMMs in higher education institutions HEIs. The purpose of the study was to both generate debate as well as provide insight into how leadership moderates AMMs role in curriculum change by answering the question: How do AMMs lead curriculum change in HEIs in Botswana? 162 AMMs were selected using the stratified random sampling procedure from a total of 280 AMMs from five HEIs. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select 10 AMMs for interviews. A mixed methods approach that employed a concurrent triangulation design was used. The study also used a structured questionnaire and a semi-structure interview for data collection. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Responses of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (DA) and Strongly Disagree (SDA) were weighted as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The sum of the weights were divided by 5 to get a criterion mean of 3 so that responses with mean scores of less than 3 were not accepted and those with mean scores of 3 and above represented marginal to very good performance in leading curriculum change. Thematic analysis was used for analysing qualitative data. Results showed that the use of participative leadership styles such as distributed leadership by AMMs is crucial to successful planning and implementation of curriculum change in HEIs. The significance and potential impact of this study are that it will contribute to improved AMMs role in curriculum change in HEIs.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a nebulous and difficult concept to define and its meaning has been a subject of much heightened debate for a long time because it is neither precise nor unified (Bryman, 2007; Hallinger & Heck, 2010a). There is still no consensus about a universal definition of leadership and this has led to a multiplicity of definitions that attempt to clarify the concept (Bryman, 2007, Hallinger & Heck, 2010b). As a result of the multiplicity and multi-dimensionality of leadership definitions, a number of leadership approaches have ranged on a continuum, from administration to management to leadership, with the last leadership approaches representing more visionary, creative, inspirational and energizing approaches than the first two (Bush, 2008; Gilbert, 2011). Among some of the definitions given by authorities based on their different conceptions and perceptions of leadership include that leadership is a process designed to influence a group of individuals to work together to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2010). Hohepa & Lloyd (2009) also define leadership as an influence process that drives individuals to think or act differently according to a task or situation. According to Joyce & Boyle (2013), the higher education (HE) has become complex and difficult to manage without the collective support of institutional members. This is supported by Jones, Lefoe, Harvey & Ryland (2012) who argue that HE management has become complex and requires collective or distributed leadership rather than hierarchical leadership.

Statement of the problem

The HE environment in Botswana is both volatile and highly competitive. The above is compounded by the fact that HE in Botswana is also highly regulated by government regulatory agencies. Despite these conditions, there is no study known to the research about how AMMs lead curriculum change in HEIs in Botswana especially in terms of issues and challenges the AMMs face when leading curriculum change. This study therefore, besides contributing to the enrichment of the body of knowledge on the moderating effect of leadership on AMM role, is meant to bridge the research gap on how AMMs are leading curriculum change in HEIs in Botswana.

Limitations of the study

There were three major limitations to this study. First was the issue of time as heavy work commitments on the part of both the researcher and the respondents was a problem especially on the interview part as some of respondents were rather hesitant to participate in 30 to 45 minutes of the interviews. Second, the HEIs were geographically spaced making travel arrangements difficult and expensive. Third, some AMMs were not prepared (were rather afraid) to discuss leadership issues in interviews with regards to how they led curriculum change at their institutions owing to the fact that their work environment was too restrictive.

LEADERSHIP ROLE OF ACADEMIC MIDDLE MANAGERS

The importance of collective leadership in the now highly volatile HE environment is also raised by a number of authorities who asserted that for there to be effective leadership in HE, there is a need for multiple individuals to share leadership by ensuring that people work collaboratively to promote connectedness (Grint & Holt, 2011; The King's Fund, 2012). Gosling et al (2009) also confirm the importance of distributed leadership in HE when they posited that it is an approach that embraces the notion of collegiality and autonomy of members rather than command, and hence is very important for the success of any type of change including curriculum change in HEIs. Curriculum change leadership is therefore a social influence process in which intentional influence is exerted by one person or group over other people for the purpose of achieving organisational and curriculum goals (Yukl, 2002; Brown et al, 2000; Rudhumbu, 2014). Two aspects of AMM role namely that of school improvement and the improvement of teaching and learning have been viewed as being catalytic in necessitating the reconceptualisation of the AMM's role as a leadership role rather than a management role in curriculum change (Thrash, 2012; Bush & Middlewood, 2005). Fitzgerald & Gunter (2006) also support this reconceptualisation of the leadership role of AMMs by suggesting a paradigm shift from managerialism and management practices to leadership matters on pedagogy and pedagogic practices.

The challenge therefore faced in this proposed paradigm shift is for the AMMs as curriculum leaders, to be able to establish a balance between leadership and management roles in order to provide both vision and direction while also ensuring effective and efficient implementation and monitoring of pre-determined curriculum policies and procedures (Humphreys, 2010). While acknowledging this balancing act predicament, AMMs are also faced with the challenge of coming up with a vision, of shaping curriculum change goals, motivations and actions of others to reach existing and new curriculum change goals (Yukl, 2002). This is so because according to Scott-Ladd and Chan (2004), change does not just happen, it must be led. Joyce & Boyle (2013) also argues that leadership is not defined by the exercise of power because people will just get fed up and show resistance, but by the capacity of a leader to increase the sense of power among the led so that everybody feels in charge, involved and a sense of ownership. This approach to leadership is viewed as highly motivational to followers and an important ingredient to the success of changes such as curriculum change.

Research shows that successful curriculum change results from effective leadership (Knight & Trowler, 2001; Bush, 2007) and also that it is no longer enough to categorise the role of the academic middle managers in curriculum change as that of head of department (manager) but rather as leader as this captures both the management and leadership attributes of academic middle managers in managing change progress and in leading improvement (Gronn, 2010; Muijs & Harris, 2003; Brundrett, 2007). Literature shows that AMM as academic leaders need to possess a wide range of leadership skills to be able to effectively lead and manage change in their units (Thrash, 2012). Such leadership and management skills include the ability to lead a diverse unit, possession of critical thinking skills, and the ability to lead by example (Corey & Corey, 2006; Haslam, 2004; Rosser et al, 2003; Nunn, 2008).

The history of leadership and management attests to the fact that AMMs as change leaders need to demonstrate certain qualities, attributes and behaviours to be able to effectively manage and lead change in their departments (Wood, 2004; Snipes-Bennett, 2006). The above is also confirmed by the fact that higher education is rapidly evolving and managing of change is becoming complex and hence require that AMMs possess effective leadership skills to be able to ensure they effectively and adequately communicate the need for curriculum change as well as ensure that the programmes continue to meet global standards (Packard, 2008; Sypawka, 2008).

Academic middle managers' role in curriculum leadership is viewed as symbolizing the creation of followers not subordinates for curriculum change, a situation which calls for middle managers to possess a variety of skills and abilities which include but not limited to the ability to lead a heterogeneous department, possession of critical thinking skills, and ability to lead by example (Corey & Corey, 2006; Haslam, 2004; Nunn, 2008; Rosser, Johnsrud & Heck, 2003). In addition to the skills mentioned above, Sypawka (2008) also argues that middle managers as curriculum leaders need to also possess the following skills namely: being cultural representatives of the department, good communicators, skilled managers, forward-looking planners, and above all, being able to demonstrate the ability to manager change (Del Favero, 2005; 2006a; Hyun, 2009; Goodman, 2001). This argument is supported by the fact that change such as curriculum change is both an emotional as well as a rational process in which listening to both enthusiasts and resisters gives the AMM important insights into how to ensure that a desired change effort succeeds (Scott-Ladd and Chan, 2004). The above then means that AMMs as curriculum leaders need to listen first then lead in order to gain the trust and respect of department members (Northern Gateway Public Schools Administration Manual, 2009; French & Raven, 2005; Luiz, 2006).

The leadership style therefore employed by middle managers in the carrying out of their role in curriculum change has a significant bearing on the success of both the institution and the department with regards to curriculum change (Del Favero, 2006b; Gmelch, 2004). The need for effective curriculum leadership by middle managers is also viewed as more important now than ever before because AMMs today are faced with the double challenge of adapting to constantly changing demands for education as well as to ensure that the internal dynamics of their departments are maintained (Sypawka, 2008). There are a number of leadership models that include the managerial, transformative, participative and the five dimensions model that attempt to explain the actions and rationale of leader behaviour in organisations and departments during the period of change (Bush & Glover, 2003; Daniel, 2009; Thrash, 2012; Humphreys & Einstern, 2004).

The managerial leadership model

The managerial leadership model assumes that the focus of curriculum leaders ought to be on functions, tasks and behaviour and that if these functions are carried out competently, the work of others in the organisation and also department will be facilitated and enhanced (Leithwood, Mascall, Strauss, Sacks, Memon & Yashkina, 2006). To be able to effectively carry out the above functions, managers as leaders need to develop and implement a cyclical process model involving seven managerial responsibilities namely goal setting, needs identification, priority setting, planning, budgeting, implementing, and evaluation. The model does not include the concept of vision that is central to most leadership models as it focuses on managing existing activities successfully rather than visioning a better future for the institution or department (Bush, 2007). As a result it is a model not seen as effective in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in higher education institutions since curriculum change is an ongoing timeless process.

However, the above model is also a model that is suitable for a centralised system of management such as the one that obtains in most PHEIs in Botswana as it prioritises the efficient implementation of external imperatives, that is, those imperatives prescribed to the middle manager by higher authorities within a bureaucratic hierarchy in the institution. Daniel (2009) described this model as the bureaucratic system/model in which decision making is viewed as a rational process where good and/or efficient decisions are made. This rationality is viewed from the context that in a bureaucracy, there exist clear and consistent sets of goals and objectives that need to be achieved within a certain time frame (Daniel, 2009). The above leadership model is characterised by clear and formal channels of communication and reporting systems, written rules and regulations and a knowledge base. One good example of the application of the managerial leadership model is scientific management as proposed by Tyler (1949). Tyler's model is associated with authoritarian, hierarchical and inaccessible leadership styles and that the middle manager's authority is perceived as God-given, judicial and final (Bush, 2007). While its opponents describe

it as archaic and antidemocratic, it is also credited for its effectiveness in ensuring efficiency in operations (Bush, 2007).

Transformative leadership model

The transformative leadership model assumes that the central focus of leadership should be commitment and capacities of departmental members. Its major dimensions on the role of the middle manager include building the departmental vision, establishing departmental goals, providing intellectual stimulation, offering individual support, modeling best practices and important departmental values, creating a productive departmental culture, and developing structures to foster participation by members in departmental decisions (Thrash, 2012). The model primarily focuses on the processes by which middle managers as leaders seek to influence departmental outcomes rather than on the nature or direction of those outcomes (Bush, 2007; Thrash, 2012). One major criticism of the model is that the middle manager as leader has potential to become despotic because of his/her strong, heroic and charismatic traits (Allix, 2000).

Participative leadership model

It is a model that assumes that the decision-making processes of the group should be the central focus of the group (Leithwood, et al, 2006). Its three major assumptions in the context of the role of middle managers during curriculum change are that i) participation by all members increases effectiveness in the department, ii) participation by all members is justified by democratic principles, and iii) in the context of site-based management, leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder. This model is also referred to as the collegial model that focuses on the creation of a community of members that share interests in the decision-making processes in the department or organisation (Daniel, 2009). Members in this team interact and influence each other through a network of continuous personal exchanges based on social interaction, value consensus and reciprocity (Daniel 2009). Members exchange ideas with their leader at both formal and informal levels while at the same time respecting each other's professional autonomy and authority. This leadership model is highly credited for its power to bond staff together and to ease the pressures on middle managers because leadership functions and roles are shared (Thrash, 2012).

The five dimensions model

The five dimensions model developed by Victor & Franckeiss (2002) further demonstrates how effective curriculum leadership by AMMs can lock together all aspects of the curriculum change process throughout the department and also ensure that all curriculum management activities and interventions by the AMM and his/her team are coordinated and consistent. According to Victor & Franckeiss (2002), effective curriculum leadership is premised on the following principles: i) Curriculum change cannot be easily defined but needs to be led proactively and in a manner responsive to the changing contingent circumstances; ii) curriculum change is optimally led through a structured yet flexible approach; iii) consistency of leadership behaviours is of paramount importance throughout the curriculum change process; iv) congruence is needed through every level of the department and at every stage of the curriculum change process; and v) the interventions that deliver curriculum change can also be used to define and secure commitment to the required change (Victor & Franckeiss, 2002).

Drawing from the above model therefore, the following dimensions help illuminate the important role of leadership in supporting curriculum change (Victor & Franckeiss, 2002): Directing: refers to ensuring that the overall direction and purpose of the curriculum change are thought through and articulated in an appropriate manner; describing: refers to the translating of the department vision and direction into enabling strategies and operational strategies (the functional plans and approaches adopted by the department through which it deploys its expertise to deliver curriculum change. The enabling and operational strategies for effective leadership of curriculum change in the department include reward strategy (rewarding of the department staff for recognising their role in implementing curriculum change), resourcing strategy (ensuring availability of adequate resources in the department), performance management strategy (ensuring department staff's strengths, weaknesses and plans for improvement are factored in the change process), and communication strategy (ensuring that communication to both department staff and other stakeholders is clear and timely); defining: refers to the clarification of department curriculum change processes, policies and procedures and ensures the change is implemented and the goals achieved in a consistent manner.

According to Victor & Franckeiss (2002), communicating the appropriate approaches and demonstrating the desired behaviours as encompassed within the values statements and the competence frameworks of the curriculum change approach should never be underestimated in terms of importance; delivering: refers to the actual development of the curriculum change management model as operationally defined through the preceding three dimensions and

ensuring that the curriculum change processes and procedures are implemented by AMMs in a manner that is congruent with the overall vision and values of the department and organisation; and training and development which refers to a continuous and consistent programme of training and development to capacitate department staff to be able to deal with new curriculum implementation as well as curriculum review issues related to developments in the marketplace in terms of customer requirements, technological advancements, competitor actions, global economic conditions and other factors pertinent to the department curriculum.

Theoretical framework

This study is informed by the distributed leadership theory as the theoretical framework. Literature shows that effective change in higher education especially in curriculum change, is a function of effective leadership in general and distributed leadership in particular (Thrash, 2012; Wood, 2004; Northouse, 2007; Spillane, 2006; Bolden, 2007). The concept of distributed leadership has become popular in recent years as an alternative to leadership models that concerned themselves primarily with the attributes and behaviours of individuals such as traits, style, situational and transformational theories (Bolden, 2007). The popularity of distributed leadership is also confirmed in research that has also shown that distributed leadership has over the years been one of the most preferred leadership styles by AMMs in higher education (Lustik, 2008; Rhodes, Brundrett & Nevill, 2008) as it a style that seeks to explain and show how leaders through the sharing of formalized power and authority (Lo, Ramayah & de Run, 2010), can effectively, efficiently and sufficiently lead change in their organisations and departments (Thrash, 2012).

The premise of distributed leadership is that leadership should be more systemic to ensure that leadership responsibilities are dissociated from formal organisational or departmental roles and that the action and influence of people at all levels are the ones recognised as integral to the overall direction and functioning of organisations or departments (Bolden, 2007). As a result therefore, distributed leadership is viewed as defining leadership in a way that shifts focus from the traits and characteristics of leaders to the shared activities and functions of leadership (Spillane, 2006), meaning that distributed leadership is a move away from the traditional leader-follower dualism that places all the responsibility for leadership on the leader and represents followers as somewhat passive and subservient to a more collective-oriented definition of leadership (Bolden, 2007).

The above is also echoed by Pearce & Conger, (2003) who posited that leadership has been historically conceived around an individual and his or her subordinates leading to the leadership field focusing attention on the behaviours, mindsets and actions of the individual leader in a team or organisation rather than on the behaviours, actions and mindsets of a team. This traditional conception of leadership was however challenged by scholars who argued that leadership was not a role but was an activity that is shared or distributed among members of a group or organisation (Northouse, 2010, Holt, 2011, Leithwood et al, 2006; Harris, 2008, 2009; Spillane, 2006, 2007). This new conception of leadership viewed leadership as a group quality or a set of function that must be carried out by the group not just one individual (Gronn, 2008a, 2008b), thus creating more leaders in organisations and departments (the numerical or additive function of distributed leadership) and facilitating concertive action and pluralistic engagement (Gronn, 2010).

Earlier theorising conceptualised distributed leadership in a variety of for example, Shelley (1960) and later Melnick (1982) viewed distributed leadership as describing tolerance of difference of opinion among team members. In the early 1990s also, the term distributed leadership became viewed as being synonymous to a baseless team or self-managed team (Barry, 1991), a description which resonates well with current conceptualisations of distributed leadership especially in its recognition of leadership as an emergent shared property (Leithwood et al, 2006). It was until the late 1990s and early 2000s that a more contemporary conceptualisation of distributed leadership emerged, a conceptualisation that showed distributed leadership as a web of leadership activities and interactions stretched across people and situations (Copland, 2003; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). In this context, distributed leadership was being viewed as a social process of distribution of leadership where the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals and the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders (Spillane, et al, 2004).

The flexibility of distributed leadership means that the middle manager can create working teams that are not permanent but which are fluid and interchangeable to ensure maximum opportunities for members to share curriculum change ideas and learn from each other (Harris, 2008). This characterisation of distributed leadership

therefore implies that for curriculum change to succeed, middle managers need to ensure that the authorship and scope of activities to be performed in the department during curriculum change are redefined to encompass pluralities so that team members' actions can mesh and new patterns of interdependent and collaboration among members can emerge (Bolden, 2007; Gronn, 2010).

METHODOLOGY

The study used a quantitative approach. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. A sample of 162 AMMs out of a total of 280 AMMs in five private higher education institutions HEIs in Botswana was used collect quantitative data to examine the influence of leadership style on the role of academic middle managers in the planning and implementation of curriculum change. Stratified random sampling procedure was used to select 162 AMMs for the quantitative phase while purpose sampling was used for selecting 10 AMMs for the qualitative phase of the study. The structured questionnaire was pilot tested for internal consistency while both the questionnaire and interview guide were also tested for content validity. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) and results showed that $\alpha = 0.85$, which showed high internal consistency reliability hence the questionnaire was considered reliable enough to be used in the study. In terms of content validity, the two data collection instruments were subjected to expert opinion and recommendations of experts were incorporated into the final instrument drafts. 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 21 was used for data analysis.

Data analysis

This section presents the descriptive statistics on the leadership role of AMMs in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs in Botswana. The mean and standard deviation were used in the analysis to show how AMMs use leadership techniques to perform their role in the planning and implementation of curriculum change in PHEIs. Respondents were asked to rate statements about how they led curriculum change in their departments. Responses of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (DA) and Strongly Disagree (SDA) were weighted as 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The sum of the weights were divided by 5 to get a criterion mean of 3 so that responses with mean scores of less than 3 were not accepted and meant ineffective leadership and those with mean scores of 3 to 5 were accepted as representing marginal to very effective leadership of curriculum change. SPSS version 21 was used to assist in the analysis of quantitative data while thematic analysis was used for analysing qualitative data.

Table 1: curriculum Leadership

curriculum leadership statements (ranked mean scores)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Providing a clear vision to the department and communicating it in a clear and inspirational way to all department staff members	4.34	1.1
Explaining and clarifying what curriculum change means for department staff and, most importantly, for learners, in positive terms	4.12	1.1
Ensuring that the senior management is continually updated about the progress in the planning and implementation of curriculum change to ensure continued top management support	3.88	.90
Having a clear rationale for change that is grounded on detailed facts and accurate research about curriculum change in the department	3.83	1.1
Motivating individual department staff member to contribute to the curriculum change process	3.75	.96

Being clear and firm about what is negotiable and what is fixed, so that energies are maximised, conflict is reduced and the direction is clear during curriculum change process	3.72	.89
Having a clear communication plan at the outset and keeping to it during both the planning and implementation of curriculum change	3.45	1.2
Creating opportunities to talk to individuals, teams and the whole department about the curriculum change and its progress during both the planning and implementation stages	3.14	1.1
Arranging regular department meetings as a means of updating all department staff on the progress of curriculum change	2.95	1.4
Mentoring and coaching department members during both the planning and implementation stages of curriculum change	2.58	1.3

Results in Table 1 show that AMMs believe that they play a very effective and significant role in leading curriculum change in the two leadership tasks which scored means higher than 4. Effective AMMs leadership of curriculum change is demonstrated by high mean scores in the following leadership tasks: providing a clear vision to the department and communicating it in a clear and inspirational way to all department staff members ($M = 4.34$, $SD = 1.1$) and explaining and clarifying what curriculum change means for department staff and, most importantly, for learners, in positive terms ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 1.1$).

In the six leadership tasks that have mean score of more than 3 but less than 4, Table 1 shows that AMMs performed their leadership roles marginally effectively during curriculum change in PHEIs. The six leadership tasks in which AMMs perform marginally well during their leadership of curriculum change include ensuring that the senior management is continually updated about the progress in the planning and implementation of curriculum change to ensure continued top management support ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 0.9$); having a clear rationale for change that is grounded on detailed facts and accurate research about curriculum change in the department ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 1.1$); Motivating individual department staff member to contribute to the curriculum change process ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 0.96$); being clear and firm about what is negotiable and what is fixed, so that energies are maximised, conflict is reduced and the direction is clear during curriculum change process (3.72 , $SD = 0.89$); having a clear communication plan at the outset and keeping to it during both the planning and implementation of curriculum change ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.2$); creating opportunities to talk to individuals, teams and the whole department about the curriculum change and its progress during both the planning and implementation stages ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.1$).

In the two leadership activities which scored means of less than 3, did AMMs performed their leadership role effectively during curriculum change. These two leadership tasks in which AMM performed poorly during their leading of curriculum change include the following: Arranging regular department meetings as a means of updating all department staff on the progress of curriculum change ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.4$) and mentoring and coaching department members during curriculum change ($M = 2.58$, $SD = 1.3$).

Overall the above results showed that AMMs mostly show average performance in their leadership of curriculum change as out of the ten curriculum leadership tasks, AMMs showed average performance in most of the leadership tasks (six out of ten). Also, results showed that the deviation on the mean scores of all the items show little variability in the way the AMMs responded as it is around 1 meaning that there is general agreement on how AMMs view their role in leading the planning and implementation of curriculum change.

Qualitative results showed that all the AMMs indicated that the centralised nature of management where some decisions on curriculum and curriculum change are just imposed by the top management and also where AMMs have to seek permission on even minor issues concerning curriculum change make it difficult for the AMMs to more effectively and successfully lead curriculum change. Despite these setbacks however AMMs who were interviewed were of the opinion that using leadership styles that promoted teamwork and that guaranteed department members an opportunity to maximally participate in curriculum change helped them to achieve a fair amount of success during the curriculum change process. Among some of the comments by AMMs during interviews were the following:

"I feel that an effective curriculum leader should be able to motivate department members by ensuring effective communication and teamwork during curriculum change process. At the same time I also feel that an effective curriculum leader should at times show firmness to ensure that there is no slackening in terms of effort required during the curriculum change process". (G1)

"You see, our work environments in PHEIs are highly controlled and this makes our leadership role in curriculum change very difficult. We do not have authority at all to take initiate and effectively lead curriculum change in some of these PHEIs. However despite this concern, I am of the opinion that to effectively lead curriculum change, AMMs need to distribute roles so that the curriculum change process is seen as everyone's responsibility in the department. Most curriculum changes that fail have been seen to fail around leaders who want to do everything by themselves instead of sharing leadership with subordinates to ensure that the skills and knowledge of every member of the department are utilized". (BU1)

"Promoting teamwork and always motivating and inspiring subordinates too me are the best ways of leading and guaranteeing successful curriculum change in departments. I think AMMs should start moving away from the hero mentality where all glory for the success of the curriculum change process should be for the AMM. This mentality where AMMs think they know it all and they can do everything alone is a recipe for curriculum change failure as department members will fold up their hands and let the AMM do it alone". I feel a leadership style that promotes collaboration in our departments is critical for curriculum changes to succeed. Also I feel that gone are the days when AMMs feel that they can just command their way to successful implementation of curriculum change. We just need to work together in our departments for innovations to succeed despite highly restrictive work environments". (AB1)

"My opinion is that AMMs can improve their leadership of curriculum change if they lead learning teams in departments. There must be time set aside by AMMs to monitor, mentor and coach their subordinates during curriculum change. Also communication that helps to clarify issues during the process of curriculum change is important in ensuring successful leadership of curriculum change by AMMs". (GIP1)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

AMMs indicated that they operated under restrictive conditions in PHEIs and had to devise strategies for ensuring that their efforts in leading curriculum change succeeded. In this section therefore views about the effectiveness of AMMs leadership role, challenges AMMs faced, their ability to lead curriculum are discussed. It was established in the study that the performance of AMMs in leading curriculum change was marginal because of the restrictive nature of the working conditions that deprived them of authority and affected their ability to take initiative and be innovative. Out of the 10 leadership tasks that indicated that they AMMs performed during curriculum change, results showed that AMMs were only effective in 20% of the curriculum change leadership tasks and marginally effective in 60% of the tasks which was a clear indication that AMMs were not effective in their leadership role in curriculum change in PHEIs despite the fact that leadership, which is about influencing and motivating others to perform certain tasks for the achievement of set goals, is viewed in literature as critical for the success of educational change such as curriculum change.

The importance of effective curriculum leadership as mentioned above was aptly demonstrated by the reconceptualisation of the AMM's role from a management role to a leadership role (Thrash, 2012; Bush & Middlewood, 2005). Effective curriculum change leadership according to Griffin (2011) entails a number of things chief of which is having authority to create a strong department culture and to establish a flatter and effective department structure to ensure effective communication and team work. Having a strong department culture during a change process is viewed as very important according Griffin (2011) in ensuring that department members were prepared to work together as a team to achieve a given task or assignment and also to ensure willingness of department members to complete the task at their level and demonstrate a sense achievement and pride for successfully completing the department tasks together.

Having authority over department matters such as curriculum change is also viewed by Griffin (2011) as an important tool in ensuring successful leading of curriculum change. Clear and adequate authority of AMMs over department matters helps AMMs to ensure that the line of authority in the department is clear enough from the middle manager to the lowest rank in the department; there is clarity on the duties, responsibilities and authority of

all department members as well as the extent to which authority is able to be delegated in the department; and also that the department structure is receptive and/or flexible to adopting curriculum change. With adequate authority, AMMs can ensure that communication during the change process is effective and multi-directional, that is, curriculum change information effectively flows downward, upward and horizontally in the department to allow high participation of department members in the change process (Goodman, 2001). If people feel that they are involved in decisions concerning the change process, Griffin (2011) argues that they become energized to participate more effectively in the change process.

Drawing from the distributed leadership theory, the role of leadership during a change process such as during curriculum change is further viewed as of critical importance. Effective curriculum change leadership during a change process fosters relationships, that is, ensures that AMMs as curriculum leaders act fairly, demonstrate sensitivity to and genuine care for followers and cultivate a culture of respect, model and promote open and inclusive dialogue, use effective communication, facilitate problem solving skills, support processes for improving relationships and deal fairly and decisively with conflict in the department (Northern Gateway Public Schools Administration Manual, 2009). For effectiveness in curriculum change, should therefore not employ leadership styles that are associated with authoritarian, hierarchical and inaccessible leadership styles and should not perceive their authority as God-given, judicial and final but as a shared responsibility (Bush, 2007).

Effective curriculum change leadership according to Luiz (2006) embodies visionary leadership where the AMM as curriculum change leader should base their leadership on a shared vision and participative leadership. Such visionary leadership by AMMs during curriculum change, as previously discussed by Griffin (2011) and also confirmed by French & Raven (2005), should facilitate change and promote innovative ideas, maximum member participation through distributed leadership consistent with the departmental needs. The role of participative and distributed leadership is explained by Thrash (2012) and also Daniel (2009). If AMMs feel that top management at their institutions create conditions that allow the AMMs to fully participate in the curriculum change process through distributed leadership, the AMMs will perform more effectively in their roles as curriculum leaders. Victor and Franckeiss (2002) also argued that if curriculum change is to be optimally led, a structured yet flexible approach takes advantage of the strengths of one group of team members to address the weaknesses of the others should be used.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above findings, it was concluded that AMMs perform marginally effective in leading curriculum change in PHEIs. It was further concluded that where curriculum change leadership tasks were within the control of AMMs such as providing a vision and also clearly explaining the purpose for curriculum change, AMMs performed their leadership role more effectively and successfully. However where curriculum leadership tasks lay outside their span of control such as the issues related to having authority over curriculum change issues and issues of decision making, it was concluded that AMMs performed their leadership roles ineffectively in PHEIs. It was also concluded that the major challenge that AMMs faced in their leadership of curriculum change was lack of authority to take initiative and be innovative in curriculum change in some of the PHEIs and this challenge significantly affected their curriculum change leadership role.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For AMMs to effectively perform their leadership role during curriculum change, they need to operate in an environment where they have adequate authority to make decisions and take initiative in the performance of their curriculum change roles and responsibilities. Most importantly AMMs need to participate more fully in decision making concerning when and how curriculum change should be done so they develop a sense of ownership as well as feel in charge. This will motivate them and also help them to motivate their subordinates during the curriculum change process.

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