

NAVIGATING CHANGE: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND CURRICULUM REDESIGN IN TERTIARY EDUCATION IN GHANA

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Abstract

Redesigning the curriculum in tertiary education is essential for maintaining its relevance to the evolving needs of students, industries, and society. However, the redesign comes with some resistance from stakeholders due to uncertainty. This study, structured along a qualitative approach, adopted a single case study design to answer the three research questions regarding leadership qualities that influenced curriculum redesign, incorporating innovative teaching methods, and overcoming resistance to change. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 28 participants from the University for Development Studies comprising the Director of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance, Deans of Schools/Faculties, Heads of Department, and lecturers. The instruments used to collect data were interviews and focus group discussions. The data were analyzed thematically. Key findings revealed that vision, interpersonal relationships, and communication significantly influenced successful curriculum redesign.

Furthermore, leadership strategies such as stakeholder engagement, addressing the concerns of stakeholders, and collaborative decision-making were crucial in mitigating resistance to curriculum change. The study concluded that a visionary leader with collaborative decision-making and good communication could lead to stakeholders supporting and owning curriculum redesign. It is recommended that educational institutions should foster a culture that values and encourages innovation and inclusivity in curriculum redesign.

Keywords: curriculum, educational leadership, curriculum redesign, resistance to curriculum development.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of modern education, the necessity for curriculum redesign emerges as a central focus. This era, marked by rapid technological progress, shifting societal demands, and the increasing diversity in the student population, calls for a curriculum that is adaptable and responsive to societal needs. Central to this evolving narrative is the role of educational leadership, which transcends beyond mere administrative functions to become a driving force in curriculum development. Alkrdem (2020) elucidated that education leaders must manage and innovatively lead, aligning curriculum with contemporary educational challenges and prospects. This role demands not only foresight but also the ability to act proactively, anticipating educational trends, embracing innovative teaching methodologies, and cultivating learning environments that are both inclusive and equitable (Lucas et al., 2021). Lucas, Spencer, and Stoll (2021) emphasized the pivotal role of the leaders in crafting initiatives that are not only reactive to the changing educational landscape but are also profoundly aware of the varied needs of the learner population. Lucas et al. argue that such leadership ensures that educational offerings are current and encompassing, catering to diverse student backgrounds and learning styles.

As the educational landscape continues to experience rapid transformation, driven by technological advancements, demographic shifts, and evolving societal expectations, the need for effective leadership in curriculum redesign has become increasingly prominent (Fullan, 2014). Despite a growing consensus on the importance of leadership in educational reform, there remains a significant challenge in actualizing curriculum redesign that effectively responds to contemporary educational demands while ensuring inclusivity and relevance (Ndlovu, 2017). A key issue is the balancing act educational leaders must perform between maintaining educational standards and embracing innovative teaching and learning strategies. As Glatthorn (2000) noted, leaders often need help to change, both from within educational institutions and from external stakeholders, posing a substantial barrier to implementing redesigned curricula. Furthermore, there is a pressing need for empirical research on the leadership qualities and strategies most effectively facilitating curriculum redesign. This is particularly crucial in addressing the diverse needs of a global student population and preparing them for a rapidly changing world. This gap between the theoretical recognition of the role of leadership in curriculum redesign and the practical reality of implementing such change presents a complex problem. Also, amidst this call for change, educational institutions face multifaceted challenges in navigating the curriculum redesign process. This study seeks to address the challenges of curriculum redesign.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The curriculum of tertiary educational institutions undergoes continuous adjustments and modifications to align with the dynamic socio-cultural needs of the population (Jukes et al., 2021). This continuous process of curriculum adaptation and modification is a proactive response to the dynamic interplay of social, cultural, and economic forces that significantly influence the educational needs of individuals within society (Wijngaards-de Meij & Merx, 2018). Jukes et al. (2021) concur with this and indicate that as these forces undergo continual shifts, higher education institutions must reassess and realign their curriculum to remain relevant and responsive. The evolving landscape necessitates a curriculum that meets academic standards and addresses individuals' practical needs and aspirations in the broader societal context (Taylor & Clark, 2018; Patel & Kumar, 2020). The influence of cultural norms, societal expectations, and global trends on curriculum adjustments has been well-documented (Anderson-Levitt, 2008). The curriculum becomes a dynamic entity, mirroring the changing demands of the educational landscape. In adapting to societal changes, higher education institutions play a crucial role in ensuring that their curriculum remains relevant and responsive to their community's diverse needs, values, and expectations (Yidana & Aboagye, 2018). These changes in the curriculum are not only influenced by shifts in cultural norms and societal expectations but also by technological advancements, economic developments, and global trends that impact the knowledge and skills deemed essential for success in the contemporary world (Anderson-Levitt, 2008 and Al Nuaimi, Ahmad & Khalid, 2023).

Furthermore, curriculum adaptation involves collaborative efforts among educators, administrators, industry stakeholders, and policymakers to identify and integrate emerging trends into the curriculum (Mitchell & Baker, 2016). This collaborative approach ensures that the curriculum meets academic standards and addresses individuals' practical needs and aspirations within the broader societal context (Taylor & Clark, 2018). As educational leaders strive to align curriculum with contemporary educational goals, pedagogical best practices, and industry demands, they encounter obstacles that impede the effective implementation of transformative

changes (Fullan, 2014; Glatthorn et al., 2019). The multifaceted nature of these challenges encompasses the structural and logistical aspects of redesign and the intricacies of leading teams through a paradigm shift in educational philosophy and practice (Glickman et al., 2014).

The existing literature highlights critical issues contributing to tertiary institutions' curriculum redesign initiatives. The existing curriculum may need to be revised, requiring an overhaul to align with emerging trends and ensure the relevance of graduates in a rapidly evolving job market (Yidana & Aboagye, 2018). Educational stakeholders, including educational administrators, lecturers, and even students, may refrain from departing from established curricular norms, hindering the smooth implementation of redesigned programs (Bolman & Deal, 2017). More financial resources, professional development opportunities, and technological infrastructure can pose formidable barriers to successfully implementing curriculum redesign (Cuban, 2013). Ensuring that the redesigned curriculum aligns with various stakeholders' diverse needs and expectations, including employers, students, and the broader community, is a complex balancing act that demands astute leadership (Hargreaves, 2012; Marzano, 2017). Engaging teachers in redesigning and garnering their commitment to the envisioned changes requires strategic leadership approaches to foster a collaborative and supportive academic culture (Bass, 1990; Kotter, 1995). Establishing effective mechanisms for assessing and evaluating the impact of curriculum redesign on student learning outcomes and overall program efficacy poses a methodological challenge that necessitates careful leadership consideration (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

The research of Adu-Gyamfi and Otami (2020) underscores the need for transformative leadership to address the challenges Ghanaian tertiary institutions face. Their work emphasizes that effective leadership is pivotal for driving meaningful curriculum changes and fostering a culture of innovation within these institutions. Numerous global studies have explored the role of effective leadership in navigating curriculum change. For instance, Bass and Riggio (2006) conducted a comprehensive analysis of leadership practices in higher education across diverse cultural and national contexts, providing insights into the global landscape. However, it is essential to note that while these studies contribute valuable perspectives, the applicability of findings to specific cultural contexts, such as Ghana, might require careful consideration due to contextual differences. In the Ghanaian context, studies specific to tertiary education and curriculum redesign are limited. However, Gurr and Drysdale (2014) delved into educational leadership in the broader context of Ghanaian higher education. Their work shed light on leadership practices but needed to focus on the intricacies of curriculum change specifically. This need for more localized studies signifies a significant gap in understanding how effective leadership contributes to curriculum navigation in the Ghanaian higher education system (Gurr & Drysdale, 2014). While these global and Ghanaian studies provide foundational insights, they often need more specificity concerning the qualities of educational leadership in successful curriculum redesign and how to overcome resistance to this process within the Ghanaian tertiary education system.

Therefore, the identified gap in the literature is the need for in-depth investigations into the role of the qualities of educational leadership in navigating curriculum change within the unique cultural and institutional context of Ghanaian tertiary institutions. This study seeks to contribute to the existing literature by exploring how educational leadership influences curriculum redesign within Ghana. As such, the study seeks to answer the following specific research questions:

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1. What qualities of educational leaders influence successful curriculum redesign in Tertiary institutions?
2. How does educational leadership influence incorporating innovative teaching methods in curriculum redesign?
3. What strategies do educational leaders use to overcome resistance to curriculum change?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

The development and implementation of a new curriculum (to replace an old one) is mainly met with some resistance at first as long as people still need to be made aware of the purpose of the change. People affected by the change need to be convinced that their prior knowledge, values, and beliefs are significant and that the change is necessary to advance the quality of education. Curriculum models, therefore, provide the structure underpinning how the curriculum development and implementation process can result in greater efficiency and effectiveness (Oliva & Gordon, 2013). This study focused on two models: 1) Overcoming Resistance to Change and 2) Concern-Based Adoption Model.

The overcoming Resistance to Change Model assumes that the success or failure of planned organizational change depends on the leader's ability to overcome staff resistance to change (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009). This model provides insights into how educational leaders can address resistance to curriculum redesign initiatives in Ghanaian tertiary education institutions. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) emphasized the importance of understanding the reasons behind resistance, including fear of the unknown, lack of involvement in decision-making, or perceived threats to autonomy. Educational leaders can use effective communication, stakeholder engagement, support, and resources to overcome resistance and gain buy-in for curriculum redesign efforts (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

The concern-based adoption model (CBA) provides a framework for understanding the stages of concern that individuals go through when adopting a new curriculum. This model helps educational leaders in Ghana identify the concerns lecturers and other stakeholders may have about curriculum redesign. By addressing these concerns systematically and providing targeted support and resources, educational leaders can facilitate the adoption of new curricular initiatives.

These models provide a framework for understanding the dynamics of curriculum redesign and offer practical strategies for educational leaders to navigate the complexities of the change (Olson et al., 2020). For instance, the overcoming resistance to change model can help identify potential barriers and sources of resistance to curriculum redesign efforts. By understanding these challenges, educational leaders can develop targeted strategies to address concerns, build stakeholder consensus, and foster a supportive environment for change. Strategies such as effective communication, stakeholder engagement, and providing professional development opportunities can be informed by this model to mitigate resistance and facilitate the adoption of new curricular initiatives. According to Olson et al. (2020), CBA offers insights into the stages of concern that individuals may experience when confronted with curriculum redesign. By recognizing and addressing the diverse concerns of stakeholders, educational leaders can tailor their approach to curriculum redesign and provide the necessary support and resources to facilitate the adoption process. This may involve offering training and professional development opportunities, providing ongoing support, and creating a culture of collaboration and shared ownership of the curriculum.

Educational leadership refers to guiding, influencing, and directing educational institutions toward achieving their goals and objectives (Bush, 2007). Educational leadership involves the guidance and direction provided by heads, principals, departmental heads, and other leaders within educational institutions. It encompasses decision-making, strategic planning, and creating an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning (Smith, 2018; Ramlal et al., 2020). Educational leaders, such as deans and departmental heads, play a crucial role in making strategic decisions, fostering a positive learning environment, and ensuring the overall effectiveness of educational programs. Educational leaders actively participate in curriculum development by providing vision, direction, and support.

Curriculum redesign involves intentionally and systematically modifying an existing curriculum to enhance its relevance, effectiveness, and alignment with contemporary educational needs ((Mitchell & Baker, 2016; Taylor & Clark, 2018). It may include updating content, revising teaching methods, incorporating new technologies, and ensuring the curriculum reflects current educational theories and practices. Educational leaders and curriculum development teams lead curriculum redesign. It requires a thorough analysis of the existing curriculum, identifying areas for improvement, and implementing changes based on research, feedback, and evolving educational trends.

Tertiary education, also known as higher education, refers to the level of education beyond secondary schooling. It includes universities, colleges, and vocational institutions that offer advanced academic and professional courses (Anderson-Levitt, 2008; Al et al., 2023). Tertiary education provides advanced learning opportunities and specialized knowledge in various academic and professional disciplines. In the context of curriculum development, tertiary education institutions design their curriculum for undergraduate and postgraduate programs. However, these must be in line with the goals of education in the country. The curriculum aims to equip students with in-depth knowledge, critical thinking skills, and specialized competencies relevant to their chosen fields. Educational leaders in tertiary institutions lead curricula development, evaluation, and continuous improvement. In summary, educational leadership in tertiary education involves guiding institutions and leading curriculum development efforts, including redesigning curricula to meet the changing needs of learners and society.

Effective curriculum redesign demands educational leaders endowed with a forward-thinking vision, adept at anticipating the dynamic needs of learners and aligning curricular changes with educational objectives. In pursuing transformative educational experiences, educational leadership with a vision emerges as a linchpin, encapsulating the ability to chart a course that responds to current challenges and prepares for the educational landscape of the future. Such leaders are adept at crafting long-term goals and aligning curriculum redesign efforts with these objectives, ensuring educational offerings remain relevant and forward-thinking (Fullan, 2014). The ever-changing landscape of education, characterized by rapid technological advancements and shifting societal needs, demands leaders who can pivot and adjust their strategies as required (Greany & Earley (eds), 2021). This agility ensures curriculum redesign is responsive to current needs and adaptive to future developments.

Educational leaders play a multifaceted role, not merely overseeing modifications to syllabi but also acting as architects of educational transformation. Their vision extends beyond the immediate modifications, encompassing a holistic understanding of how the redesigned curriculum aligns with broader educational goals, societal needs, and emerging trends in pedagogy (Fullan, 2014).

Fullan's (2014) insights underscore that curriculum leaders can articulate the significance of change, making it tangible and relevant to each stakeholder group. By doing so, they create a sense of collective ownership, fostering a shared responsibility for the success of the redesigned curriculum. In practice, curriculum leaders envision engaging in ongoing dialogue, leveraging effective communication strategies to elucidate the rationale behind curriculum redesign. They navigate the complexities of change by fostering a culture that values innovation, adaptability, and continuous improvement.

Harris, Jones, and Crick (2020) assert that leadership is critical in steering educational institutions toward successful reform and adaptation. Harris et al. emphasize that visionary foresight in curriculum leadership involves a deep understanding of the potential long-term implications of current societal and technological shifts in education. They explained that Leaders with this foresight can envisage the future of education in a way that transcends traditional boundaries, enabling them to develop curricula that are relevant today and will remain pertinent. This aspect of leadership is crucial in preparing students for a world that is continuously evolving in terms of technology, job markets, and societal needs.

Integrating innovative teaching methods and technologies is a fundamental element in curriculum redesign, a notion extensively explored by Patel and Kumar (2020). Their research underscores the critical role of curriculum leaders in spearheading this integration, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing innovation and fostering creative pedagogical approaches. Integrating new teaching methods and technologies is paramount for staying abreast of evolving pedagogical trends and meeting the diverse learning needs of students. Patel and Kumar (2020) argue that influential curriculum leaders understand the transformative power of innovation in the educational sector. These leaders explain, actively seek, and promote the integration of new teaching technologies and methodologies into the curriculum. The role of such leaders involves being abreast of the latest educational technologies, understanding how these can enhance learning experiences, and making informed decisions about incorporating such technologies into the curriculum.

Beyond adopting new technologies, the research by Patel and Kumar (2020) highlights the necessity for leaders to foster an environment where creative pedagogical approaches are encouraged and nurtured. This involves supporting educators in experimenting with and implementing innovative teaching strategies, thereby enriching the learning experience for students. Such an environment facilitates the adoption of new teaching methods and promotes a culture of creativity and continuous learning among educators and students alike. A significant emphasis of Patel and Kumar's (2020) research is on the leaders' ability to ensure that curricula remain engaging and relevant for students. In the digital age, where students are accustomed to interactive and technologically enriched environments, more than traditional teaching methods may be required. Leaders who successfully integrate innovative teaching methods and technologies into the curriculum are better positioned to maintain student engagement and cater to different learning styles, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of education. Wijngaards-de Meij and Merx (2018) suggest that the ability of curriculum leaders to blend strategic vision, adaptability, and pedagogical expertise is increasingly recognized as crucial for leaders in the educational sector. This triad of competencies enables leaders to effectively guide their institutions through the complexities of curriculum redesign, ensuring that educational programs are robust and that educational leaders are tasked with identifying and integrating innovative teaching methods that enhance the learning experience. Glatthorn (2019) emphasizes the role of curriculum leaders in promoting a culture of continuous improvement, wherein new teaching methods are

embraced and systematically evaluated for their impact on student learning outcomes. Through proactive engagement with educational research, leaders can guide faculty in selecting innovative pedagogies that have proven effective in enhancing student engagement and understanding.

Infusing educational technologies into the curriculum is a transformative aspect of contemporary curriculum redesign. Curriculum leaders must possess the technological literacy to evaluate, select, and integrate digital tools that align with the curriculum's objectives (Fullan, 2014). Successful technology integration requires a technical understanding and strategic leadership in managing the cultural shift accompanying such changes (Bolman & Deal, 2017). Leaders must navigate potential resistance to change, address faculty concerns, and create a supportive environment encouraging experimentation and risk-taking (Bass, 1990). Strategic communication is a critical element of adaptive leadership in this context. Leaders must articulate a compelling vision for the role of new teaching methods and technologies in advancing educational objectives. Transparent communication fosters a shared understanding among stakeholders, mitigating concerns and promoting a collaborative culture that embraces innovation (Bolman & Deal, 2017).

Resistance often arises from a need for more understanding or familiarity with new pedagogical approaches or technologies. According to Ganon-Shilon, Haim, and Chen (2022), curriculum leaders can address this by providing targeted professional development opportunities and ongoing support to ensure that faculty members feel competent and confident in navigating the changes, thus reducing resistance (Fullan, 2014; Ganon-Shilon et al., 2022). Glickman et al. (2014) emphasize that supportive leadership is essential for creating an environment where faculty members feel valued and equipped for the challenges of curriculum innovation. Influential curriculum leaders actively listen to concerns raised by stakeholders and adapt plans accordingly. This responsiveness demonstrates a commitment to a collaborative and iterative approach, easing apprehensions and facilitating a smoother implementation process (Bass, 1990). The ability to balance the pursuit of innovation with a genuine understanding of faculty members' challenges contributes significantly to overcoming resistance. Curriculum leaders must recognize that overcoming resistance involves individual changes and a broader cultural shift within the institution (Badger, 2022). Incorporating stakeholders in the decision-making process is crucial for overcoming resistance. Collaborative decision-making leverages diverse perspectives and engenders a sense of ownership and commitment among faculty and staff (Glatthorn, 2019). Curriculum leaders who embrace a participatory approach empower stakeholders to contribute to the redesign process, fostering a shared responsibility for the initiative's success.

4. METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study was anchored in the interpretive paradigm, with a qualitative approach that sought to provide a comprehensive exploration of the complex interplay between the qualities of educational leadership and curriculum redesign at the University for Development Studies, Ghana. In Ghana, through the heads of departments, tertiary educational institutions are responsible for designing and redesigning their curriculum to address the changing socio-cultural needs of the people. The study adopted a qualitative case study design, allowing for an in-depth exploration of the qualities of educational leadership that influence curriculum redesign in tertiary institutions in Ghana. A case study approach was deemed appropriate for its ability to capture the multifaceted nature of the qualities of educational leadership in curriculum redesign, acknowledging the unique features and contextual variations within each institution.

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This study was carried out at the University for Development Studies, Ghana. This University's curriculum design is led by the heads of departments (HODs). The HODs present the new curriculum to the Faculty/School board for initial approval and subsequently through the Director of Academic and Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA) to the University's Academic Board for approval. The University then submits the curriculum to the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) for final approval and certification. The population for the study included DAPQA, Deans of School/Faculty (Deans), HODs and lecturers. Participants were purposefully selected to ensure relevance to the research questions. A sample of 28 participants comprised one DAPQA, three Deans, six HODs, and 18 university lecturers. The aim was to capture a range of perspectives and experiences, enriching the interpretive analysis. Furthermore, samples in qualitative studies are not meant to represent large populations, as small samples of well-informed participants are often chosen and involved (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Semi-structured interview guides were self-designed and used to conduct interviews with DAPQA and the Deans. The interviews focused on leadership qualities and strategies employed during curriculum redesign, challenges faced, and the perceived influence on stakeholders. The open-ended nature of the interviews allowed participants to share their experiences, interpretations, and reflections. The focus group discussion guide gathered information from HODs and lecturers. Focus group discussions were held with four groups of six members each for HODs and lecturers. However, seven lecturers and HODs were also selected for interview. The essence was to affirm or otherwise the responses to the focus group discussions conducted.

Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns, themes, and meanings within the qualitative data. The interpretive lens guided the analysis, emphasizing the subjective interpretations of participants and the context-dependent nature of effective leadership. Themes emerged organically from the data, and patterns were identified through iterative cycles of coding and reflection. Triangulation enhanced the study's rigor by combining data from multiple sources, including interviews, focus group discussions, and curriculum documents. This approach facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon, minimizing the impact of individual biases and enriching the overall interpretive analysis.

Member checking was performed to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Participants were provided with summaries of their interviews and preliminary themes for validation. This iterative process allowed participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations and further refine themes. Participants were also provided with detailed information about the study, its purpose, and the use of their data. Informed consent was obtained before the interviews, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality.

Before starting the research, I obtained ethical clearance from the University's institutional ethics boards. Additionally, I ensured that each participant approved their participation in the study by signing the informed consent form so that their participation would be voluntary. To protect their identities, the lecturers, deans, and HODS participated in the interview as anonymous participants.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results and discusses the research questions.

1. What qualities of educational leaders influence successful curriculum redesign in tertiary institutions?

The first theme of the study sought to unravel the qualities of educational leaders that influence curriculum redesign. In-depth interviews conducted as part of the study revealed vision, integrity, empathy, good interpersonal relationships, communication, adaptability, resilience, and confidence as qualities of leaders that drive successful curriculum redesign initiatives within tertiary institutions in Ghana. Vision emerged as the most essential quality a leader needs to have to lead in curriculum redesign. The respondents were unanimous about this quality and that it was the cornerstone, actively shaping a compelling narrative for the future of their institutions. Participants consistently highlighted the significance of educational leaders who could articulate a compelling and inspiring future for their institutions. The focus group discussion revealed that visionary leaders should demonstrate a deep understanding of the institution's mission, values, and overarching educational objectives to foster a sense of purpose and direction permeating the entire curriculum redesign process. A key aspect of visionary leadership was aligning the redesigned curriculum with broader educational goals. This alignment ensured that the curriculum was not just a set of courses but a strategic instrument contributing to realizing the institution's larger vision. The findings corroborate Harris, Jones, and Crick's (2020) assertion that visionary foresight in curriculum leadership goes beyond mere anticipation of future trends. It involves a deep understanding of the potential long-term implications of current societal and technological educational shifts. Participants emphasized the transformative impact of leaders who could inspire a shared vision among stakeholders. The respondents explained that the shared vision of a leader served as a unifying force, aligning the efforts of faculty and other stakeholders toward the common goal of curriculum redesign that reflected the institution's values and aspirations. This finding is in line with the assertion by Fullan (2014) that visionary leaders went beyond the immediate concerns of curriculum adjustments and inspired and cultivated a shared vision that extended into the future. By communicating a compelling vision, these leaders instilled a sense of commitment and motivation among stakeholders (Fullan, 2014). One of the respondents indicated that:

Good leaders have a clear vision for the future and can articulate it to inspire others. They provide direction and purpose for their teams or departments. (Lecturer E)

Another respondent intimated that:

Humble leaders acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses. They seek feedback, learn from others, and are open to curriculum Redesign. (HOD C)

These quotations from participants revealed that leaders who shared their vision with their followers and motivated them created a sense of ownership of the new curriculum among the rest of the stakeholders. This sense of ownership will, in turn, help the institution align the redesigned curriculum with society's changing needs.

An interview with DAPQA revealed that:

Leaders with integrity are honest and transparent and uphold ethical standards.

They earn trust and respect through consistent and principled behavior.

A good leader understands and values the perspectives and feelings of others.

They demonstrate empathy, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment.

Another striking revelation by a respondent was that:

Resilient leaders can navigate challenges, setbacks, and uncertainties.

They maintain composure, learn from failures, and persevere in

adversity. Good leaders believe in their abilities and decisions, instilling

confidence in their team and stakeholders. Leaders inspire and motivate

others. They lead by example, set high standards, and encourage individuals

to reach their full potential. Taking responsibility for one's actions is a

fundamental quality. Good leaders hold themselves and their team

accountable for achieving goals and maintaining high standards. Effective

leaders foster a collaborative environment. They encourage teamwork,

value diverse perspectives, and promote collective problem-solving. (Dean B)

Deducing from these responses provided by the respondents, leaders are expected to possess a repertoire of leadership qualities such as integrity, empathy, good interpersonal relationships, communication, adaptability, resilience, and confidence that will enable them to inspire, guide, and effectively lead individuals or teams to successful curriculum redesign. What ran through the focus discussion was that these qualities collectively contributed to effective leadership that motivated and guided individuals or teams toward achieving the desired goal.

The findings underscore the integral role of leadership qualities in the success of curriculum redesign initiatives within Ghanaian tertiary institutions. Educational leaders become instrumental architects of educational transformation by articulating a compelling future, aligning the curriculum with broader educational goals, and inspiring a shared vision. This finding is consistent with the finding of Adu-Gyamfi and Otami (2020) that leadership is not merely about strategic planning but involves good personal relationships and the ability to inspire, communicate, and align diverse stakeholders toward a shared educational vision.

2. How does educational leadership influence the incorporation of innovative teaching methods in curriculum redesign?

This research question explored participants' views on how educational leadership influenced the incorporation of innovative teaching methods into a curriculum. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with teachers and educational leaders. The participants identified vision and advocacy, professional development, resource allocation, curriculum design and review, support and collaboration, and monitoring and evaluation as ways that educational leaders can influence the incorporation of innovative teaching methods in the curriculum. One lecturer reported as follows:

Visionary leaders inspire a shared vision for the future of education and advocate for innovative teaching methods as part of curriculum redesign. They articulate the importance of embracing new approaches to teaching and learning to enhance student engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. (Lecturer A)

One HOD had this to say:

As a curriculum leader, I articulate a compelling vision for integrating innovative teaching methods into the curriculum. They advocate for embracing new pedagogical approaches to enhance student engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

The responses from the participants revealed that visionary leaders were forward-thinking and actively influenced the adoption of innovative pedagogies. The ability of educational leaders to articulate a compelling future for the institution becomes a driving force for embracing teaching methods that align with emerging educational trends. The findings show that visionary leaders ensure that chosen pedagogies respond to current educational needs and contribute to realizing the institution's overarching mission and vision. A lecturer had this to say:

Curriculum leaders who prioritize professional development opportunities for teachers through training, workshops, and resources to support them develop their skills and confidence in using new instructional approaches can influence the incorporation of innovative teaching methods in the curriculum. (Lecturer C)

Another participant said:

Curriculum leaders can influence the inclusion of innovative teaching methods into a new curriculum if he collaborates with teachers, curriculum specialists, and other stakeholders to identify learning objectives, select appropriate teaching strategies and assess the impact of innovative approaches on student learning outcomes and also monitor and evaluate the implementation of innovative teaching methods to assess their effectiveness. (Dean D)

Another participant reported as follows:

Curriculum leaders who create a supportive environment that encourages collaboration, experimentation, and risk-taking among teachers, foster a culture of collaboration where teachers can share successes, challenges, and ideas for improvement and provide instructional materials,

technology infrastructure and to ensure that teachers have the tools they need will ultimately influence the design of a curriculum with innovative teaching methods. (Lecturer B)

The responses from these participants revealed that educational leaders influenced the incorporation of innovative teaching methods in curriculum redesign by providing vision, resources, professional development, support, and guidance to implementers.

The findings highlight how the qualities of educational leaders significantly influence the integration of innovation into curriculum redesign. Through advocacy, leaders foster inclusivity by deliberately selecting and tailoring innovative teaching methods to cater to diverse learning styles, preferences, and backgrounds. This commitment to inclusivity permeates the educational landscape, ensuring all stakeholders feel acknowledged, valued, and engaged in their educational journey. Influential leaders challenge established norms, promote experimentation, and endorse pedagogical approaches, dismantling barriers and providing equitable learning opportunities for every student. This finding is consistent with the findings of Wijngaards-de Meij & Merx (2018) and Fullan (2014), which state that leaders shape the ethos of an educational institution and influence the adoption of innovative pedagogies.

Moreover, they advocate for adapting innovative teaching methods and cultivating a culture encouraging faculty to explore new approaches. Communication is a pivotal aspect of leadership, facilitating innovative teaching methods into the curriculum. Educational leadership, characterized by strategic alignment of teaching methods with educational goals, advocacy for experimentation, effective communication, and support for professional development, ultimately shapes the educational environment. The group discussion underscores that educational leadership acts as a catalyst for integrating innovative teaching methods into curriculum redesign, fostering a culture that embraces and capitalizes on the transformative potential of innovative pedagogies. This perspective resonates with existing literature, emphasizing leadership's role in nurturing a culture of innovation within educational institutions. Additionally, it underscores an interpretive perspective, acknowledging the subjective interpretations of participants and the relational aspects of leadership in guiding change.

3. What strategies do educational leaders use to overcome resistance to curriculum change?

Participants were asked to share their views on educational leaders' strategies to overcome resistance to curriculum change. The participants enumerated strategies such as communicating the purpose of change to stakeholders, involving stakeholders in the change process, empowering and ensuring stakeholders own the change process, addressing the concerns of stakeholders, and motivating and sharing success stories with stakeholders. The study findings bring to the fore collaborative decision-making as a central strategy educational leaders employ to overcome resistance to curriculum change. As reported by one of the HODs:

Rather than a unilateral top-down approach, I always engage stakeholders in a collaborative decision-making process in curriculum redesign. (HOD B)

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One of the participants indicated:

As much as leaders celebrate successes and milestones achieved during the curriculum change process with stakeholders, recognizing their contribution will help build momentum and motivation for continued curriculum redesign. (Dean B)

DAPQA has this to say:

When leaders provide professional development opportunities to support stakeholders in implementing the new curriculum through seminars, workshops, and ongoing support, they help stakeholders develop the skills and confidence needed to embrace the changes effectively. By acknowledging and addressing concerns, leaders build trust and credibility, fostering a positive environment for curriculum redesign. (DAPQA)

Participants identified several strategies adopted by leaders to overcome resistance to change. Firstly, collaborative decision-making was highlighted as crucial, involving stakeholders in the process and fostering a sense of ownership and commitment. Leaders effectively communicated the purpose of curriculum redesign and addressed stakeholders' concerns, ensuring a shared responsibility for its success. This approach led to a co-constructed curriculum, enhancing stakeholders' commitment to its implementation. Educational leaders instilled a participatory ethos, valuing diverse perspectives and creating an environment where resistance could be transformed into active engagement. By strategically valuing diverse viewpoints, leaders demonstrated inclusivity and mitigate resistance. Additionally, strategies such as fostering a culture of change and innovation, listening to concerns, addressing them thoughtfully, and providing training to enable stakeholders to understand the necessity of change were identified. These findings align with Bolman and Deal (2017) and Badger (2022), who asserted that leaders who do not impose change but create an environment where stakeholders actively contribute to the decision process overcome resistance to curriculum redesign.

To collaborate on how these strategists enable educational leaders to overcome resistance to curriculum redesign, some participants responded as follows:

Establish clear and transparent communication channels to convey the reasons behind the curriculum redesign, its benefits, and the expected outcomes. (lecturer A)

Provide training and professional development opportunities to ensure faculty members have the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the new curriculum effectively. (Lecturer D)

Clearly articulate the advantages and positive outcomes of the curriculum change, emphasizing how it aligns with the institution's mission and enhances student learning. (Lecturer B)

Actively listen to and address concerns thoughtfully, demonstrating empathy and a willingness to adapt the curriculum based on constructive feedback. (Lecturer G)

*I acknowledge and celebrate milestones and successes associated with
the new curriculum, reinforcing the positive aspects of the change. (HOD C)*

When educational leaders communicate the purpose of the change to stakeholders, involve stakeholders in the change process, empower and ensure stakeholders own the change process, address stakeholders' concerns, and motivate and share success stories with stakeholders, they can create an environment that minimizes resistance and fosters a positive attitude toward curriculum redesign.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sheds light on the critical role of educational leadership in facilitating successful curriculum redesign within tertiary education institutions. Through collaborative decision-making, effective communication, and addressing stakeholders' concerns, leaders can foster a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders, leading to a co-constructed curriculum and shared responsibility for its success. The emphasis on participatory leadership, valuing diverse perspectives, and creating an environment where resistance can be transformed into active engagement underscores the importance of inclusivity and collaboration in navigating change. Moreover, strategies such as fostering a culture of change and innovation, listening to concerns, and providing training further contribute to overcoming resistance and promoting the adoption of innovative pedagogies. These findings provide valuable insights into the Ghanaian tertiary education context and offer broader implications for educational leadership and curriculum redesign initiatives globally. By embracing participatory approaches and fostering inclusive environments, educational leaders can effectively navigate change and drive positive transformation within educational institutions.

Recommendation

Educational leaders should involve stakeholders in the curriculum redesign process through collaborative decision-making. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders, leading to successfully implementing the redesigned curriculum.

Educational leaders should ensure that stakeholders are well-informed and their concerns are addressed thoughtfully, fostering trust and collaboration. They should also foster a participatory culture within educational institutions that values diverse perspectives and experiences. By actively engaging stakeholders and acknowledging the richness of their viewpoints, leaders can mitigate resistance and promote buy-in for innovative pedagogical approaches.

Encourage educational leaders to foster a culture that embraces change and innovation. By promoting experimentation, celebrating successes, and learning from failures, institutions can create an environment conducive to continuous improvement and growth.

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