

Development Programmes Requirements for Managing and Supporting the Ever-Dynamic Job Roles of Middle Managers in Higher Education Institutions: The Espousal Demanded from Human Resources Department; Case Studies of a New University in United Kingdom

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Abstract : Background: The fast-paced changing landscape of UK Higher Education Institution (HEIs) is poised by changes and challenges affecting Middle Managers (MM) in their job roles. MM contribute to the success of HEIs by balancing the equilibrium and pass organization strategies from senior staff towards operationalization directives to junior staff. However, this study showcased from the data analyzed during the semi structured interviews; MM job role is becoming more complex due to changes and challenges creating colossal pressures and workloads in day-to-day working. Current development programmes provisions by Human Resources (HR) departments in such HEIs are not feasible, applicable, and matching the true essence and requirements of MM who suggest that programmes offered by HR are too generic to suit their precise needs and require tailor made espousal to work effectively in their pertinent job roles. Methodologies: This study aims to capture demands of MM Development Needs (DN) by means of a conceptual model as conclusive part of the research that is divided into 2 phases. Phase 1 initiated by carrying out 2 pilot interviews with a retired Emeritus status professor and HR programmes development coordinator. Key themes from the pilot and literature review subsidized into formulation of 22 set of questions (Kvale and Brinkmann) in form of interviewing questionnaire during qualitative data collection. Data strategy and collection consisted of purposeful sampling of 12 semi structured interviews (n=12) lasting approximately an hour for all participants. The MM interviewed were at faculty and departmental levels which included; deans (n=2), head of departments (n=4), subject leaders (n=2), and lastly programme leaders (n=4). Participants recruitment was carried out via emails and snowballing technique. The interviews data was transcribed (verbatim) and managed using Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis using Nvivo ver.11 software. Data was meticulously analyzed using Miles and Huberman inductive approach of positivistic style grounded theory, whereby key themes and categories emerged from the rich data collected. The data was precisely coded and classified into case studies (Robert Yin); with a main case study, sub cases (4 classes of MM) and embedded cases (12 individual MMs). Major Findings: An interim conceptual model emerged from analyzing the data with main concepts that included; key performance indicators (KPI's), HEI effectiveness and outlook, practices, processes and procedures, support mechanisms, student events, rules, regulations and policies, career progression, reporting/accountability, changes and challenges, and lastly skills and attributes. Conclusion: Dynamic elements affecting MM includes; increase in government pressures, student numbers, irrelevant development programmes, bureaucratic structures, transparency and accountability, organization policies, skills sets... can only be confronted by employing structured development programmes originated by HR that are not provided generically. Future Work: Stage 2 (Quantitative method) of the study plans to validate the interim conceptual model externally through fully completed online survey questionnaire (Bram Oppenheim) from external HEIs (n=150). The total sample targeted is 1500 MM. Author contribution focuses on enhancing management theory and narrow the gap between by HR and MM development programme provision.

Keywords : development needs (DN), higher education institutions (HEIs), human resources (HR), middle managers (MM)

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