

Australian Journal of Teacher Education

Volume 41 | Issue 10

Article 1

2016

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Recommended Citation

Amimo, C. A. (2016). Private Universities in Kenya Seek Alternative Ways to Manage Change in Teacher Education Curriculum in Compliance with the Commission for University Education Reforms. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 41(10).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016v41n10.1>

This Journal Article is posted at Research Online.

<https://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol41/iss10/1>

Private Universities in Kenya Seek Alternative Ways to Manage Change in Teacher Education Curriculum in Compliance with the Commission for University Education Reforms

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Abstract: This study investigated management of change in teacher education curriculum in Private universities in Kenya. The study employed a concurrent mixed methods design that is based on the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A multi-stage sampling process which included purposive, convenience, cluster, and snowball sampling methods was followed. The sample comprised of 5 chartered private universities which were offering teacher education by the year 2008. The respondents were 5 Deans from the School of education, one from each of the universities; 14 Heads of Departments (H.O.D s), 32 Teacher Educators and 150 Teacher Trainees, 2 staffs from Commission for University Education and 2 from Teachers' Service Commission. Complexity Theory and Theory of Planned Change guided the study. Face and content validity was done by the expert judgment. The reliability of the questionnaire was established at Alpha of .760. Data from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations - based on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 20. Qualitative data from the interviews and documents was analyzed for content in an ongoing process as themes and subthemes emerged. The results indicated that the universities followed due processes, recommended by curriculum experts, to implement change; but sought alternative ways where due process had failed. This was because of the complexity of teacher education program, on basis of scale, foci and clientele, and also the unique nature of private universities in Kenya. The study recommends that private universities should not only follow due process, but look out for alternative strategies in implementing changes in teacher education, as they consult closely with the Commission for University Education and Teachers' Service Commission, and endeavor to fulfill their mission.

Key words: Teacher Education, Curriculum Change, Process of Change, management of change, Theory of Planned Change, Complexity Theory

Introduction

While management of curriculum change is an issue at all levels of education, it is more challenging in teacher education -- given its complexity in terms of scale, foci and clientele (Sykes, Bird & Mary, 2010) - particularly in the 21st century when pressures of change are mounting from a series of global social-economic, political and technological changes. In the Republic of Kenya, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MOEST), Teacher's Service Commission (TSC), and the Commission for University Education (CUE) are currently steering reforms in teacher education. Among these are raised standards for admission, subject area alignment, curriculum content specifications, and additional courses such as Educational Media, Communications and Technology, Health Education, Educational Guidance and Counseling, Environmental Education and Entrepreneurship Education. Following the regional Credit Accumulation and Transfer System (CATS) project by the Rockefeller Foundation, which ran from 2007 to April 2009, the Commission for University Education (CUE) has continued to develop minimum standards for undergraduate programs offered by the Kenyan universities; and it is estimated that by end of 2012/2013 financial year, 17 academic programs would have been developed (Teachers' Service Commission Act, 2012; Commission for University Education Act, 2012; Commission for University Education, 2012; 2013a; Benyawa & Odiwuor, 2013). Bachelor of Education Arts, and Science undergraduate programs are already developed for implementation. The key factors in these reforms are integration, harmonization, consistency, and equivalence-standardization as expressed in the theme "credit accumulation and transfer" (Lengoiboni, 2009; CHE, 2012; Republic of Kenya, 2012c; Wafula, 2013). This study explored the stakeholders' views on the processes considered in the implementation of the aforementioned changes in private universities in Kenya, at a time when media reported a lot of concerns on the implementation process.

Literature Review

Two Competing Models in Management of Curriculum Change Process

Generally, the function of management entails the continuous, intelligent direction of others by determining, communicating and supporting objectives of an organization. This function entails the development and utilization of time, plan of action and resources. Otunga, Odera, and Barasa (2011) impress that there is need for a carefully thought out strategy in the management of the process of curriculum change since change means dissemination of policy, knowledge and agreement on plan of action. Unfortunately, research indicates that most of the curriculum changes are implemented piecemeal without due consideration of the entire process (Gruba, Alister, Harald, & Justin, 2004). Two competing models now dominate curriculum change management. These are the product and the process models, deriving from the theories of curriculum development. The product model, the most preferred by education totalitarians, is a brain child of Tyler's (1949) conceptions on curriculum development, whereas the process model is a creation of the more liberal educators who believe that education is a complex phenomenon whose practice should be continually monitored for accountability and effectiveness.

The Product Model

The product model (power-coercive strategy) seems to dominate the process of management of curriculum change since the 1950s. Research shows evidence of “de facto state curriculum” reforms; based on a super-ordinate-sub-ordinate relationship, and enforced by political and economic powers (Otunga, Odero, & Barasa, 2011). This strategy, typically referred to as Tylerian, is rational, linear and product oriented (Morisson, 2003). Lachiver and Tardif (cited by Gruba, Alister, Harald, & Justin, 2004) give a typical illustration of the model (Tylerian) in relation to curriculum change management, in a logical five-step process, as follows: (1) analysis of current offerings and context, (2) expression of key program aims in a mission statement, (3) prioritization of resources and development strategies, (4) implementation of the targeted curricula change, and (5) establishment of monitoring tools and processes.

Analysis of current offerings and context means diagnosis of needs to show the concerns, and dissatisfaction with the current curriculum. This phase is very important because if the stakeholders do not recognize and accept the change, they are most likely to resist it (Kritsonis, 2005). Incidentally, implementation is the most difficult phase of change process since most of the shortcomings become evident (Lewin, 1947). It is a continuum which begins from the need of the new curriculum to its acceptance. While this process continues, it is necessary to monitor and evaluate the results. According to Zhao (2010), one notable feature of teacher education is the absence of attention to the evaluation of results. He encourages that circles of continuous improvement should focus on collection of information, to test whether the curriculum and pedagogy of teacher education is effective and to make steady improvements upon it. Focusing on resulting improvements is not only useful for accountability, but helps in maintaining focus as well as inspiring the reform process (Schlechty & Bob, 1991; Millitelo & Rallis, 2009).

Attempting to deviate from the Tyler model, Cheng (1994) gives an elaborate example of a strategic approach to management of the process of curriculum change in school in five sequential components as follows: (1) analyzing and monitoring the internal and external environment of the school and procuring information for planning, (2) systematic Planning and structuring of relations and resources for accomplishment of programs / school objectives, (3) developing staff and directing them into purposeful actions towards programs/ school objectives (4) constructive monitoring at individual, program and school levels, and (5) evaluation at individual, program and school levels to ensure progress towards planned objectives. Wiles and Bondi (1998) introduce yet another version of the Tylerian model in the management of change which has been offered by Lippitt, Watson and Wesley in their pioneer work, *The Dynamics of Planned Change*. This approach, though still linear, begins to emphasize the relationship between the change agent and the client system as seen in the following seven stages: (1) development of a need for change, (2) establishment of a change relationship, (3) diagnosis of the client system’s problem, (4) examination of goals and alternative routes of action, (5) transformation of intentions into action, and (6) generalization and stabilization of change.

The Process Model

Proponents of the process model are of the opinion that curriculum change is too complex to be managed in a strictly rational and in a linear way (Tylerian). As Wallace (2005) points out, “shifts in political and administrative context of schooling may alter the process and context of

educational change”, such that the original plan may not work. For example, what is deemed as small change may create a large effect breaking the linearity reasoning that small causes produce small effects (Morrison, 2008). Management of such effects requires flexible management approaches, meaning that one can easily move back from the implementation process to the first stage of analysis of needs or skip monitoring to evaluation of results. Such flexibility and a careful attention to the interactions and outcomes is what characterize the process model.

Referring to curriculum change in Hong Kong school system, Morrison (2008) predicted that there is going to be an emergence of complex curriculum structures that will characterize many schools in the 21st century. He recommends that the process of management has to emphasize flexibility, emergence, self-reorganization, communication, feedback, connectedness, relationships, collaboration and distributed control. This offshoot curriculum management process falls under the rational-empirical and normative re-educative strategies. These two strategies recognize human competence and a cooperative relationship between change agent and the client system. They further build on problem-solving, social interaction, research, development and diffusion models (Otunga, Odero & Barasa, 2011). According to Peck, Gallucci, and Sloan (2010), the dilemma facing teacher education reforms is “how policy compliance, which is necessary for institutional survival, may be achieved without devaluation of local knowledge, values and moral autonomy, which most view as necessary for program integrity” (p. 452).

These models encourage a participatory approach where the whole idea of change is initiated by the stakeholders and widely canvassed. Pointing at the importance of stakeholders’ involvement, Maassen and Cloete (2007) observe that management of higher education is largely fragmented around professional groupings and “change takes place in an incremental grassroots way” (p. 15). Outside the school circles influential personalities such as political leaders should be involved. They may not have the immediate expertise needed, but they possess the political will and the contextual support that determines factors such as consent and funding (Cheng, 1994; Gruba, Alister, Harald, & Justin, 2004; Wallace, 2005).

The process model requires that during the implementation the change agents should pay continuous attention to the management team who shoulder the responsibility for managing the change (Ndou, 2008) to ensure that they are (1) providing important human resources in terms of participating, time, experience, knowledge and skills for better planning; (2) producing high quality decisions and plans of change by invoking different perspectives and expertise; (3) promoting greater responsibility, accountability and commitments; (4) supporting the implementation and results of curriculum change; (5) developing meanings and culture which contributes to team spirit and organizational integration; (6) providing opportunities for individuals and groups to enrich their professional experience and pursue professional development; (7) providing information and greater opportunities to overcome technical and psychological resistances; and (8) changing ineffective practices at different levels of management of change.

If it is strongly felt that a new course is needed, Crawley, Malmqvist, Ostlund, and Brodeur (2007) recommend the following steps: (1) review the current subject area, (2) explore potentials for inclusion into the new course, (3) identify practical implications, (4) determine additional inputs in terms of preparation, appropriate theory and review; and (5) establish sequence of activities within the new course to maximize learning potential. They further stress that any approach to curriculum change management must consider departmental/school strengths, and issues related to the proposed change. In this respect several key assets within the

school and amongst the staff that provide a sound rationale and impetus for the proposed curriculum change must be highlighted to instill confidence in the proposed plan.

Such strengths could include an existing dedication to improving students learning, commitment to a structured curriculum change plan, availability of resources and facilities, having the relevant staff already taking ownership of the planned change, acknowledging the objectives of the proposed change, generally agreeing on the change structure and possessing the necessary expertise and experience to implement the change. In addition, two areas of key concern in curriculum management should be the course content and the students. Content should be changed in line with the demands of the modern workplace where employers expect 'ready-made' workers who can 'hit the ground running'. It is also important to consider the diversity of student intake as this further influences the course development (Crawley, Malmqvist, Ostlund, & Brodeur, 2007).

As Gruba, Alister, Harald, and Justin (2004) observe, minor changes are usually approved and implemented with minimum debate. For instance, they explain that if a lecturer is on study leave in a particular year, his subjects can be put on hold. Such decisions are typically made by the Head of Department or a small committee of staff administering the particular program. They add that the formal approval process within the university is often streamlined, and where necessary one-off amendments of existing guidelines are usually done. Similarly, changes within a subject do not require complex procedures. However, introduction of new degree programs may involve marketing studies, business plans, and formal approval processes that involve an Academic Board or Senate and government-administered educational bodies.

In summary, effective management of change in curriculum requires a process which focuses on two different levels of school effectiveness: (1) the structural (planning) and (2) the human aspects. Both levels are built on mechanisms of strategic management that involve environmental analysis (social context), planning and structuring, staffing and directing, monitoring and evaluation at individual, program and whole school levels. The critical element here is participation as it enhances quality planning, motivation, competence, greater responsibility, accountability, team spirit, and commitment. The process of change should also factor in congruence between curriculum change and various factors such as; teacher development, and resources. Individuals at all levels of school organization should have a common understanding of the change and respond in a synchronized fashion. Similarly, various levels of curriculum functions (including the state, district, school and classroom) should demonstrate conceptual and operational consistency – because successful change process requires harmony among stakeholders (Cheng, 1994; Ganguly, 2001).

Methodology

This study employed a concurrent mixed methods design that is based on the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches, with the quantitative approach being descriptive-comparative. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) posit that “mixed designs build on the synergy and strength that exists between qualitative and quantitative research methods to understand a phenomenon more fully than is possible in using either quantitative or qualitative alone” (p. 462). The choice of the design was based on the advice given by Low, Hui and Taylor (2012), that a dialectic mixed methods approach is the most suitable for teacher education “because teacher education requires multidisciplinary evidence derived from diverse methodological

perspectives... involves a large set of complex issues, questions and conditions” (pp. 72-73). The population comprised of Teacher Educators, Heads of Departments, Deans of Faculty of Educations, and Teacher Trainees in 7 chartered private universities in Kenya which were offering teacher education on full time basis by 2012. Private universities were considered because they seemed to be struggling with the implementation of educational reforms mandated by the government (Mwiria & Ngome, 1998; Abagi, Nzomo, & Otieno, 2005). Staffs from curriculum department of the Commission for University Education (CUE) were also included in the study because they are responsible for the development of teacher education program and inspection of the universities to ensure implementation of the reforms. Staffs from quality assurance and staffing sections of the Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC) were also considered on the grounds that they recruit teachers who graduate from universities, and, as such, would provide relevant information regarding the changes in teacher education and challenges in implementation.

The study employed a multi-stage sampling process which included purposive, convenience, cluster, and snowball sampling methods. The sample comprised of 5 chartered private universities which were offering teacher education by the year 2008. The respondents were 5 Deans from the School of Education, one from each of the universities; 14 Heads of Departments (H.O.Ds) -- 3 from the Departments of Education (in two of the universities the Deans were also acting as heads of department) and 11 from departments servicing teacher education; 32 Teacher Educators and 150 third and fourth year Teacher Trainees who were enrolled for the second and third trimesters, 2014; 2 staff from the department of curriculum of the Commission for University Education (CUE), 2 staff from Teachers Service Commission (TSC) – the departments of Quality Assurance and Standards, and Staffing. The total sample size was two hundred (200). This sample was estimated to form thirty percent of the total population. Briggs and Coleman (2007) argue that thirty percent is the minimum acceptable size for a survey. For validity the study adopted a triangulated approach in data gathering, which included questionnaires, face to face interviews and documentary analysis. Further, the researcher formulated the questionnaire items and interview schedules around the aspects of the problem and related literature. Face and content validity was done by the expert judgment. The reliability of the questionnaire was established at Alpha of .760. Data from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics – based on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version 20. Qualitative data from the interviews was analyzed by content. Quantitative and qualitative findings were triangulated to answer the research question.

Results

The researcher sought to establish the processes considered in the implementation of change in teacher education of private universities in Kenya. The research question stated: *What are the processes considered in the implementation of change in Teacher education curriculum of private universities in Kenya?* This question had 10 items rated on a 5 point scale as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1.00 -1.49, Disagree = 1.50-2.49, Not Sure = 2.50-3.49, Agree = 3.50-4.49, and Strongly Agree = 4.50-5.00. The findings are presented in table 1.

Processes Considered in Change Implementation	Teacher Trainees =150		Teacher Educators=32		Heads of Departments =14	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
1. Analysis of the current curriculum offering to establish if there is need for change	3.98	1.12	4.13	.92	4.57	.51
2. Analysis of key objectives of the program and the mission statement in the light of the suggested	4.01	.89	4.16	.62	4.29	.83
3. Assessment of availability of resources to implement the change in terms of equipment, rooms, lecturers	4.09	1.16	4.06	.95	4.43	.65
4. Informing faculty, students and other stake holders about the change	3.92	1.20	3.84	1.11	4.36	.84
5. Considering the possible consequences of change and addressing concerns	3.88	1.15	3.66	.86	4.21	.80
6. Getting support from Teachers' Service Commission and Commission for University Education to implement change	3.91	1.09	4.06	1.19	4.14	.86
7. Monitoring change at faculty/student, program and School levels	3.98	1.08	3.56	1.16	4.21	.89
8. Evaluation of change outcomes at meetings with students and faculty	3.88	1.22	3.55	1.12	4.50	.65
9. Students are given checklist with relevant changes	3.82	1.29	3.31	1.23	4.14	.77
10. The changes are included in the university bulletin	3.83	1.29	3.25	1.22	4.57	.51

Table 1: The Processes Considered in Implementation of Change

Table 1 shows that the Heads of Departments strongly agreed that the administrative aspects of change had been processed. Their universities had analyzed the current curriculum offering to establish the need for change (Heads of Departments \bar{X} = 4.57; SD = .51); Teacher Trainees \bar{X} = 3.98; SD = 1.12; Teacher Educators \bar{X} = 4.13; SD = .92); included changes in the bulletin (Heads of Departments \bar{X} = 4.57; SD = .51; Teacher Trainees \bar{X} = 3.83; SD = 1.29); Teacher Educators \bar{X} = 3.25; SD = 1.22), and evaluated change outcomes at meetings with students and faculty (Heads of Departments \bar{X} = 4.50; SD = .65; Teacher Trainees \bar{X} = 3.88; SD = 1.22; Teacher Educators \bar{X} = 3.55; SD = 1.12). On the other hand, by only agreeing to these processes, the Teacher Educators and Teacher Trainees were registering a degree of dissatisfaction in the way these processes were carried out.

The Heads of Departments (\bar{X} = 4.14; SD = .86) and Teacher Educators (\bar{X} = 4.06; SD = 1.19) strongly agreed that they were getting support from Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and the Commission for University Education (CUE) to implement the change, unlike the Teacher Trainees (\bar{X} = 3.90; SD = 1.09) who only agreed to this process. Even though the interview reports revealed that TSC has an open door policy that welcomed all stakeholders for consultation, the organization of Education systems in Kenya limits the extent to which Teacher Trainees can utilize this opportunity. Even the School Deans and Deputy Vice Chancellors in charge of academics had not fully engaged Teachers Service Commission and the Commission

for University Education on the challenges they were experiencing with implementation. Among the Deans interviewed, only three had gone to the Teachers Service Commission for consultation. One Vice Chancellor had written a letter to the Secretary of the Commission to inquire about the changes, and only one university had invited the Secretary of Teachers Service Commission to address faculty and students on the changes.

Though the university stakeholders agreed that the key objectives of the program had been analyzed in the light of the suggested changes (Heads of Departments $\bar{X} = 4.29$; SD = .83; Teacher Educators $\bar{X} = 4.16$; SD= .62; Teacher Trainees $\bar{X} = 4.01$; SD = .89), the details of the changes and how they would affect the stakeholders were not clear as shown in the following mean ratings: informed faculty, students and stake holder about the changes (Heads of Departments $\bar{X}= 4.36$; SD= .84; Teacher Educators $\bar{X}= 3.84$; SD= 1.11; Teacher Trainees \bar{X} 3.92; SD = 1.20), looked at possible consequences of the changes and addressed concerns (Heads of Departments $\bar{X}= 4.21$; SD=.80; Teacher Educators $\bar{X}= 3.66$; SD= .86; Teacher Trainees $\bar{X} = 3.88$; SD = 1.15). Further, all the stake holders strongly agreed that there was assessment of the availability of resources to implement the changes (Heads of Departments $\bar{X}= 4.43$; SD=.65; Teacher Educators $\bar{X}= 4.06$; SD= .95; Teacher Trainees $\bar{X} = 4.09$; SD = 1.16), but were not on the same page that the changes were monitored at faculty, students, program and school levels (Heads of Departments $\bar{X}= 4.21$; SD =.89 ; Teacher Educators $\bar{X}= 3.56$; SD=1.16; Teacher Trainees $\bar{X} =3.98$; SD = 1.08), and that the students have been given a checklist with the changes (Heads of Departments $\bar{X}= 4.14$; SD =.77; Teacher Educators $\bar{X}= 3.31$; SD=1.23; Teacher Trainees $\bar{X} =3.82$; SD = 1.29).

The interviews with staffs from Teachers' Service Commission, and the Commission for University Education affirmed that the universities were beginning to follow due process in implementing the changes. One staff from Teachers' Service Commission said that "*the level of compliance has picked up, especially during the years 2012 and 2013*". In the interviews, the Deans gave a detailed description of the existing administrative organs and policies at their universities, and how each level is engaged in matters of curriculum change. What seems to be common in the five universities is the establishment of a process of change that procedurally starts at Departmental level, to School Board, Academic Board Divisions, and finally the Senate. One of the universities had this process stipulated in a curriculum policy document. However, the Deans were in agreement that the ongoing changes in teacher education were externally driven, and sporadic in nature, making it difficult to stick to the university's policies on change. They also felt that the changes come as directives, and the implementation was reactionary. This was captured in the following expression by one of the Deans:

"The changes follow a Top- bottom process, at times not really reaching the bottom. If it reaches, the bottom has no powers to push the top... it can be aggressively received... the bottoms are so pressed... they wear out because of pressure from the top".

In addition, the Deans expressed that the sources of information varied from the radio, television, internet to news papers - often relayed as directives, and at times contradictory. When circulars come from Teachers' Service Commission or the Commission for University Education they land and delay in the "top offices". The researcher only managed to get two of such documents from one of the universities - one from Teachers' Service Commission dated 18th November 2008, and another from the Commission for University Education dated 22nd August, 2013. These two documents came through the offices of the Vice Chancellors and Director of

Quality Assurance and were copied to administrators at different levels. As observed by most of the School Deans during the interviews, they do not experience any organized way of handling changes in teacher education curriculum; information is sporadic, and as mentioned before, at times contradictory. One of the Deans said,

“Information on these changes is coming from everywhere. It is like an academic conspiracy... that cannot be debated, interrogated and agreed upon. There is no concerted effort to bring out stakeholders to debate and agree on the way forward”.

The only levels where some debates, in terms of concerns would take place are departmental forums where Teacher Educators and Teacher Trainees sometimes challenged the directives. When asked the question *“What do you do at your university to facilitate effective management of change in teacher education curriculum?”* the Deans’ interview responses showed an emergence of a number of alternative strategies they opted for when due process failed - as indicated in table 2.

Dean from University A	Dean from University B	Dean from University C	Dean from University D	Dean from University E
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Holds departmental clinics since 2012 to address students’ concerns on the changes. -The university has put infrastructure and teaching-learning resources to cater for the changes. -Invited the Teacher’s Service Commission Secretary to address the faculty and students on the changes during the institutions General Assembly on 3rd November, 2009 on the topic; “Matching Teacher Training with Employability” - Exercises flexibility in course offerings to help students graduate on time. -Attended “Stakeholders Consultative Workshop on Coordination of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commit students to write letters of commitment if they do not meet Teachers Service Commission’s requirements, but insist on taking the training for private employment - Students who do not meet entry requirements are advised to bridge before enrolling for the degree of Teacher education. - Keep in constant contact with Teachers’ Service Commission. - Outsource experts to teach new courses. - Offer subject combinations requested by students, especially non Kenyans -Negotiate the changes with service departments offering teaching subjects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The university facilitated Deans’ visit to Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC) to clarify changes. - Allow students to enhance or bridge by taking diploma in education. - Whenever students have lacked credit hours in content areas (after graduation) they are allowed to come back to the University for Enhancement. - Introduction of pedagogical curriculum for all lecturers- a one year program taken by all lecturers to enhance content (especially in new courses) and pedagogy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Dean went to Teachers’ Service Commission headquarters to seek clarification on the changes. - A letter was written to Teachers’ Service Commission to clarify the changes. - Consulted another private university to clarify the Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC) requirements (that university shared a letter of correspondence from Teachers’ Service Commission indicating the scope of the change. - Obtained a circular on entry qualification from Teacher Service Commission County Director (a letter dated 2nd August, 2012). - Explained changes to students and asked students lacking the TSC entry requirements, but still want to train to write commitment letters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving students possibilities and a chance to think through them. - Requiring students to sign commitment letters if they don’t meet Teachers’ Service Commission requirements, but want to train for private employment. - Teacher Education Department is now working very closely with the office of Cooperate Affairs and Marketing to help incoming students to understand teacher education requirements. - Dean made a proposal that reduced General requirements for education students from 50 credit hours to 30 credit hours. - Choice of subjects has been made liberal to non-Kenyans and Kenyan students who are not seeking employment with TSC -Negotiate the changes with service departments offering teaching subjects.

Primary Teacher Training and University Education” on 24 th August, 2009. – Obtained Guidelines on change from CUE				
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Table 2: Alternative Strategies Adopted by School Deans to Implement Changes

In some universities departmental meetings were held where the changes were clarified and negotiated with the Teacher Trainees on options that suited their particular needs. They also consulted Teachers’ Service Commission, and the Commission for University Education to get a deeper understanding of the changes and for further negotiations on alternative strategies to implement the changes. In one university the dean made a proposal that reduced General Requirement courses for education students from 50 credit hours to 30 credit hours, and the service departments offering teaching subjects to Teacher Trainees were now working very closely with the Department of Education and the office of Cooperate Affairs and Marketing to help incoming students to understand teacher education requirements. In some cases choice of teaching subjects was liberalized for non-Kenyans and Kenyan students who were taking teacher education for their own private practice. Some students were allowed to “enhance or bridge” by taking a diploma in education. In some rare cases, students who graduated with deficits in subject areas came back to the University for “Enhancement”.

Discussion

From the results it is evident that the Heads of Departments (HODs) had higher ratings on the processes followed to implement change, possibly, because these processes are directly linked to their responsibilities, and they were in a better position to know what they were actually doing to implement the change. Particularly, the higher ratings on the item on analysis of the current curriculum offerings to establish if there is need for change, suggests that the HOD’s could have seen gaps in the curriculum - which the Teacher Trainees and Teacher Educators had not seen. It is also possible that being in constant consultative meetings with individual Teacher Trainees and Teacher Educators enabled the HOD’s to constantly evaluate the change outcomes. Their strong agreement on the item on inclusion of change in the university bulletin indicates that in their view the changes have been institutionalized (one university bulletin had this evidence).

On the other hand, it is possible that the Teacher Trainees and Teacher Educators were less involved in the process of change, hence lacked adequate information on change. Even though the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) claimed to have “an open door policy” for stakeholders, the Teacher Educators and Teacher Trainees may not have an easy access to the Commission personnel and would probably require assistance from the Heads of Departments to air their views to the Commission. Cheng (1994) asserts that curriculum change is a cyclic process that requires congruency and involvement at all levels of change: the individual, departmental, school and the change agent levels. Though the university stakeholders agreed that the key objectives of the program had been analyzed in the light of the suggested changes, there were gaps on information about the changes and their consequences. As seen from the data, the

concerns about the changes had not been fully addressed. Research shows that gaps in information and failure to address concerns on change often create apathy and “innovation fatigue” (Cheng, 1994; Ponte, 2012; Snyder, 2013).

The respondents seemed to have lower ratings on the process of monitoring and institutionalizing the changes, suggesting that these processes had not picked up very well at the universities. According to Ganguly (2001), monitoring helps in identifying and addressing negative outcomes early enough. Kritsonis (2005) also advises that if change is to be owned by the recipients, it has to be engraved into the institution’s practices to prevent regression into old practices, meaning that in the current study, the institutions needed to have owned the changes by adopting them into the institutions’ documents such as the bulletin and course check lists. Only one university seemed to have done this. On the overall the quantitative findings indicated that the private universities, as much as possible, followed due process in the implementation of change in teacher education curriculum, as advised by key curriculum experts (Tyler, 1949; Bondi, 1998; Gruba, Alister, Harald, & Justin, 2004).

However, qualitative findings revealed that the Deans explored and sought for alternative strategies where due process failed. For example, they negotiated with the Teacher Trainees on options that suited their particular needs, and further negotiated the alternative suggestions with Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC), and the Commission for University Education. Some of these included bridging courses, readmitting students who had graduated to come back and complete some credits, and giving certain subject combinations to non-Kenyan students. There were also some negotiations with the service departments on subject area offerings. Complexity theorists argue that “the actors in an educational system do not come from the same initial state, nor do they necessarily resemble each other, what works for one child, teacher, district or system is not guaranteed to work for another. Indeed, what works for one element of one system may not work for other elements even within the same system” (Snyder, 2013, p.9). The alternative approaches mentioned by the Deans, at the interviews, echo many of the complexity theory principles such as problem solving, social interaction, information seeking, flexibility, emergence, self-reorganization, communication, feedback, connectedness, collaboration and distributed control processes (Morrison, 2008; Snyder, 2013).

Complexity theory advances that the environment of change is often too complex, with so many players operating at different levels. In the process of change all these levels engage in activities, pro-activities and re-activities that require a collective relationship among the member parts (Morrison, 2008). This is a true reflection of what was going on at the five private universities as the reforms had to be negotiated within education departments, across the service departments offering teaching subjects, and with the change agents. Cheng (1994) and Ganguly (2001) argue that any change in curriculum must be understood congruently at all the levels, and all the operations should be synchronized for successful implementation. Subsequently, the Theory of Planned Change advances that education is at the heart of a nations’ survival; therefore, any change in education must be carefully planned for the purposes of accountability to stakeholders (Lewin, 1947; Burnes, 2004 a; Burnes, 2004 b). “Whereas policy decisions indicating broader paradigms can be taken at the national/state level, it is important to take a number of decisions at the regional/local levels to ensure the curriculum is kept relevant to felt needs at the grassroots” (Ganguly, 2001, p.51).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study revealed that the management team followed due process especially analyzing their current curriculum offering to establish the need for change, analyzing the objectives of teacher education program in the light of the changes, institutionalizing the changes, evaluating the change outcomes, utilizing the open door policy to get support from Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and the Commission for University Education (CUE) to implement the change. However, there were some gaps on information about the changes and their consequences. Monitoring of changes was also not done effectively at all levels, as was felt especially by the Teacher Educators and the Teacher Trainees. When due process failed the management team (School Deans and Heads of Departments) sought alternative strategies to implement change. This was necessary because the teacher education program served a diverse clientele and the changes had also been incremental, affecting continuing students (in their third and fourth years). This study observes and recommends - as Laberee (2004, 2008) and Wang, Odell, Klecka, & Lin, (2010) also advise - that due to the complex nature of teacher education programs, changes in the curriculum should be thought out more carefully, and the management team should not only follow due process in implementation, but seek alternative ways to cater for their diverse clientele - in this case, students at various levels and needs of those who come from outside Kenya. The change agents (Teachers Service Commission and the Commission for University Education) should also understand that these changes have been introduced incrementally, and have affected the Teacher Trainees; therefore, more accommodating alternatives are needed for implementation. Besides, there should be clear communication on change, as well as careful monitoring and evaluation of the change process and outcome.

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