Leadership Skills of Middle Management in Extension – A Global Assessment

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Leadership skills go far beyond the traditional command and control functions. Effective leadership has been identified as the reason many organizations grow and evolve, while others struggle to exist or die.

Most senior positions in extension organizations are held by individuals with significant training in their area of expertise as well as leadership and management. These individuals have usually demonstrated an ability to excel in their area of expertise or have demonstrated an ability to lead others.

There does appear to be a void in the area of leadership training of middle managers. These individuals have often risen from successful lower level appointments to management roles with little or no training or experience.

Organizational and senior leadership effectiveness depends greatly on middle managers leadership ability. In order for increasingly complex extension organizations to be able to shift and adapt to opportunities, a strong core of middle managers is essential.

Method

We are proposing a research study to assess middle managers competence and training needs outside the United States. Our target population for the research is graduate students who have attained advanced degrees from the department of Human and Community Resource Development at The Ohio State University.

We believe this group will provide a good assessment of the organizations in which they are involved. Most of these individuals occupy senior leadership positions with Extension or in universities which prepare extension educators.

A mailed or emailed questionnaire will be used to gather this information. The results will be presented through AIAEE.

Major Points

The authors hope to use the Carousel session to gather input from professionals about the study. This guidance will be used to further develop the research proposal and implement the research project.

Input is needed on population, sample, research questions, survey methods etc. Input is critical on issues like standardizing questions to account for cultural, and administrative differences between systems.

Conclusions or Lessons to be Learned

The researchers believe the input described above to be critical in gathering valid and reliable data from which to draw conclusions. This will be the researcher’s first international research project, therefore this input is very important.

Educational Importance

The information gathered from this study will influence leadership training for middle managers around the globe. The results may support the need for increased leadership training and create opportunities for middle managers to access needed training.