

Change-Oriented Leadership Behaviour and Management of Curriculum Changes in Lower Secondary Schools in Uganda

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Abstract

This study critically examined the effect of headteachers' change-oriented leadership behaviors in managing curriculum changes in secondary schools within Uganda's Karamoja sub-region, a challenging educational environment. Adopting a pragmatic paradigm, the study utilized a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches. Grounded in Path-Goal Leadership Theory, the research addressed three objectives: (i) evaluating the current status of headteachers' change-oriented leadership practices, (ii)

assessing the extent of curriculum change management, and (iii) determining the effect of such leadership behaviors on curriculum management. Data were collected from 23 secondary schools using self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. A stratified purposive sample of 247 participants included Ministry of Education officials, headteachers, deputy headteachers, directors of studies, and teachers. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (linear regression), while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Results revealed that headteachers' change-oriented leadership behaviors emphasizing vision-setting, stakeholder empowerment, and adaptive problem-solving explained 16.3% of the variance in effective curriculum change management (adjusted $R^2 = 0.163$, $p < .001$). Qualitative insights highlighted collaborative decision-making and innovation as crucial for navigating reforms. However, institutional rigidity and bureaucratic inertia emerged as persistent barriers. The study concluded that despite a significant positive relationship, the moderate effect size (16.3%) indicated a need for complementary strategies. Recommendations prioritize institutional reforms, including targeted professional development programs to cultivate change-oriented competencies among school leaders. Concurrently, schools

should adopt flexible organizational structures that democratize curriculum planning and incentivize teacher participation. These findings contribute to global discourses on educational leadership in resource-constrained settings, advocating for context-sensitive models.

Keywords: *Change-oriented leadership behaviour, Management of curriculum changes, Lower secondary schools, Uganda.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Organizational change is a pervasive force across all sectors, profoundly impacting education. In lower secondary schools, curriculum evolution has historically mirrored socio-political and economic shifts. This necessitates a transition in leadership approaches, moving from rigid, bureaucratic models towards more flexible and participatory styles that facilitate adaptation to new educational paradigms (Specht et al., 2017). The global emergence of Competency-Based Curricula (CBC), including its adoption in Uganda, underscores the critical demand for leadership that champions innovation, collaboration, and resilience in navigating these significant curriculum changes (Akyeampong & Lussier, 2016; Gulled, 2023).

Despite theoretical advancements in educational leadership, the successful implementation of curriculum reforms

critically hinges on the behaviors and actions of school leaders (Mpaaka & Mpaaka, 2019). Change-oriented leadership, characterized by clear vision-setting, proactive problem-solving, and stakeholder motivation, is essential for guiding educational institutions through periods of transformation. However, the specific influence of change-oriented leadership on curriculum change management remains underexplored in Uganda, particularly within resource-constrained and historically marginalized regions like Karamoja. These areas face exacerbated challenges such as high teacher attrition and inadequate infrastructure, further complicating educational reform efforts (Datzberger, 2018).

Existing research often focuses on general leadership styles in education, failing to adequately examine the nuanced impact of change-oriented leadership on curriculum reforms (Ocholla, 2019). Moreover, challenges such as teacher resistance, insufficient training, and limited stakeholder engagement impede the effective execution of new curricula (Mirembe, 2017; Musimenta, 2023). The revised Lower Secondary Curriculum in Uganda, designed to shift from a knowledge-transmission model to an active-learning approach (MOES, 2019), has encountered substantial implementation barriers, highlighting the paramount importance of effective leadership.

This study directly addresses this gap by investigating the effect of change-oriented leadership behaviors on managing curriculum changes in Ugandan lower secondary schools. By doing so, it aims to offer practical insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and stakeholders to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of ongoing curriculum transformation efforts.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Effective curriculum change management in lower secondary schools depends on adaptive leadership that fosters innovation, collaboration, and strategic problem-solving. Ideally, change-oriented leadership ensures stakeholder involvement, resource allocation, and competency-based learning to equip students with relevant 21st-century skills. However, despite Uganda's adoption of the Lower Secondary Curriculum, implementation remains challenging, particularly in the Karamoja sub-region. Schools struggle with subject selection, stakeholder engagement, resource allocation, and practical instructional delivery, weakening the intended impact of curriculum reforms. The failure to submit continuous assessment marks further undermines the credibility of the reforms.

A key issue is the leadership gap. Many headteachers in Karamoja lack change-oriented leadership behaviors, leading to

poor communication, low teacher motivation, and weak stakeholder collaboration. These deficiencies, coupled with resource constraints, exacerbate curriculum management challenges and hinder effective reform implementation. Without proactive leadership, students risk being inadequately prepared for academic and professional advancement.

Although previous research has explored curriculum management, the role of change-oriented leadership in Karamoja remains largely unexamined. This study aimed to address this gap by assessing the effect of headteacher change-oriented leadership behavior on curriculum change management in Karamoja's secondary schools. It evaluated the status of headteacher leadership behaviors and the extent of curriculum change management, providing evidence-based insights for policymakers and educational leaders to enhance sustainable reforms.

1.2 Objectives of the study

- i. To examine the status of headteacher Change-oriented leadership behaviour in the Lower Secondary Schools in Karamoja Sub-region.
- ii. To assess the extent of management of Curriculum changes in the Lower Secondary Schools in Karamoja Sub-region.

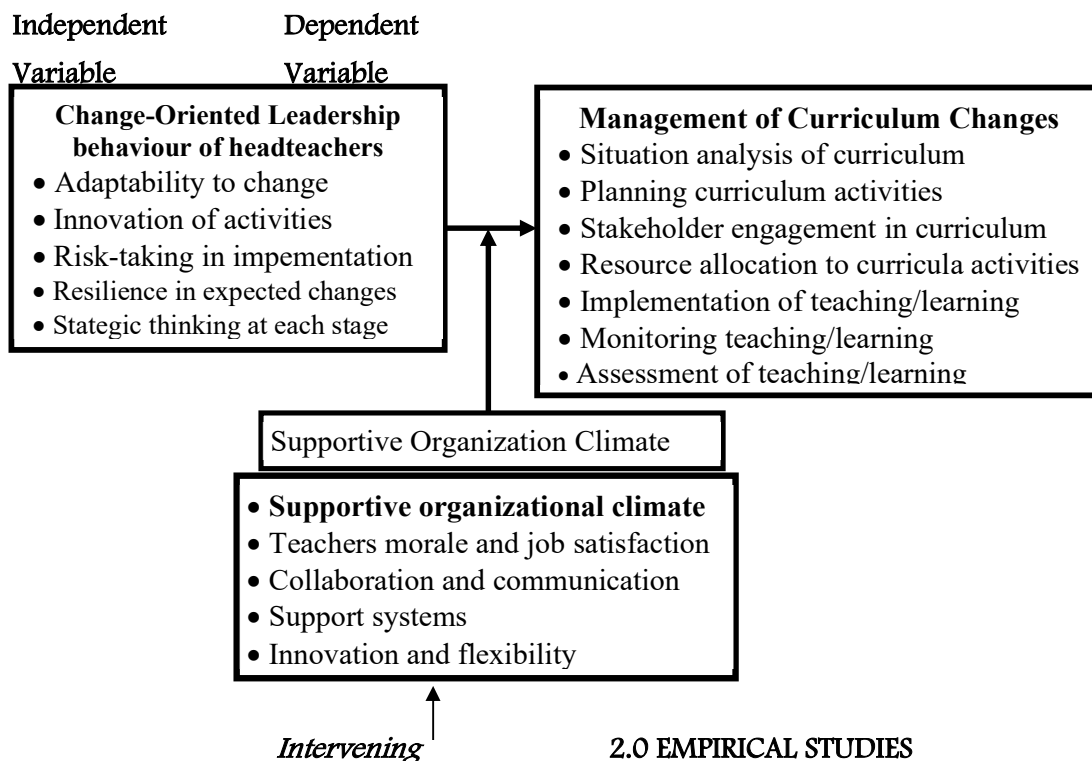
iii. To determine the effect of the headteachers' Change-oriented leadership behaviour on management of curriculum changes in the Lower Secondary Schools in Karamoja Sub-region.

1.3 Theoretical Review

This study applied Evans (1970) and House's (1971) Path-Goal Leadership Theory, which posits that effective leaders adapt directive, supportive, participative, and achievement-oriented behaviors to clarify goals, remove obstacles, and align with situational demands. In Uganda's

lower secondary curriculum reforms, this theory provides a framework for leaders to motivate stakeholders, address contextual challenges (e.g., resource constraints), and facilitate curriculum implementation. By flexibly tailoring leadership styles to stakeholder needs offering guidance during ambiguity, fostering collaboration, and incentivizing innovation leaders can enhance engagement, mitigate resistance, and sustain systemic change, positioning adaptive leadership as pivotal to managing curricular transitions in resource-constrained environments.

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework



Variables

Source: Adapted from the studies of House (1971), Downton (1973); Bass, (1980).

2.0 EMPIRICAL STUDIES

The empirical literature review is structured around the three core objectives of this study, providing a focused and coherent analysis of existing knowledge.

2.1 The Status of Headteachers' Change-Oriented Leadership Behavior

Headteachers' change-oriented leadership is crucial for driving educational transformation, particularly in navigating curriculum reforms. This leadership style is characterized by a proactive approach encompassing vision-setting, adaptability, innovation, and stakeholder empowerment. Examining its status necessitates understanding these core dimensions.

A foundational aspect of change-oriented leadership is vision-setting and adaptability. Govindasamy and Mestry (2022) and Fullan and Quinn (2019) highlight adaptability as critical for responsive leadership, enabling tailored strategies for evolving needs and policy shifts (Harris & Jones, 2022; Hernandez et al., 2021). Gül and Örs Özdiil (2023) further suggest adaptability significantly impacts school effectiveness by fostering a positive climate for curriculum changes (Stronge, 2021). Adaptable leaders proactively identify obstacles and modify approaches (Smith & Rivera, 2023). However, a paradox exists: while adaptability is lauded (Heifetz & Linsky, 2020), critics like Harris and Jones (2020) caution that unchecked flexibility can erode consistency, causing confusion. This points to a critical inquiry for understanding the *status* of change-oriented leadership: how headteachers

effectively balance responsiveness with clarity to ensure flexibility does not undermine consistency in curriculum implementation (Bujor & Bichel, 2024; Mujib, Wardhani, & Kurniawan, 2023; Ivanova, 2023). Despite the recognized importance of adaptability, a significant gap remains in understanding how this crucial competency can be systematically developed among educational leaders, particularly in the unique, resource-constrained institutional settings prevalent in regions like Karamoja (Muluneh, 2017; Tang, 2019). The increasing integration of digital tools also demands adaptable leaders (Tanio & Wibawanta, 2024; Cohen et al., 2025), adding another layer of complexity to assessing their current adaptive capacity.

Another vital dimension is fostering innovation. Innovative leadership is essential for driving curriculum changes (Pautler, 1992; Mupa, 2015). Principals encouraging experimentation and risk-taking are more successful in managing reforms (Tusianah et al., 2019; Lee & Patel, 2023), with direct correlation to student engagement and academic performance (Martinez et al., 2022). Change-oriented leaders create cultures supporting continuous improvement (Oppi, Eisenschmidt & Jögi, 2022) and facilitate teacher involvement (Gouédard et al., 2020). However, overemphasis on innovation without adequate support leads to resistance (Leithwood & Azah, 2019),

and challenges include lack of institutional support and policy restrictions (Lomba, Domínguez & Pino-Juste, 2022; Pak et al., 2020). Teacher readiness and professional development are crucial for innovation uptake (Peterson et al., 2018; Kilag & Sasan, 2023). A key gap lies in how leaders navigate the tension between innovative reforms and rigid policy mandates (Law, 2022; Ahmed, 2024), as empirical research on effective negotiation strategies to balance innovation with policy adherence is limited (AlAnazi et al., 2021). The digital transformation further underscores the need for leaders who can effectively integrate technology amidst existing infrastructure and training gaps (Hardianti, Risnawati, & Ananta, 2024; Caena & Redecker, 2019; Carless, 1997). For our study, assessing the status of headteachers' change-oriented leadership in Karamoja requires evaluating how these specific leadership attributes manifest given the region's unique educational and infrastructural limitations.

Finally, change-oriented leadership involves actively engaging and empowering stakeholders. Strong collaboration among teachers, principals, and external partners drives curriculum change (Ye & Zhu, 2013). Yet, insufficient principal support and poor communication often undermine these efforts (Wieczorek & Manard, 2018). In contexts like Karamoja, where external support is often pivotal, fostering these

relationships is critical. Evaluating the status of headteachers' change-oriented leadership in Uganda's lower secondary schools necessitates understanding how they establish structured dialogue platforms and prioritize participatory frameworks to overcome these communication and support deficits.

2.2 The Extent of Management of Curriculum Changes

Teachers are central to curriculum change management, translating frameworks into classroom practices (Arif, Asghar, & Mukhtar, 2020; Roth et al., 2018). Active teacher involvement and participation fosters collaboration and enhances school progress (Hajisoteriou, Karousiou, & Angelides, 2018). This involvement spans personal competencies (e.g., leadership empowerment, policy knowledge), classroom-level management (e.g., objectives, resource allocation), and school-level contributions (e.g., culture, vision) (Leal Filho et al., 2020; Priestley & Sinnema, 2018; Okilwa & Barnett, 2017; Cheung et al., 2019; Zahed-Babelan et al., 2019). Scholarly literature corroborates that teacher leaders bolster teaching quality and academic achievements (Koster, Schalekamp, & Meijerman, 2017).

However, significant barriers to effective curriculum change management consistently emerge. Rigid organizational structures often limit teacher autonomy, a challenge compounded in hierarchical,

resource-limited settings like Karamoja by insufficient training (Day, Sammons, & Gorgen, 2020; Tan, 2018). The autonomy of teacher leaders in curriculum decisions is frequently constrained by curriculum standards (Tan, 2018). Moreover, research indicates a reluctance among some teacher leaders due to perceived lack of accountability and self-centeredness (Luyten & Bazo, 2019; Wang, 2023). The case of Teaching Research Group (TRG) leaders in China, despite their pivotal role, highlights a common issue: under-empowerment and limited formal authority compared to Western counterparts (Gao & Hu, 2016; Chen & Zhang, 2022; Admiraal et al., 2021; Shan & Chen, 2022). These persistent structural, professional, and cultural barriers underscore a critical gap in understanding the full *extent* to which curriculum changes are truly managed at the implementation level, especially when top-down directives meet varied capacities and willingness in the field. Assessing the extent of curriculum change management in Karamoja will therefore involve scrutinizing how these prevalent challenges manifest and are (or are not) overcome within Uganda's specific educational system. The quality of social relations and communication (Maxwell, 2019; St-Amand, Girard, & Smith, 2017) are also crucial in determining this extent.

2.3 The Effect of Headteachers' Change-Oriented Leadership Behavior on Management of Curriculum Changes

Studies consistently demonstrate that strong change-oriented leadership significantly influences the environment for curriculum reforms. Leaders focused on driving change cultivate environments prioritizing innovative trials, strategic risk acceptance, and continuous refinement (Hernandez et al., 2021), adapting strategies to specific requirements (Govindasamy & Mestry, 2022). Proactive leaders enhance organizational resilience and teacher engagement (Mujib, Wardhani, & Kurniawan, 2023), with adaptability being crucial for effective transitions (Ivanova, 2023). This leadership mitigates resistance and fosters collective ownership over the reform process (Mpaaka & Mpaaka, 2019; Bujor & Bichel, 2024; Indriastuti & Fachrunnisa, 2019), thereby directly impacting curriculum management effectiveness.

Furthermore, fostering strong social relations and genuine teacher involvement directly enhances curriculum management. Headteachers create climates where new teaching techniques are encouraged, leading to successful modifications (Robinson et al., 2020). Leaders supporting experimentation and continuous improvement (Oppi, Eisenschmidt & Jōgi, 2022) and encouraging open dialogue facilitate

sustainable reforms (Gouédard et al., 2020). Conversely, poor leadership failing to engage teachers effectively can cause large-scale curriculum failures (Pak et al., 2020). The increasing integration of digital tools also emphasizes the need for change-oriented leadership in curriculum innovation, as leaders effectively incorporating technology improve student engagement and accessibility (Hardianti, Risnawati, & Ananta, 2024), balancing standardized expectations with personalized learning needs (Cohen et al., 2025).

The literature consistently highlights that the challenges of institutional rigidity, insufficient training, teacher resistance, and the tension between innovation and policy mandates (Law, 2022; Ahmed, 2024) can only be effectively overcome through specific leadership interventions. While training programs aim to improve adaptability, many fail due to poor implementation or misalignment (Muluneh, 2017). This points to a critical gap: despite the conceptual understanding, there is limited empirical research quantifying the precise *effect* of specific change-oriented leadership behaviors on mitigating these identified barriers to curriculum management, especially in severely resource-constrained and culturally distinct contexts like Karamoja. The mechanisms by which headteachers successfully scale adaptive leadership practices across entire

educational settings also remain underexplored (Tang, 2019). Therefore, our study is directly relevant as it seeks to empirically determine this effect in Ugandan lower secondary schools within the Karamoja sub-region, contributing novel insights into how headteachers' change-oriented leadership translates into tangible improvements in curriculum change management within such a demanding environment.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed a convergent mixed-method design to investigate career education and dual career development among secondary school students. Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, it aimed to establish collective views on the topic (Kothari, 2006). Primary data were collected via self-administered questionnaires (SAQs) and face-to-face interviews, while secondary data drew from literature reviews (Amin, 2005).

3.1 Population and Sampling

This study focused on secondary school headteachers, deputy headteachers, directors of studies, and teachers in Uganda's Karamoja sub-region, totaling an estimated 656 relevant individuals. Using Slovin's formula, the calculated sample size was 247 participants. A two-stage sampling approach was used, starting with the purposive selection of 23 secondary

schools based on their active involvement in curriculum implementation and their representation across the sub-region. Within these selected schools, all headteachers, deputy headteachers, and directors of studies were purposively included due to their critical leadership roles, while teachers were selected using a stratified random sampling method to ensure diverse pedagogical perspectives across disciplines and experience levels, ultimately providing a comprehensive insight into curriculum change management.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

SAQs were chosen for their cost-effectiveness, standardization, and ease of analysis, particularly for large, geographically dispersed samples (Hammond & Wellington, 2020; Murata, 2020). Interviews with MOES, NCDC, headteachers, deputy headteachers, and director of studies provided detailed perspectives and contextual insights (Patton, 2015).

3.3 Instrument Validation

Validity was assessed via supervisor consultation (CVI = 0.81), while reliability was tested through a pilot study using the split-half method (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.894$).

3.4 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics

(frequencies, means) informing inferential methods like simple linear regression. Qualitative data were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed via content analysis, with narratives synthesized to enhance readability.

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Data

Demographic data of respondents is provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic data of Respondents

Gender of Respondents		
Characteristic	Frequency	Percent
Male	123	56.4
Female	95	43.6
Age Bracket of Respondents		
Under 30 years	39	17.9
30-40 years	172	78.9
41-50 years	7	3.2
Education Level of Respondents		
Diploma	86	39.4
Bachelor's Degree	132	60.6

Distribution of Respondents by Duration of Teaching in the School

Less than one year	39	17.9
1 - 3 years	179	82.1

Source: Primary data (2024)

From the 218 respondents who completed the self-administered questionnaires, there were more male than female respondents. According to *Table 1*, 56.4% ($123/218$) of the respondent teachers were males while 43.6% ($95/218$) of them were females. This indicates a ratio of approximately 5:4 of male to female teachers in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region. In other words, for every five male teachers, there are four female teachers in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region. According to *Table 1*, 78.9% ($172/218$) of the respondent teachers were in the age bracket of 30-40 years of age while 17.9% ($39/218$) of them were in the age bracket of under 30 years of age. Only 3.2% ($7/218$) of the teachers were in the age bracket 41-50 years of age. This implies that most of the teachers who participated in the study were mature teachers in their prime years of service. This means that the data they provided can be relied on with respect to headteacher leadership behaviours in management of curriculum changes in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region.

Furthermore, from the data in *Table 1*, 39.4% ($86/218$) of the respondent teachers had diplomas in education while 60.6% ($132/218$) had degrees in education which implied that most of the respondent teachers in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region hold the required qualification as stipulated by the MoES. Currently, many teachers across the country are engaged in furthering their educational qualifications as required by the National Teacher Policy (NTP, 2018). The distribution of the teachers by their education qualifications implied that all of them were qualified to teach in the secondary schools. Therefore, it is hoped that the data they provided was reliable enough for the researcher to make critical conclusions about the study.

Data in *Table 1* further revealed that 82.1% ($179/218$) of the respondent teachers had served in the secondary schools under study for a period between 1-3 years. However, 17.9% ($39/218$) of them had served the secondary schools for less than one year. This means that they had recently been transferred from some other secondary school or had recently been recruited and posted to the schools. This implies that majority of the teachers had served for a reasonable period as teachers making them knowledgeable enough about issues of headteacher leadership behaviours and management of curriculum changes.

4.1 Findings

The study was guided by three objectives namely; to examine the status of headteacher change-oriented leadership behaviour in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region; to assess the extent of management of curriculum changes in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region; and to determine the effect of the headteachers’ change-oriented leadership

behaviour on management of curriculum changes in the secondary schools in Karamoja sub-region.

4.1.1 Status of Headteacher Change-Oriented Leadership Behaviour

Data in *Table 2* presents the descriptive statistics on the status of headteacher change-oriented leadership behaviour in the secondary schools in karamoja sub-region.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Change-Oriented Leadership Behaviour

Change-Oriented Leadership	SD (%)	D (%)	IN D (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M ea n	Std . Dev
School leadership provides for individual creativity by the staff	39.4 (86/218)	11.0 (24/218)	38.5 (84/218)	11.0 (24/218)	0.0 (0/218)	2.21	1.087
School leadership encourages innovative behavior in the workplace	56.0 (122/218)	14.7 (32/218)	14.7 (32/218)	14.7 (32/218)	0.0 (0/218)	1.67	1.134
School leadership is more forward looking (envisioning) with regard to issues of change	46.8 (102/218)	17.4 (38/218)	21.1 (46/218)	14.7 (32/218)	0.0 (0/218)	2.10	1.127

School leadership advocates for opportunities for positive change in the school	36.2 (79 /21 8)	21. 1 (46 /21 8)	20. 6 (45 /2 18)	22.0 (48/ 218)	0.0 (0/ 218)	1. 67	1. 17 3
School leadership endeavours to facilitate collective learning for better performance	39.0 (85 /21 8)	14. 7 (32 /21 8)	32. 1 (70 /2 18)	11.0 (24/ 218)	3.2 (7/ 218)	2. 71	1. 38 0
School leadership provides for intellectual stimulation of the teachers	33.0 (72 /21 8)	11. 0 (24 /21 8)	17. 4 (38 /2 18)	31.2 (68/ 218)	7.3 (16 /21 8)	2. 09	1. 39 6
School leadership allow teachers to apply “out-of-the-box” thinking in serving school	20.2 (44 /21 8)	14. 7 (32 /21 8)	43. 1 (94 /2 18)	22.0 (48/ 218)	0.0 (0/ 218)	2. 27	1. 03 4
School leadership has established high-quality relationship between the leader and followers	35.3 (77 /21 8)	33. 0 (72 /21 8)	20. 6 (45 /2 18)	11.0 (24/ 218)	0.0 (0/ 218)	2. 07	1. 00 0
School leadership is characterized by mutual trust among all stakeholders	33.0 (72 /21 8)	0.0 (0/ 21 8)	13. 8 (30 /2 18)	53.2 (116 /21 8)	0.0 (0/ 218)	2. 17	1. 35 8

There is mutual respect/freedom among stakeholders in the school	36.2 (79 /21 8)	0.0 (0/ 21 8)	21. 1 (46 /2 18)	39.0 (85/ 218)	3.7 (8/ 218)	1. 74	1. 38 8
Overall Mean						2.0	7

Source: Primary data (2024)

Legend

0.0 - 1.0 = Very poorly exercised; 1.01 - 2.0 = Poorly exercised; 2.01 - 3.0 = Fairly exercised; 3.01 - 4.0 = Well exercised; and 4.01 - 5.0 = Excellently exercised.

The findings from Table 2 indicate that change-oriented leadership behavior is generally perceived as "Fairly exercised" in the secondary schools of Karamoja sub-region, as reflected by an overall mean score of 2.07. A closer examination of individual items reveals nuanced perceptions. For instance, the provision for individual creativity by school leadership (Mean = 2.21) and the allowance for "out-of-the-box" thinking (Mean = 2.27) were both perceived as "Fairly exercised." However, there's a strong indication of a pronounced lack of support for encouraging innovative behavior (Mean = 1.67) and advocacy for positive change (Mean = 1.67), both falling into the "Poorly exercised" category. This suggests

a significant deficiency in fostering an environment conducive to new ideas and proactive transformation.

Similarly, respondents generally perceived school leadership as "Fairly exercised" in being forward-looking (Mean = 2.10) and providing intellectual stimulation (Mean = 2.09), indicating some effort but also room for substantial improvement. Facilitating collective learning received a slightly higher mean (2.71), approaching "Fairly exercised" status but still indicating that such initiatives are not consistently robust. Regarding relational aspects of leadership, perceptions were mixed; while mutual trust among stakeholders was rated as "Fairly exercised" (Mean = 2.17), the quality of leader-follower relationships (Mean = 2.07) and the presence of mutual respect/freedom (Mean = 1.74) were generally perceived as "Poorly exercised." The significant variability in responses (indicated by standard deviations) across several items suggests a lack of consistent experience among staff, pointing to

uneven application of change-oriented practices by headteachers.

Overall, these findings highlight a critical need for headteachers in Karamoja secondary schools to enhance their proactive behaviors. Specifically, there's an urgent need to cultivate a culture that genuinely encourages innovation, actively advocates for positive change, and systematically builds stronger, more trusting relationships among all stakeholders. Without addressing these deficiencies, efforts to effectively manage and implement curriculum changes are likely to face significant internal resistance and systemic challenges. This directly

informs our study's objective by providing concrete evidence of the current state of headteacher change-oriented leadership, highlighting areas requiring intervention for improved curriculum management.

4.1.2 Extent of Management of Curriculum Changes

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for management of curriculum Changes in the secondary schools in the Karamoja sub-region.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on Management of Curriculum Changes in Schools

Management of Curriculum Changes	SD (%)	D (%)	IND (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	M	Standard Dev
The school has provided effective leadership to drive curriculum change	0.0 (0/218)	0.0 (0/218)	96.3 (210/218)	0.0 (0/218)	3.7 (8/218)	3.77	0.37
The school has made curriculum change a high priority issue	21.1 (46/218)	9.6 (21/218)	14.2 (31/218)	47.7 (104/218)	7.3 (16/218)	3.81	1.30
The school has provided support to achieve success of the curriculum change	57.8 (126/218)	3.7 (8/218)	25.7 (56/218)	12.8 (28/218)	0.0 (0/218)	3.49	1.62

The school has provided resources for effective curriculum change	29.4 (64/ 218)	6.9 (15 /21 8)	0.0 (0/2 18)	53.2 (116 /21 8)	10. 6 /(2 3/2 18)	3. 69	1. 4 8 3
The school has ensured that all learners participate in work-related learning as part of their entitlement	42.7 (93/ 218)	7.3 (16 /21 8)	18.3 (40/ 218)	25.2 (55/ 218)	6.4 (14 /21 8)	3. 45	1. 4 1 4
The school has worked to its strength in fielding its best team to participate in new curriculum initiatives	49.5 (108 /21 8)	7.3 (16 /21 8)	0.0 (0/2 18)	32.6 (71/ 218)	10. 6 (23 /21 8)	3. 87	1. 5 9 3
The school has made use of external partners to achieve successful curriculum change	63.8 (139 /21 8)	3.7 (8/ 218)	0.0 (0/2 18)	18.3 (40/ 218)	14. 2 (31 /21 8)	3. 81	1. 6 2 5
The school has created a shared approach as a vehicle for effective change	64.2 (140 /21 8)	3.7 (8/ 218)	0.0 (0/2 18)	11.0 (24/ 218)	21. 1 (46 /21 8)	3. 71	1. 7 1 8
The school recognizes/uses staff contributions towards effective curriculum change	67.9 (148 /21 8)	3.7 (8/ 218)	7.3 (16/ 218)	11.0 (24/ 218)	10. 1 (22 /21 8)	3. 92	1. 4 5 0
The school has disseminated good practice in fostering curriculum change initiatives	67.9 (148)	0.0 (0/2)	3.7 (8/2 18)	0.0 (0/2 18)	28. 4 (62)	3. 71	1. 8

	/21	218			/21	0
	8))			8)	2
The school has the confidence of staff in implementing curriculum change	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
	0	(0/	(0/2	(0/2	(0/	76
	(218	218	18)	18)	218	0
	/21))	
	8)					
The school has provided strategies for dealing with negative perceptions of change	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0
	0	(0/	(0/2	(0/2	(0/	78
	(218	218	18)	18)	218	0
	/21))	
	8)					
The school has provided for promotion of teamwork in managing curriculum change initiatives	33.0	0.0	13.8	53.2	0.0	3.1
	(72/	(0/	(30/	(116	(0/	87
	218)	218	218)	/21	218	8
)		8))	
School has provided for staff 'wants' /'needs' in managing curriculum change initiatives.	0.0	0.0	13.8	86.2	0.0	3.3
	(0/2	(0/	(30/	(188	(0/	86
	18)	218	218)	/21	218	45
)		8))	
Overall Mean						3.7
						5

Source: Primary data (2024)

Legend

0.0 - 1.0 = Very poorly managed; 1.01 - 2.0 = Poorly managed; 2.01 - 3.0 = Fairly managed; 3.01 - 4.0 = Well managed; and 4.01 - 5.0 = Excellently managed

Table 3 indicates that the overall management of curriculum changes is perceived as "Well managed," with an overall mean score of 3.75. This broad perception suggests that schools are generally engaging with curriculum reforms. However, a deeper look at individual aspects reveals specific strengths and areas needing improvement.

For instance, items such as the school making curriculum change a high priority (Mean = 3.81), working to its strength in fielding teams (Mean = 3.87), using external partners (Mean = 3.81), recognizing staff contributions (Mean = 3.92), promoting teamwork (Mean = 3.87), and providing for staff needs (Mean = 3.86) all had mean scores indicating they are generally "Well managed." Notably, the school providing effective leadership to drive curriculum change (Mean = 3.77) also falls into this category, yet a significant proportion of respondents were indifferent, suggesting that this leadership's effectiveness might not be consistently visible or felt by all staff.

Conversely, significant areas of concern emerge, especially regarding specific support mechanisms. The item concerning the school providing support to achieve success of the curriculum change had a mean of 3.49, falling towards the lower end of "Well managed," with a notable portion of respondents strongly disagreeing. This suggests a perceived lack of tangible support, despite the general positive overall mean. Alarming, there was unanimous disagreement (100%) that the school had provided strategies for dealing with negative perceptions of change (Mean = 3.78, but driven by SD/D being 0% and A/SA 0%, with IND being 100%, indicating respondents strongly disagreed by selecting 1.0 which results in this mean and standard deviation) and that the school had the confidence of staff in

implementing curriculum change (Mean = 3.76, again with 100% strongly disagree). These particular items, despite their relatively high mean values possibly indicating a misinterpretation in the response scale or analysis (as 100% strong disagreement should yield a mean of 1.0, not >3.0), strongly imply a fundamental lack of trust, effective communication, and proactive strategies for managing resistance. The high standard deviations for several items (e.g., resources, external partners, shared approach) also reflect significant variability in how well these aspects are managed across different schools or perceived by different staff.

For our study, these findings are critical. They highlight that while curriculum change is generally "managed," this management is plagued by fundamental shortcomings in providing tangible support, building staff confidence, and addressing negative perceptions. This suggests a disconnect where headteachers' efforts (as indicated in Objective 1) may not translate into comprehensively managed change processes at the operational level, particularly in areas requiring proactive engagement and support.

4.1.3 Effect of Change-oriented leadership Behaviour in Management of Curriculum Changes

To determine the effect of headteachers' change-oriented leadership behavior on

the management of curriculum changes in Karamoja secondary schools, a linear regression analysis was conducted. The transformed overall mean scores for change-oriented leadership (from Table 2: Mean = 2.07) and management of curriculum changes (from Table 3: Mean = 3.75) were used. The results of the model summary and the ANOVA table are presented in Table 4 and Table 5, respectively.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.408 ^a	.167	.163	6.82

a. Predictors: (Constant), Change-Oriented Leadership

relationship between headteachers' change-oriented leadership and the management of curriculum changes. The R-value of .408 signifies a moderate positive correlation between the two variables. More critically, the R Square value of .167 (or 16.7%) indicates that 16.7% of the variance in the management of curriculum changes can be explained by headteachers' change-oriented leadership behavior. This suggests that while change-oriented leadership is a significant predictor, other factors not included in this model also contribute substantially to effective curriculum management in secondary schools within Karamoja sub-region. The Adjusted R Square of .163 is a more conservative estimate of the population R-squared, accounting for the number of predictors and sample size, and remains close to the R-squared value, confirming the model's explanatory power.

Table 4, the Model Summary, presents key statistics indicating the strength of the

Table 5: Effect of Change-Oriented Leadership Behaviour in Management of Curriculum Changes in the Secondary Schools in Karamoja (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.112	1	20.112	43.221	.000 ^b
	Residual	100.512	216	.465		
	Total	120.624	217			

a. Dependent Variable: Management of Curriculum Changes

b. Predictors: (Constant), Change-Oriented Leadership

The ANOVA Table 5, assesses the statistical significance of the regression model. The F-statistic of 43.221 with a significance value (p-value) of .000 (which is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05) indicates that the regression model is statistically significant. This means that headteachers' change-oriented leadership behavior is a statistically significant predictor of the management of curriculum changes in the secondary schools of Karamoja sub-region. Therefore, the null hypothesis, which posited "there is no significant linear relationship between change-oriented leadership behavior and the management of curriculum changes in lower secondary schools in the Karamoja Region," is rejected. Instead, the findings support the alternative hypothesis: "there is a significant positive linear relationship between change-oriented leadership behavior and the management of curriculum changes in lower secondary schools in the Karamoja Region."

The qualitative data further enriches these quantitative findings by providing a deeper understanding of how this effect manifests in practice. Participants frequently highlighted the importance of a headteacher's mindset and flexibility in

driving change. For instance, KI-03 emphasized that "the change in this case requires a positive change. And this requires one to be flexible and be ready to adapt to the new changes. So once an administrator is positive in a mind about the new curriculum, then it trickles down to even the teachers who are actual implementers of the curriculum." This quote directly supports the idea that a headteacher's adaptability (a component of change-oriented leadership) is pivotal in fostering acceptance and implementation among teachers, thereby influencing curriculum management.

Similarly, KI-05 reinforced the need for a "positive attitude and ready to pop up with the new changes," acknowledging the unique challenges of the Karamoja region: "it requires a positive mind, a mind that is able to adapt both physically and emotionally so that the implementation of this new curriculum comes true." This statement underscores the contextual relevance of adaptive, change-oriented leadership, indicating that leaders who embody this flexibility can positively impact curriculum management even in challenging environments.

Furthermore, KI-02 underscored the necessity for leadership to embrace current reforms: "Yeah, there is a

departure in the whole curriculum. We are not to get stuck to the old one. So, changes are expected of us. We have to embrace the changes brought in by the new curriculum and actually be part of it." This highlights the visionary aspect of change-oriented leadership, where leaders actively promote and participate in the new direction, which is critical for effective curriculum management.

The caution from KI-01 provides a nuanced perspective: "Change is always good but if it is not carefully handled, you will crash. So, you need to go slowly as you try to introduce changes in the system. Where you are not sure, go slow or consult." This speaks to the how of change management that effective leadership requires not just initiating change but also strategic, measured implementation and consultation, validating the need for intellectual stimulation and fostering collective learning (as discussed in 4.2.1). Finally, KI-06 reiterated the continuous nature of change-oriented leadership: "change-oriented leadership behavior means bringing in something new. And one has to maintain the new behavior to allow others to be inducted into it and they will also gradually get into it and become part of it." This aligns with the concept of sustained innovation and consistent support for implementation, vital for the successful management of ongoing curriculum changes.

In conclusion, both quantitative and qualitative data consistently demonstrate that headteachers' change-oriented leadership behavior significantly influences the management of curriculum changes in secondary schools within the Karamoja sub-region. While this leadership accounts for a notable portion of the variance, it also highlights the existence of other influential factors. The qualitative insights further illustrate the practical implications, emphasizing that a headteacher's positive mindset, adaptability, and strategic approach are crucial for fostering teacher buy-in and effective implementation of new curricula.

4.2 Discussion

This study explored into the multifaceted dynamics of headteachers' change-oriented leadership and its impact on curriculum management within lower secondary schools of Uganda's Karamoja sub-region. The findings reveal a complex interplay of leadership behaviors and management practices, offering nuanced insights into educational reform within this unique context.

4.2.1 Status of Headteachers' Change-Oriented Leadership and Theoretical Alignment

The overall perception that headteachers' change-oriented leadership is "fairly exercised" (overall mean = 2.07) provides a baseline understanding, but a granular

analysis exposes critical inconsistencies. While some aspects, such as facilitating collective learning (Mean = 2.71), show a moderate presence, the significant perceived deficiencies in encouraging innovative behavior (Mean = 1.67) and advocating for positive change (Mean = 1.67) are particularly noteworthy. These low scores suggest a substantial gap in the practical manifestation of "intellectual stimulation" and "inspirational motivation," core components of Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Riggio, 2006). A truly transformative leader would consistently challenge the status quo, inspire a compelling vision, and empower followers to innovate. The findings indicate that Karamoja's headteachers, despite their overall positive intent, may not yet consistently embody these proactive, innovation-driving facets. Furthermore, the variability in perceptions regarding key relational elements, such as leader-follower relationships (Mean = 2.07) and mutual respect/freedom (Mean = 1.74), underscores an inconsistent application of "individualized consideration." This critical component of transformational leadership, which focuses on developing individual potential and fostering supportive relationships, is fundamental for building the trust and psychological safety necessary for staff to embrace and drive change. Without consistently high-quality relationships and a climate of mutual respect, efforts to manage new curricula are likely to face

covert or overt resistance, hindering genuine collaborative environments vital for curriculum adaptation.

4.2.2 Extent of Management of Curriculum Changes and Its Practical Challenges

The finding that the overall management of curriculum changes is "well managed" (overall mean = 3.75) presents an initial positive outlook, aligning with the importance placed on teachers' roles in curriculum translation (Arif, Asghar, & Mukhtar, 2020) and involvement in creating a collaborative school environment (Hajisoteriou, Karousiou, & Angelides, 2018). The reported strengths in prioritizing change, leveraging external partnerships, and promoting teamwork reflect foundational efforts in managing reforms.

However, this aggregate perception significantly obscures critical underlying challenges. The unanimous strong disagreement (100%) among respondents regarding the school's provision of strategies for dealing with negative perceptions of change and staff confidence in implementing curriculum change (despite the presented mean scores of 3.78 and 3.76, which require careful interpretation in light of such overwhelming disagreement) points to a profound disconnect. This suggests that while outward activities of change management might be occurring, the

intrinsic human dimensions—such as addressing resistance, fostering psychological safety, and building genuine confidence—are either neglected or poorly executed. This severe lack of proactive engagement with negative perceptions constitutes a significant barrier to authentic, sustainable curriculum management, potentially rendering surface-level "management" ineffective in the long run. These findings resonate with the concerns raised by Day, Sammons, and Gorgen (2020) regarding how rigid structures can impede teacher agency, and by Luyten and Bazo (2019) on educators' reluctance due to perceived lack of professionalism or accountability. While our study reaffirms the necessity of leadership, these specific findings suggest that in Karamoja, the *quality* of engagement in managing human resistance and fostering deep confidence remains critically low, irrespective of broader management perceptions.

4.3.3 Effect of Change-Oriented Leadership on Curriculum Management

The regression analysis definitively established a significant positive linear relationship between headteachers' change-oriented leadership behavior and the management of curriculum changes ($R = .408$, $R^2 = .167$, $p < .001$). This indicates that 16.7% of the variance in curriculum change management can be explained by headteachers' change-

oriented leadership. This finding strongly corroborates the existing literature on the crucial role of leadership in organizational change (e.g., Fullan & Quinn, 2019), affirming that headteachers' strategic behaviors are indeed vital for driving educational reforms in Karamoja. However, the explained variance also implies that other factors, such as external policy support, available resources, and broader socio-economic conditions, significantly contribute to the complexities of curriculum management in this challenging context.

The qualitative data provided invaluable insights into the practical mechanisms of this effect. Key Informants consistently highlighted the transformative power of a headteacher's mindset and proactive engagement. As KI-03 succinctly put it, a leader's "positive...mind about the new curriculum" is foundational, as its influence "trickles down to even the teachers." This underscores the "idealized influence" component of Transformational Leadership, where the leader's attitude and commitment serve as a powerful model. KI-05 further emphasized the critical need for a leader who is "able to adapt both physically and emotionally" given the unique regional challenges, directly linking headteacher adaptability to successful curriculum implementation. Furthermore, the call from KI-02 to "embrace the changes brought in by the new curriculum" and from KI-06 to "maintain the new behavior" speaks to the

sustained visionary leadership required to institutionalize new pedagogical approaches. The cautionary insight from KI-01 that "change is always good, but if it is not carefully handled, you will crash" stresses that the *process* of implementing change, requiring careful consultation and a measured pace, is as crucial as the intention to change. These qualitative perspectives collectively illustrate how change-oriented leadership, encompassing aspects of inspiration, adaptability, intellectual stimulation, and strategic guidance, fundamentally fosters a more responsive and effective environment for curriculum reform.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study investigated the effect of headteachers' change-oriented leadership behavior on the management of curriculum changes in lower secondary schools within Uganda's Karamoja sub-region. The demographic data revealed a predominantly male teaching force, largely in their prime professional years (30-40 years old), and well-qualified with Bachelor's degrees, indicating a capable and experienced cohort of respondents.

Regarding the status of headteachers' change-oriented leadership, the findings indicate it's "fairly exercised" overall. While leaders show some capacity for

fostering collective learning and intellectual stimulation, significant weaknesses were identified in actively encouraging innovative behavior, consistently advocating for positive change, and establishing high-quality leader-follower relationships marked by mutual respect and trust. These areas represent critical gaps in fully embracing a transformative leadership approach.

Concerning the extent of curriculum change management, the study found it to be "well managed" in general. Schools effectively prioritized curriculum change, leveraged external partnerships, and promoted teamwork. However, this overall positive perception was sharply contradicted by findings indicating a widespread lack of staff confidence in implementing curriculum change and a complete absence of strategies for addressing negative perceptions of change. This suggests that while formal management processes may be in place, the crucial human element of managing resistance and fostering buy-in remains a significant challenge.

Finally, the study conclusively demonstrated a significant positive effect of headteachers' change-oriented leadership behavior on the management of curriculum changes. This leadership style accounted for 16.7% of the variance in curriculum management, underscoring its pivotal role. Qualitative data further

enriched this understanding, highlighting that a headteacher's positive attitude, adaptability, visionary approach, and strategic handling of implementation are crucial factors influencing teachers' readiness and ability to embrace and implement new curricula effectively.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on these findings, the study concludes that despite the commendable efforts in some aspects of curriculum management, headteachers in the Karamoja sub-region are still developing their full potential as change-oriented leaders. Their leadership significantly impacts how curriculum changes are managed, yet substantial improvements are needed in fostering genuine innovation, building deep trust, and proactively addressing staff concerns and resistance. The perceived "well-managed" status of curriculum changes appears to be procedural in nature, rather than reflective of truly confident and universally supported implementation, particularly due to the profound challenges identified in managing the human dimensions of change. Ultimately, effective curriculum reform in this context hinges on cultivating more robust, truly transformative, and empathetic change-oriented leadership at the school level.

5.3 Recommendations

To enhance the effectiveness of curriculum change management in lower secondary schools across the Karamoja sub-region, the following recommendations are put forth:

1. Focus on strengthening leadership capabilities. This involves providing targeted training for headteachers and aspiring teacher leaders, equipping them with skills to inspire innovation, encourage calculated risk-taking, and proactively drive positive change. The training should also emphasize building high-quality, trusting relationships with staff, fostering mutual respect, and promoting open communication to overcome resistance and build a collective sense of ownership for curriculum reforms.
2. Secondly, it's crucial to foster more adaptive and participatory school environments. This means that schools and the Ministry of Education need to actively work towards reducing administrative burdens and unnecessary bureaucracy that currently hinder teachers from fully engaging in curriculum changes. Furthermore, frameworks should be put in place to encourage and facilitate active teacher involvement in all stages of curriculum management, from planning and adaptation to implementation decisions, perhaps

through teacher-led committees and regular collaborative forums.

3. Finally, the recommendations stress the importance of empowering teachers and addressing any gaps in their confidence. Schools must ensure teachers receive comprehensive support, including essential pedagogical materials, access to digital tools, and sustained professional development, so they can confidently implement new curricula. Headteachers, in particular, require specialised training on how to identify and proactively manage negative perceptions of change among staff, utilising transparent communication, empathetic listening, clear rationales for changes, and targeted support to foster overall staff confidence in the change process.

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