Managerial Competencies of Middle Managers in Teacher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the managerial competencies of the middle managers in teacher education institutions with the end view of proposing a middle management development program providing them with opportunities and prepares them for higher-level roles. It also determined the extent of manifestation of the 21st century competencies of middle managers in Teacher Education institutions relative to planning and organizing, building and managing relationships, communication and strategic thinking, managing and developing performance and resilience. Further, the study also identified the challenges met by the middle managers in the teaching education institutions in achieving the managerial competencies, which also helped in the preparation of the development program for the middle managers. The study used the descriptive-quantitative design with the research questionnaire as the chief tool to gather data from the middle managers assigned in the college of teacher education from the different campuses in Batangas State University-TNEU. This was complemented with a focus group discussion to enrich the findings of the study. The respondents were 40 middle managers, broken down as department chairperson, program chairperson and coordinators from the teacher education institutions in the different campuses of Batangas State University- TNEU. Middle managers have commendable personal and professional attributes in relation to the fulfillment of their task and function in the teacher education institution in the university. The 21st century competencies were highly manifested on building and managing relationships, communication and strategic thinking. However, moderately manifested was mostly the assessment of the respondents on planning and organizing, managing and developing performance and resilience. Balancing administrative responsibilities instructional tasks, diverse interactions with the subordinates, sole responsibility for meeting targets, lack of comprehensive management training, juggling multiple roles and maintaining employee's morale were some of the challenges met by the middle managers in achieving the 21st century competencies.

Index words: 21st century competencies, middle managers, teacher education institution, managerial competencies

INTRODUCTION

In an organization, middle management has a special opportunity to bring about change. Any significant change merely needs to be supported by middle-level management. It is undeniable that the notable and significant contributions of today's low-key middle-level managers account for a large portion of an organization's success. Positive transformation in the realm of influence is substantially concretized by their distinct position in the management ladder. Because they can demand the devotion of regular employees and have access to upper management, they ought to be appreciated for the contributions they make. Because of this, every organizational leadership program for managers at the middle level new environment challenges a leader to play various roles. It is expected that 21st century managers and leaders should cope with a rapidly changing world of work. They should be readily prepared to cope with changes if they are to be effective. Managers will have to be competent leaders in order to transform their people to achieve the required organizational outcomes. Another point to consider which describes a 21st century leader as having the ability to demonstrate a greater empathy and concern for people issues than his/her earlier counterparts. In doing so, they will require abilities as being team-oriented, strong communicators, team players, problem solvers, change-makers and leaders among others [2]

The purpose of the study is to assess the level of competency and utilization of strategies of academic middle managers in teacher education institutions to serve as the basis for the formulation of a middle management training and development program.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess the level of competency and utilization of strategies of academic middle managers to serve as the basis for the formulation of a management training and development program.

1. Describe the profile of the respondents in terms of:

1.1 gender

1.2 employment status

1.3 educational background

1.4 professional category

1.5 area of specialization

1.6 length of service

1.7 number of relevant trainings and seminars attended

2. Determine the extent of manifestation of the managerial competencies of middle managers in Teacher Education Institutions as assessed by the respondents relative to:

2.1 planning and organizing

2.2 building and managing relationships

2.3 communication and strategic thinking

2.4 managing and developing performance

2.5 resilience

3. Find if there is a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the extent of manifestation of the managerial competencies of academic middle managers in Teacher Education Institutions?

4. Identify the challenges met by the middle managers in the teacher education institutions in achieving the managerial competencies?

METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of the study assesses the level of competency and utilization of strategies of academic middle managers to serve as the basis for the formulation of a management training and development program.

The conceptual framework for this study is visually represented through interconnected hexagons, utilizing complementary colors to emphasize the distinct yet interrelated components of the research. At the outer center of the framework are the managerial competencies in the outer big arrows, while in the inner small arrows are the profile of the middle managers. At the inner center are the challenges met by the middle managers in achieving the managerial competencies. The arrow outside directs to the mere output of the study which is a management plan
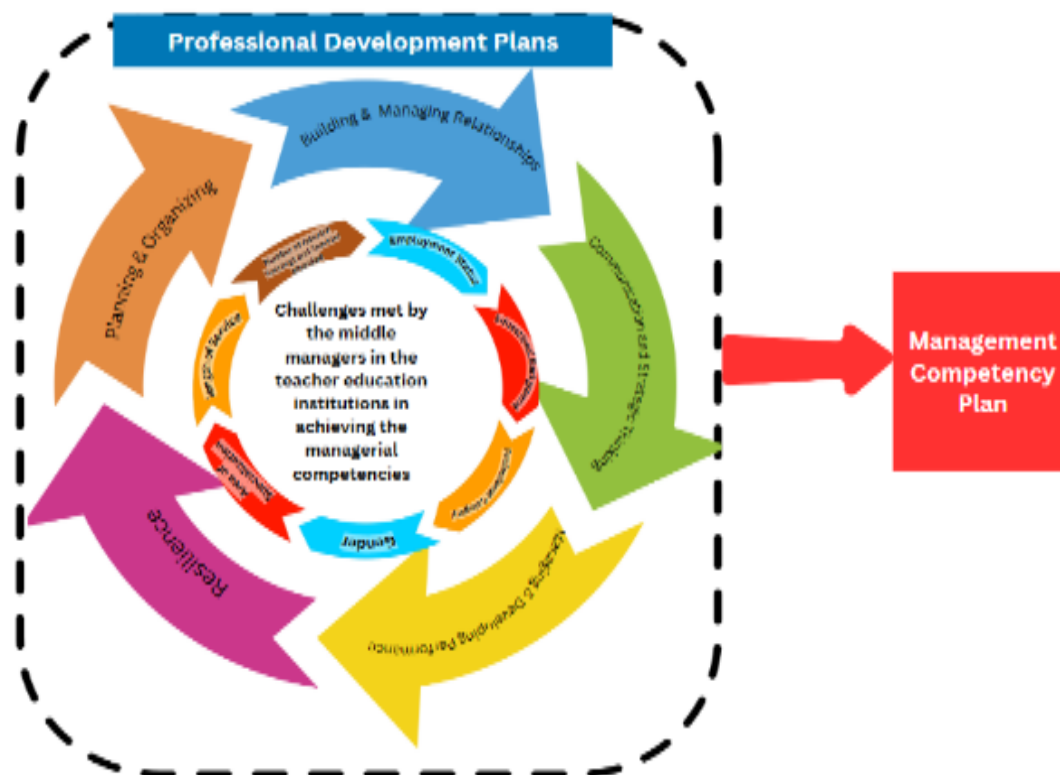
In this study, the researcher used the descriptive – quantitative research design to gather objective data through a questionnaire. Likewise, qualitative technique was utilized through a focus group discussion to gather subjective data regarding the issues and challenges met by the middle managers in the teacher education institutions in achieving the managerial competencies

The main instrument which was utilized by the researcher in gathering data was the researcher's made questionnaire. The researcher's personal observations were also considered in the construction process. The researcher used various references and sources in order to come up with the key instrument. Published materials, books, journals and other written materials were also utilized to come up with the items about the managerial competencies relative to planning and organizing, building and managing relationships, communication and strategic thinking, managing and developing performance and resilience.

The researcher sought the help of the adviser and other experts to ensure that all the items were parallel to the objectives of the study. It undergone checking, editing and revising for the refinement of the instrument. The final draft was validated by the members of the panel and expert. The questionnaire was further validated by a reliability test that proved that the test items were of good internal consistency and reliability. A final copy was then produced by the researcher for pilot testing and was distributed physically to the respondents of the study.

The subjects in this study were the department chairpersons, program chairpersons and coordinators in the college of teacher education from the different campuses in Batangas State University-TNEU. The respondents were from the Pablo Borbon, Rosario, Lipa, Malvar and Nasugbu campuses. The whole population was considered. The researcher used the Google Form and Google Meet for the administration of the questionnaire and focus group discussion to the respondents. However, Google Drive was used as a repository for the gathered data. The researcher discussed the purpose of the study to the respondents for clarification and bases in answering the questionnaire. Additionally, the responses from the questionnaire were tallied and tabulated for statistical treatment of data. To ensure proper treatment of the data, the researcher sought the help of the statistician. Appropriate statistical tools were employed in the data analysis.

Frequency and percentage were utilized to get the percentage and frequency of the correct responses of the respondents in relation to their demographic profile. Weighted mean was used to measure the average responses of the respondents on the level of manifestation of the 21st century competencies of middle managers in the teacher education institutions and the challenges met in achieving the competencies.

To better understand the quantitative data, the following scale and interpretations were used:

Option	Scale Range	Verbal Interpretation
4	3.50 – 4.00	Highly Manifested
3	2.50 – 3.49	Moderately Manifested
2	1.50 - 2.49	Slightly Manifested
1	1.0 - 1.49	Least Manifested

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Distribution of the Respondents

The subject in this study were the 40 middle managers who were given the position and were assigned in the College of Teacher Education from the different campuses in Batangas State University-TNEU. The number of respondents depend on the local designations given in each of the teacher education institution. Random sampling was not used since the researcher consider the whole population as respondents of the study. Data for the study were collected through online questionnaire.

Reliability Test

The questionnaire was further validated by a reliability test that proved that the test items were of good internal consistency and reliability. A final copy was then produced by the researcher for pilot testing and was distributed through online means to fifteen participants who were former middle managers in the teacher education institution from the different colleges in the different campuses of the university.

TABLE 1 Reliability Test

Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Planning and organizing	0.953	Excellent
Building and Managing Relationship	0.962	Excellent
Communication and Strategic Thinking	0.962	Excellent
Managing and Developing Performance	0.967	Excellent
Resilience	0.981	Excellent
Manifestation of the 21st Century Competencies of Middle Managers in TEI's	0.991	Excellent

Profile of the Respondents

Gender. Table 2 shows that most respondents were females. More so, as originally viewed, teaching is intended for female that is why most of the teachers were women. Additionally, there were times in a certain department that almost all employees and faculty were females. Males tend to be more task-oriented than females, thus placing more emphasis on work, accomplishment and rank whereas women seem to place more importance on the social influence, being more expressive, more aware of others' feelings, and more compliant compared with men [3].

TABLE 2 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Gender

	f	%
F	24	60.0
M	16	40.0
Total	40	100.0

Employment Status. Table 3 shows that most of the respondents are permanent in status This suggested that the majority of the participants have worked in the field for a considerable amount of time.

TABLE 3 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Employment Status

	f	%
Contract	2	5.0
Permanent	38	95.0
Total	40	100.0

Educational Background. As seen in Table 4, relatively, greater number of respondents fall under the Master's degree. They had completed relevant MA degrees significant in the program they are in and aligned with the target specialization of the college. This conforms to the idea of influencing the overall performance of teachers in the field of education. Furthermore, Gutte [4] emphasized the importance of teacher education knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the development of effective teaching and leadership.

TABLE 4 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Educational Background

	f	%
Doctoral Degree	18	45.0
Master's Degree	22	55.0
Total	40	100.0

Professional Category. Table 5 shows that most of the respondents are having the professional category of Assistant Professor. This means that the local designation was mostly assigned to assistant professors. Owen's research indicates [5] that while teachers excel in certain areas, they often need further development in analytical and action-focused skills when transitioning to middle management.

TABLE 5 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Professional Category

Category	f	%
Professor	2	5.0
Associate Professor	11	27.5
Assistant Professor	15	37.5
Instructor	10	25.0
Guest Lecturer	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Area of Specialization. As seen in Table 6, those respondents whose specialization is in line English Language Education mostly has been given the position in the teacher education institutions. Derveni [6] in his study identified specific competencies across six dimensions, emphasizing the importance of field-specific knowledge alongside general teaching and administrative skills.

TABLE 6 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Area of Specialization

Area of Specialization	f	%
Computer Education	3	7.5
Educational Management	6	15
Elementary Education	2	5
English Language Education	8	20
Filipino	1	2.5
General Curriculum	2	5
MAPEH	2	5
Mathematics Education	2	5
Physical Science	7	17.5

Social Sciences	4	10
Technology and Livelihood Education	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Length of Service. Table 7 shows that the majority of respondents had previously spent eleven to fifteen years working for the institution and in the profession. This is a strong sign that these respondents have cherished the sense of residency in their work, and it gives the idea that they will fully support anything the school hopes to do and grow.

TABLE 7 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Length of Service

Category	f	%
1-5	5	12.5
6-10	8	20.0
11-15	12	30.0
16-20	6	15.0
21-25	4	10.0
	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Trainings and Seminars. As seen in Table 8 most middle managers had joined six and above numbers of seminars and trainings related to the middle managers competencies. Fernandes et al.,[7] found that pedagogical training programs significantly impact higher education teachers' perceptions of their teaching practices and professional development. This study emphasizes that increased participation in training leads to improved teaching methodologies and overall professional growth.

TABLE 8 Profile of the Respondents in terms of Number of Trainings/Seminars Attended

Category	f	%
2-below	5	12.5
3-5	7	17.5
6 above	28	70.0
Total	40	100.0

Extent of Manifestation of the Managerial Competencies of Middle Managers in Teacher Education Institutions

Planning and organizing. Numerous important indicators can be used to gauge how much middle administrators in teacher education institutes are demonstrating 21st-century skills, especially in terms of organizing and planning. The capacity to involve and communicate with others during the planning process is an important item in this domain. Effective leadership in contemporary educational contexts requires a collaborative and inclusive approach to management, which is reflected in this competency. As it was reflected in the table, involving and communicating with others in own planning was highly manifested by the middle managers of teacher education institution. This was supported by the idea of Gonzalez [8] that effective planning and organizing require active stakeholder involvement and clear communication strategies. This involvement is critical for aligning the educational goals with the needs and expectations of all parties involved, thereby enhancing the overall efficacy of the educational management process.

Moreover, consultation with relevant parties to ensure that tasks and time frames are realistic and resource are available was also highly manifested. Furthermore, paying close attention to detail and ensuring team's work is delivered to a high standard and Planning and prioritizing own workload to meet agreed deadlines were also assessed with high manifestation.

However, as shown in table 9, such tasks like juggle priorities in the organization, makes contingency plans to account for changing work priorities, deadlines and milestones and identifies and consults with sponsors, or

stakeholders in planning work were assessed by the respondents as moderately manifested. This shows that middle managers in teacher education institutions find these as crucial role to handle unexpected changes and risks effectively. This was supported by the idea of Eby [9] those effective strategies for managing these competing priorities include creating a comprehensive task list, breaking it down into manageable sections with realistic deadlines, and using prioritization tools, this involves adding contingency time to project schedules, clearly labeling it to avoid confusion, and distinguishing it from management reserves.

TABLE 9 Manifestation of the Managerial Competencies of Middle Managers in terms of Planning and Organizing

Indicators	WM	VI
Involves and communicates with others in own planning	3.60	HM
Consults with relevant parties to ensure that tasks and time frames are realistic and resource are available	3.59	HM
Pays close attention to detail, ensuring team's work is delivered to a high standard	3.56	HM
Plans and prioritizes own workload to meet agreed deadlines	3.55	HM
Checks for errors to ensure work is delivered to a high standard	3.53	HM
Considers the larger picture in developing and implementing plans.	3.53	HM
Negotiates realistic timescales for work delivery, ensuring team deliverables can be met.	3.50	HM
Allocates appropriate time and resources for completing	3.49	MM
Monitors allocation of resources, anticipating changing requirements that may impact work delivery	3.43	MM
Uses appropriate systems and tools to track and monitor progress	3.43	MM
Foresees risks and obstacles and allows contingencies when planning	3.40	MM
Uses quality assurance processes across the organization as a feedback mechanism to improve performance	3.40	MM
Juggles priorities in the organization.	3.38	MM
Makes contingency plans to account for changing work priorities, deadlines and milestones	3.33	MM
Identifies and consults with sponsors, or stakeholders in planning work.	3.28	MM
COMPOSITE MEAN	**3.46**	**MM**

Building and Managing Relationships. Having good working relationships with colleagues and effective alliances with external partners will help create an organization people want to work with, enabling more effective delivery of the organization's strategic priorities. As reflected in table 10 all competencies got the overall verbal interpretation of highly manifested as assessed by the respondents. Always shows respect and consideration to others and solicits inputs and valuing other's ideas and expertise place the highest. These shows that in being a middle manager one must be able to build rapport towards the colleagues and subordinates to further create a harmonious working environment and to easily bridge the gap in between the superiors and subordinates. This was supported by the study of Care, Anderson, and Kim [10] which highlighted the critical role of communication and relationship management within the broader scope of 21st-century competencies. Their analysis shows that effective involvement and communication with stakeholders are necessary for implementing educational reforms and achieving institutional goals.

Furthermore, understands and recognizes the contributions that staff at all levels make to delivering priorities, works with others to identify solutions to issues, and listens to others and is open to their ideas placed second and third top most highly manifested competencies of middle managers. Hence, building consensus with others to achieve common goals and engaging partners and encourages others to build relationship that supports the organization's objectives placed last but still assessed as highly manifested.

TABLE 10 Manifestation of the Managerial Competencies of Middle Managers in terms of Building and Managing Relationships

Indicators	WM	VI
Always shows respect and considerations to others.	3.83	HM
Solicits inputs and valuing other's ideas and expertise.	3.83	HM
Understands and recognizes the contributions that staff at all levels make to delivering priorities	3.80	HM
Works with others to identify solutions to issues	3.78	HM
Listens to others and is open to their ideas	3.78	HM
Develops new professional relationships	3.70	HM
Shares information with colleagues within and outside own team	3.70	HM
Manages partner relationships, preventing or resolving any conflict	3.70	HM
Build thrust-based relationship within and across the organization	3.68	HM
Identifies and resolves conflict between self and others	3.65	HM
Understands differences, anticipates areas of conflict and takes action	3.65	HM
Understands the needs of others, the constraints they face and the levers to their engagement	3.65	HM
Challenges and addresses attitudes to encourage effective relationship	3.63	HM
Builds consensus with others to achieve common goals.	3.63	HM
Engages partners and encourages others to build relationships that supports the organization's objectives	3.60	HM
COMPOSITE MEAN	**3.71**	**HM**

Communication and Strategic Thinking. Based on the assessment of the respondents, encouraging and supporting teams in engaging in transparent and inclusive communication and using communication channels, tools and options both placed as the top most having the highly manifested verbal interpretation. This shows that middle managers must make an open line in motivating their subordinates in working with honesty and transparency. Pellegrino al [11] cited that transparency in educational leadership fosters an environment where stakeholders, including teachers and staff, feel valued and informed. This leads to better collaboration and a more cohesive approach to achieving educational goals.

On the other hand, generates and leads strategic initiatives that reflect the organizations' position as part of a teacher education institution was assessed as moderately implemented by the respondents. This may mean that middle managers were challenge to apply organizational initiatives due to subordinate's diverse nature. [12] highlighted that strategic thinking involves both content knowledge and procedural knowledge—understanding how, why, and when to apply this knowledge effectively. This dual aspect of strategic thinking is crucial for middle managers as it enables them to navigate complex educational environments and make informed decisions

TABLE 11 Manifestation of the Managerial Competencies of Middle Managers in terms of Communication and Strategic Thinking

Indicators	WM	VI
Encourages and supports teams in engaging in transparent and inclusive communication	3.70	HM
Uses communication channels, tools and options	3.70	HM
Considers the target audience, adapting style and communication method.	3.68	HM
Places issue in the broader context of the organization's priorities and plans	3.65	HM
Is able to translate strategies into action	3.65	HM
Uses understanding of different parts of the organization to accomplish goals and objectives	3.65	HM
Seeks and encourages two-way communication in the deliverance of the priorities of the organization.	3.65	HM
Communicates the organization's strategic priorities in a compelling and convincing manner	3.60	HM

Looks beyond the immediate and considers long-term impact and consequences	3.60	HM
Briefs and prepares team to accomplish goals and objectives	3.53	HM
Considers multiple possible causes and risks and anticipates consequences of situations	3.53	HM
Challenges the views of others in an open and constructive way.	3.53	HM
Is able to discuss the strategies using the proper channel	3.50	HM
Communicates with confidence.	3.50	HM
Generates and leads strategic initiatives that reflect the organizations' position as part of a teacher education institution	3.45	MM
COMPOSITE MEAN	**3.59**	**HM**

Managing and Developing Performance. Most of the respondents assessed that ensuring own and other's workloads are realistic and achievable and motivating and inspiring others to perform to their best, recognizing and valuing their work and encouraging them to learn and reflect placed the top most in highly manifested interpretation. This means that it provides staff with clear direction and objectives, ensuring they understand expectations [13].

However, providing objective and regular feedback and championing the employee's development for career growth and mobility only got moderately manifested interpretation as assessed by the respondents. It was also indicated that middle managers in teacher education institutions were more focus on providing workloads to members which they can perform. They are responsible for translating the institution's strategic goals into actionable plans for their respective units. They foster positive work environments, encourage faculty development, and ensure fair handling of performance issues. Implement regular, constructive performance reviews that focus on leadership competencies. Foster an environment where managers feel comfortable seeking and giving feedback. Recognize that different departments or schools within a TEI may have varying goals and needs, requiring flexible yet standardized performance management approaches.

TABLE 12 Manifestation of the Managerial Competencies of Middle Managers in terms of Managing and Developing Performance

Indicators	WM	VI
Ensures own and other's workloads are realistic and achievable	3.63	HM
Motivates and inspires others to perform to their best, recognizing and valuing their work and encouraging them to learn and reflect	3.63	HM
Ensures that performance issues are dealt with objectiveness and fairness.	3.62	HM
Aligns own and team performance with organizational goals and objectives	3.60	HM
Recognizes and acknowledge efforts as well as achievements	3.60	HM
Seeks opportunities to develop professional skills and knowledge and encourages team to do so.	3.60	HM
Shares constructive feedback, supporting the delivery of own and other's work	3.60	HM
Seeks opportunities to develop, taking responsibility for own personal development plan	3.58	HM
Keeps up to date with new processes and information in own role	3.58	HM
Promotes positive team culture that respects diversity and deals with barriers to inclusion.	3.58	HM
Leads and sets an example for desired behavior and performance	3.53	HM
Creates an organization that learns from experience	3.50	HM
Manages performance issues to avoid adverse impact on team morale and performance	3.50	HM
Provides objective and regular feedback	3.48	MM
Champions employee development for career growth and mobility	3.45	MM
COMPOSITE MEAN	**3.56**	**MM**

Resilience. Based on the assessment made by the middle managers, accepting circumstances that cannot be changed placed as first which got the highly manifested verbal interpretation. It was followed by developing realistic goals and move towards them and maintaining a hopeful outlook, good things and visualizing what is wished which also got the highly manifested interpretation. This shows that middle managers in teacher education institutions were able to anticipate and handle risks when it comes to challenges that may circulate around their leadership. [14] emphasized the importance of anticipation, sensemaking, adaptation, and trade-offs

in resilience. These strategies are essential for managers to effectively handle complex and demanding situations in their institutions.

However, the ability to cope with small and big challenges towards work, avoiding seeing crises or stressful events as unbearable problems and maintaining personal well-being and achieves a balance between work and home life got the moderately manifested verbal interpretation from the respondents. [15] explored the resilience-building processes of a mid-career teacher in China, focusing on the interaction between challenges, resources, and coping strategies. The study found that resilience is developed through emotional, intellectual, and psychological growth in response to various challenges, underscoring the importance of resilience in maintaining motivation and commitment in demanding professional environments

TABLE 13 Manifestation of the Managerial Competencies of Middle Managers in terms of Resilience

Indicators	WM	VI
Accept circumstances that cannot be changed	3.58	HM
Develop realistic goals and move towards them	3.55	HM
Maintain a hopeful outlook, good things and visualizing what is wished.	3.54	HM
Shows positivity in the face of external pressure, minimizing negative impact.	3.53	HM
Maintaining good relationships with members of the organization.	3.53	HM
Responds to changing circumstances with flexibility	3.53	HM
Uses challenges as an opportunity to learn and improve	3.53	HM
Keep a long-term perspective and consider the stressful event in a broader context.	3.50	HM
Able to cope with stress in a healthy manner.	3.50	HM
Able to cope with small and big challenges towards work.	3.46	MM
Avoid seeing crises or stressful events as unbearable problems.	3.45	MM
Transforms unfavorable situations into wisdom, insights and compassion.	3.45	MM
Able to respond to difficult situations with positivity in mind.	3.45	MM
Manages team's well-being, supporting them to cope with pressure and change	3.43	MM
Maintains personal well-being and achieves a balance between work and home life.	3.40	MM
COMPOSITE MEAN	**3.49**	**MM**

Significant Relationship between the Profile of the Respondents and the Extent of Manifestation of the Managerial Competencies of Academic Middle Managers in Teacher Education Institutions

Relationship in the Assessments in terms of Gender. The respondents reported that their gender is not significantly related to the extent of manifestation of their managerial competencies in terms of planning and organizing, building and managing relationships, communication and strategic thinking managing and developing performance and resilience This implies that the gender of the middle managers does not relate significantly on how they manifest the managerial competencies.

[16] One study examining the relationship between 21st-century teacher skills and critical thinking found no significant relationship in these competencies based on gender or professional experience. This study utilized a sample of classroom teachers and measured their agreement with various competencies, indicating that gender did not play a significant role in the manifestation of these skills.

TABLE 14 Relationship of Gender of Middle Managers to their Extent of Manifestation of Managerial Competencies

	X^2	df	p	Decision on Ho	Remark
Planning and organizing	0.417	1	0.519	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Building and Managing Relationship	2.222	1	0.136	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Communication and Strategic Thinking	1.714	2	0.424	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Managing and Developing Performance	2.934	1	0.087	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Resilience	1.905	2	0.386	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Overall Extent	0.614	1	0.433	Failed to reject	Not Significant

Relationship in the Assessments in terms of Employment Status. Table 15 shows that the employment status of the respondents is significantly related to their managerial competencies in terms of communication and strategic thinking. This means that the extent of manifestation of the said competencies can be directly explained by their employment statuses. A study highlighted that employment stability significantly influences educational leaders' effectiveness in promoting and applying 21st-century skills. The report suggested that full-time middle managers tend to show higher levels of these competencies due to their secure job status, which allows them to focus on long-term strategic initiatives and continuous improvement [17].

TABLE 15 Relationship of Employment Status of Middle Managers to their Extent of Manifestation of Managerial Competencies

	X^2	df	p	Decision on Ho	Remark
Planning and organizing	0.000	1	1.000	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Building and Managing Relationship	0.702	1	0.402	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Communication and Strategic Thinking	19.789	2	<0.001	Reject	Significant
Managing and Developing Performance	3.158	1	0.076	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Resilience	0.067	2	0.967	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Overall Extent	0.048	1	0.826	Failed to reject	Not Significant

On the other hand, the respondents also reported that their employment statuses significantly relate to the extent of manifestation of the rest of their managerial competencies such as planning and organizing, building and managing relationships managing and developing performance and resilience. These mean that the extent of manifestation of these competencies cannot be directly explained by their employment statuses. Overall, there is no significant relationship between the employment statuses of academic middle managers to their extent of manifestation of managerial competencies.

Relationship in the Assessments in terms of Educational Background. The respondent's assessment reflected that their educational backgrounds do not significantly relate to the extent of manifestation of their managerial competencies in terms of planning and organizing, building and managing relationships, communication and strategic thinking, managing and developing performance, and resilience. These mean that the extent of manifestation of the indicated competencies cannot be directly explained by their educational backgrounds, supported by the overall extent of no significant relationship.

Contrary to the study of Massing and Schneider [18] wherein it indicated a significant relationship between the educational background of middle managers and their extent of manifestation of 21st-century competencies in educational institutions. It shows that higher educational qualifications are strongly associated with enhanced competencies such as literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking, which are essential for effective management in educational settings. This correlation is attributed to the opportunities for knowledge acquisition and competency development provided through formal education, which are crucial for performing complex tasks required in 21st-century educational environments.

TABLE 16 Relationship of Educational Background of Middle Managers to their Extent of Manifestation of Managerial Competencies

	X^2	df	p	Decision on Ho	Remark
Planning and organizing	0.404	1	0.525	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Building and Managing Relationship	0.135	1	0.714	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Communication and Strategic Thinking	0.970	2	0.616	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Managing and Developing Performance	0.017	1	0.897	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Resilience	2.033	2	0.362	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Overall Extent	0.051	1	0.822	Failed to reject	Not Significant

Relationship in the Assessments in terms of Professional Category. It was noted that there is significant relationship in between the professional category of the middle managers and their extent of manifestation of the managerial competencies. However, the respondents also implied that their professional categories do not

significantly relate to the extent of manifestation of the rest of their managerial competencies such as planning and organizing, building and managing relationships, managing and developing and resilience These mean that the extent of manifestation of these competencies cannot be directly explained by their professional categories. Overall, there is no significant relationship between the professional categories of academic middle managers to their extent of manifestation of managerial competencies.

This was supported by the study of Fotso, [19] it was found that while certain competencies like digital literacy, financial acumen, and interpersonal skills are crucial, these are not significantly influenced by the professional category of the managers. Instead, these competencies are more closely linked to individual traits and the specific training and development opportunities managers receive.

TABLE 17 Relationship of Professional Category of Middle Managers to their Extent of Manifestation of Managerial Competencies

	X^2	df	p	Decision on Ho	Remark
Planning and organizing	0.158	4	0.997	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Building and Managing Relationship	2.974	4	0.562	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Communication and Strategic Thinking	21.855	8	0.005	Reject	Significant
Managing and Developing Performance	3.561	4	0.469	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Resilience	6.036	8	0.643	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Overall Extent	0.394	4	0.983	Failed to reject	Not Significant

Relationship in the Assessments in terms of Area of Specialization. The responses reflected that the areas of specialization of the respondents do not significantly relate to the extent of manifestation of their managerial competencies in terms of planning and organizing, building and managing relationships, communication and strategic thinking, managing and developing performance, and resilience. These implied that the extent of manifestation of the indicated competencies cannot be directly explained by their areas of specialization, supported by the overall extent of no significant relationship.

Miller [20] highlighted the difficulties in assessing the managerial skills and competencies comprehensively across different educational settings. This research underscores that various factors, including personal attitudes and the availability of resources, significantly impact the manifestation of these competencies, rather than the field of specialization itself

TABLE 18 Relationship of Area of Specialization of Middle Managers to their Extent of Manifestation of Managerial Competencies

	X^2	df	p	Decision on Ho	Remark
Planning and organizing	18.500	14	0.185	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Building and Managing Relationship	9.778	14	0.778	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Communication and Strategic Thinking	22.114	28	0.835	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Managing and Developing Performance	11.875	14	0.616	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Resilience	13.254	28	0.992	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Overall Extent	11.185	14	0.671	Failed to reject	Not Significant

Relationship in the Assessments in terms of Length of Service. The respondents reported that the length of their service does not significantly relate to the extent of manifestation of their managerial competencies in terms of planning and organizing, building and managing relationships, communication and strategic thinking, managing and developing performance, and resilience. These mean that the extent of manifestation of the indicated competencies cannot be directly explained by their lengths of service, supported by the overall extent.

Soland et al. [21] cited that while the managerial competencies are essential for educational success, they are not inherently tied to the length of service. Instead, the development and effectiveness of these competencies are influenced by training, professional development, and the educational environment, rather than the number of years in service.

TABLE 19 Relationship of Length of Service of Middle Managers to their Extent of Manifestation of Managerial Competencies

	X^2	df	p	Decision on Ho	Remark
Planning and organizing	4.000	5	0.549	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Building and Managing Relationship	5.378	5	0.372	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Communication and Strategic Thinking	10.171	10	0.426	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Managing and Developing Performance	4.271	5	0.511	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Resilience	4.802	10	0.904	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Overall Extent	4.740	5	0.448	Failed to reject	Not Significant

Relationship in the Assessments in terms of Number of Relevant Trainings and Seminars. The respondents implied that the number of relevant trainings and seminars do not significantly relate to the extent of manifestation of the managerial competencies in terms of planning and organizing building and managing relationships communication and strategic thinking managing and developing performance and resilience These mean that the number of trainings and seminars do not have any effect in the extent of manifestation of the managerial competencies of middle managers.

Fotso [22] underscores that effective leadership in the 21st century involves a variety of skills that may not be significantly enhanced by attending numerous seminars and trainings alone. Instead, a more holistic approach to professional development is recommended, emphasizing practical experience and the integration of new skills into daily practice.

TABLE 20 Relationship of Number of Relevant Trainings and Seminars of Middle Managers to their Extent of Manifestation of Managerial Competencies

	X^2	df	p	Decision on Ho	Remark
Planning and organizing	6.810	3	0.078	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Building and Managing Relationship	4.000	3	0.261	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Communication and Strategic Thinking	11.589	6	0.072	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Managing and Developing Performance	4.732	3	3.192	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Resilience	9.180	6	0.164	Failed to reject	Not Significant
Overall Extent	6.046	3	0.109	Failed to reject	Not Significant

Challenges Met by The Middle Managers in The Teacher Education Institutions in Achieving the Managerial Competencies

These were the concerns and challenges of the middle managers in the teacher education institutions with regards to achieving the managerial competencies.

Based on the focus group discussion (FGD), there were numerous problems met by the middle managers in achieving the 21st century competencies. Specifically, the respondents included issues on balancing administrative responsibilities and instructional tasks, diverse interactions with the subordinates, sole responsibility for meeting targets, lack of comprehensive management training, juggling multiple roles and maintaining employee's morale. Each aforementioned concern was deeply affirmed by each of the participants.

For them, significant challenge revolves around navigating the complexities of balancing administrative responsibilities with instructional leadership. It has been cited by the participants that as a middle manager, they were tasked with overseeing the day-to-day operations of the department, including class monitoring, faculty supervision, and student support services. Another concern pertains to fostering a culture of collaboration and shares governance within the organization.

Howard [23] highlighted the difficulties in educational leadership and governance structures that are necessary for transformative education. It was indicated that achieving 21st-century competencies requires a shift towards

a more holistic and sustainable approach to education, which can be challenging for middle managers who often operate within traditional and rigid systems.

Another challenge mentioned by the participant was the resistance to change, limited resources, and competing priorities. This was supported by Markovitz [24] by identifying four barriers. These barriers include resistance to change, lack of resources, inadequate professional development, and the challenge of integrating new technologies into existing curricula. Middle managers must navigate these barriers to successfully implement 21st century learning initiatives

CONCLUSIONS

Determined by the results of the investigation the following conclusions were made. Middle managers have commendable personal and professional attributes in relation to the fulfillment of their task and function in the teacher education institution in the university. The managerial competencies were highly manifested on building and managing relationships, communication and strategic thinking. However, moderately manifested was mostly the assessment of the respondents on planning and organizing, managing and developing performance and resilience.

Significant relationship was noted in the manifestation of 21st century competencies of middle managers in terms of professional category. Balancing administrative responsibilities instructional tasks, diverse interactions with the subordinates, sole responsibility for meeting targets, lack of comprehensive management training, juggling multiple roles and maintaining employee's morale were some of the challenges met by the middle managers in achieving the 21st century competencies.

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