



Original Article

# Factors Influencing Middle Administrative Manager Training and Development at Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City

Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan\*

*University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City,  
10-12 Dinh Tien Hoang, Ben Nghe, District 1, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam*

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**Abstract:** Administrative manager training and development in universities as a contribution to effective university administration in the context of strong movement to autonomy in higher education is a matter of deep concern for many university leaders nowadays. Recognizing the influencing factors and their levels of impact on training and developing administrative managers could allow university leaders to implement appropriate and effective solutions for the process of training and development. This article presents the results of research into the factors affecting middle administrative manager training and development at member universities of Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City through surveying opinions of 484 individuals who were officials and managers working at 07 member universities of Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, and further interviewing 07 participants. 03 categories of factors with 19 items identified as having an impact on middle administrative manager training and development, ranked from high to low level of impact, were organizational factors, functional factors and individual factors. More importantly, the results indicate that factors related to humans, including support from university leaders, capabilities of staff responsible for middle administrative manager development, and motivation of middle administrative managers, are identified as having the greatest impact on training and developing middle administrative managers.

*Keywords:* Influencing factors, training and development, middle administrative manager, university.

## 1. Introduction

Managers working at functional departments (middle administrative managers)

are important human resources in universities. They simultaneously are responsible for two roles: advising and assisting the university leaders to operate university activities in accordance with the laws, and directly leading and operating functional departments to administrate and organize tasks based on

\* Corresponding author.

*E-mail address:* [ntkngan@vnuhcm.edu.vn](mailto:ntkngan@vnuhcm.edu.vn)

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assigned functions and responsibilities. Training and developing competent middle administrative managers that are fully capable of fulfilling assigned functions and responsibilities is a matter of great concern for universities, especially in the current context of rapid movement towards university autonomy.

Middle administrative manager training and development is affected by various factors, among which internal factors within the university play a strong, direct and primary role in middle administrative manager training and development. Recognizing these factors and their levels of impact, university leaders can find appropriate solutions to influence and adjust, in order to create a favorable foundation for middle administrative manager training and development, thereby increasing the effectiveness of human resource administration and university activities operation.

## 2. Research Concepts

Human resource training and development in any organization is influenced to an extent by environmental factors [1-4]. Among these, many studies have asserted that institution leaders need to pay special attention to internal factors within the institution, since these are factors that can be actively controlled, adjusted, and mastered [5]. These factors are divided into 03 categories: organizational, functional and personal.

### 2.1. Organizational Factors

Organizational factors create a solid foundation and demonstrate strong commitment to activities implemented for successful training and developing human resource of an organization.

Human resource training and development stems from subjective requirements of an educational institution to change and adjust its own values to meet practical demands [6]. The visions, missions, core values and human behavior philosophies of an institution are the basis for navigating activities of human resource training and development, guiding interactions among individuals of the

institution. The goals and development strategies of an institution in different stages pose corresponding requirements for human resource quality and value. This serves as a basis for a university to design the content, program and route of staff training and development, in order to instill qualities and competencies aligned with the university's values and effectively serve its goals [3].

The organizational structure and management system of a university allow specific determination of roles, tasks and responsibilities for every unit and individual participating in the university's activities as a whole, and in particular the activity of human resource training and development [6, 7]. The human resource management system is an important foundation for the activity of training and developing human resource - as a component functional activity in the overall of human resource management activities - to be implemented. Human resource management system of an organization is the legal foundation that directly influences the determination of policies and regulations for human resource management, utilization, training, and development.

The leadership in an organization is the prerequisite factor for any policy regarding human resource training and development of that organization [8]. Human resource development in a university relies heavily on the thinking, awareness, qualifications, and determination of the members of leader and management board [9]. Any program/activity without the understanding and commitment from the leader will be severely impaired in its ability to influence and implement [10]. The support of institutional leaders and the participation of all managerial levels are favorable conditions for the establishment of policies and resources disposition, while motivating the contribution and assistance of every individual in human resource training and development. All of the above factors are important prerequisites to ensure successful implementation of activities to train and develop human resource in universities.

## 2.2. Functional Factors

Functional factors are resources, conditions, and mechanisms established to serve the training and development of human resource, create a positive environment for an organization's members to train and develop themselves to contribute into the organization's development.

The most important resource is human resource, including the leaders, managers, and those responsible for human resource activities in an organization [5, 11]. Their quantity, quality, capabilities, roles, responsibilities, and tasks correspond with the organization's human resource training and development demands.

Financial resources and materials availability are seen as the vital sources for human resource training and development in universities. Policies that encourage learning culture, improve an eagerness in learning in an organization, and a professional working environment with management and job designs that motivate and promote people's abilities and proactivity towards one's working environment, etc. have tremendous effect on administrative managers training and development in universities [5, 11, 12]. Internal principles, regulations and procedures that create a transparent and positive environment, allowing the personnel to learn, enhance their work capabilities, and actively decide how they can carry out assigned responsibilities; and encouraging and supportive policies, appropriate in terms of both spiritual and material needs, etc. demonstrate the organization's commitment, motivate staff to develop their career and personal values, and contribute effectively to the development of the institution.

The information and data system related to the training and development of an organization's human resource assists in collecting, using and transferring data, giving explanation in the human resource management and administration system for transparency and efficiency. Data are pooled to improve interaction and connection, as well as tighten the control on personnel management and development activities in higher education

institutions, helping the leader board with timely and accurate decision making [5].

## 2.3. Individual Factors

Individual factors are seen as having a direct impact on the training and development of human resource in an organization. Development activities are often difficult to be enforced by managers, but primarily rely on voluntary participation from employees. Individual characteristics and personal traits influence the organization's human resource training and developing activity to an extent. They are motivation and awareness of the need to learn, time availability, skills, and work experience [11], as well as values, attitudes, motivation, and individual awareness and capability of learning [13]. Confidence and openness to new experiences, and the recognition of the relationship between training and work efficiency, etc. are considered relevant and positively influential in the participation of an individual in the organization's training and development activities [12, 14]. Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick [15] argued that although a positive reaction is not a guarantee of learning, a negative reaction almost certainly cancels out any possibility of it occurring. An individual's learning motivation has a primary impact on actively choosing, prioritizing and seizing training and development opportunities [12].

In this study, the author has identified the direct and primary influence on middle administrative manager training and development by internal factors within a university, divided into 03 categories with a total of 19 representative factors. *Organizational factors*: Visions, missions and core values; Philosophies in human resource administration and development; Institutional structure; Mechanism of decentralization in management; Development objectives and strategies; System of policies and regulations of human resource administration and development; Support from the leaders of the institution; Support and participation of managerial levels to middle administrative

manager development. *Functional factors:* Capabilities of staff responsible for middle administrative manager training and development; Resources (financial, facilities) for the implementation of middle administrative manager training and development; Information system managing middle administrative manager training and development; Working environment of middle administrative managers; Methods of quality control in middle administrative manager training and development. *Individual factors of middle administrative managers:* Motivation; Learning abilities; Age; Professional qualifications; Gender; Working experience. Study into the current levels of impact of these factors in reality can help universities to proactively establish positive and favorable foundation for the training and development of middle administrative managers with full capabilities aligned with the universities' goals.

### 3. Materials and Methods

#### 3.1. Research Instruments

Quantification method with survey questionnaire and qualification method by in-depth interview are utilized to study, analyze and determine the levels of impact of the factors on middle administrative manager training and development at member universities of Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City.

The survey questionnaire was designed for collecting quantitative data which were opinions of surveyed individuals on the factors' levels of impact according to a Likert scale with 05 levels: from level 1 – completely non-influential - to level 5 - completely influential, with equivalent scores from 1 to 5 representing 05 corresponding levels: 1.00 to 1.80 - Completely non-influential; 1.81 to 2.60 - Non-influential; 2.61 to 3.40 - Partially influential; 3.41 to 4.20 - Influential; 4.21 to 5.00 - Completely influential. The garnered data were analyzed using SPSS version 22.0 in terms of descriptive statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation: SD).

The study identified 03 categories of factors with a total of 19 elemental factors, including: Organizational (08 factors), Functional (05 factors), and Personal (06 factors). The questionnaire was subjected to expert screening, then a pilot study with 47 participants. Cronbach's Alpha scores of the organizational, functional and individual factors were 0.919, 0.879 and 0.668, respectively, indicating the reliability of the scale.

Table 1. Reliability coefficients

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha coefficient	N of Items
Organizational Factors	0.919	8
Functional Factors	0.879	5
Individual Factors	0.668	6

Next, a personal interview was used to collect quantitative data from several participants from the survey to further investigate the analyzed quantitative data from the survey for the influencing factors.

#### 3.2. Sample

484 individuals from 07 member universities participated in the survey, including 26 university leaders; 142 middle administrative managers; 117 managers of institutional departments and centers; and 199 lecturers and experts. The participants consist of 289 males (59.6%) and 195 females. In-depth interview was carried out with 07 participants of the survey, including 02 university leaders, 04 middle administrative managers and 01 head of department.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1. Opinions on the Impacts of Organizational Factors

Among 08 organizational factors, 07 factors had mean scores equivalent to Completely influential and 01 factor had a mean score at Influential. Factors with highest mean scores

were related to the support of leaders and managers, and basic regulation system for middle administrative manager training and development: *Support from the leaders of the institution to middle administrative manager development* (Mean = 4.43, SD = 0.666), *System of policies and regulations of middle administrative manager management and development* (Mean = 4.33, SD = 0.715), *Support and participation of managerial levels to middle administrative manager development* (Mean = 4.30, SD = 0.621) (Table 2).

Opinions collected from the interview were consistent with the survey results with emphasis

on the support from the leaders of the institution as an affirming and favorable indication of middle administrative manager training and development. *“The support from the leaders of the institution acts as a catalyst to create an effect, or even a motivational force, for everyone else to also show their support, paving the way for middle administrative manager training and development. It can be seen as a signal for relevant parties to recognize and make efforts to carry out the will and desires of the leaders towards middle administrative manager training and development,”* said 1<sup>st</sup> middle administrative manager.

Table 2. Opinions on the impacts of organizational factors

Item	Organizational Factors (OFs)	Levels of impact		
		Mean	SD	Rank
OF.1	Visions, missions and core values of the institution	4.16	0.708	8
OF.2	Philosophies in human resource administration and development of the institution	4.27	0.748	4
OF.3	Institutional structure	4.26	0.732	6
OF.4	Mechanism of decentralization in management	4.27	0.750	4
OF.5	Development objectives and strategies of the institution	4.22	0.745	7
OF.6	System of policies and regulations of middle administrative manager management and development	4.33	0.715	2
OF.7	Support from the leaders of the institution to middle administrative manager training and development	4.43	0.666	1
OF.8	Support and participation of managerial levels to middle administrative manager training and development	4.30	0.621	3
	Overall	4.28	0.587	

3<sup>rd</sup> middle administrative manager emphasized, “The hidden values in the philosophies and policies of the institution regarding human issues are conveyed in the content of the training and development activities to build a force of middle administrative managers with values aligned with the values of the institution”. Meanwhile, the 4<sup>th</sup> middle administrative manager asserted, “The internal human resource management system is a solid and transparent legal framework to guarantee the middle

administrative manager training and development. A good administrative system with effective management tools will create a positive environment for middle administrative managers to unleash their energy, be motivated, and be given opportunities to learn, develop, and contribute to the institution’s objectives”.

Evidently, organizational factors have a strong and fundamental impact on middle administrative manager training and development. The support from the leaders and managers is a prerequisite for the favorable

initiation of middle administrative manager training and development. The philosophies and policies regarding human resource will guide and navigate as a whole for middle administrative manager training and development to meet institution's requirements. The institutional structure and internal regulation system are the foundation for a harmonized implementation of middle administrative manager training and development with the participation of relevant parties with clear functions, responsibilities and authorities, contributing to the effective middle administrative manager training and development.

#### 4.2. Opinions on the Impacts of Functional Factors

Among 05 functional factors, 04 factors had mean scores equivalent to Completely influential. One of them was a human-related factor, *Capabilities of staff responsible for middle administrative manager training and*

*development*, which scored an exceptionally high mean (Mean = 4.37, SD = 0.671).

Other factors related to resources availability and working environment followed in levels of impact, including *Resources (financial, facilities) for middle administrative manager training and development* (Mean = 4.28, SD = 0.693), *Working environment* (Mean = 4.27, SD = 0.671), *Methods of quality control in middle administrative manager training and development* (Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.702).

The only factor at the level of Influential was *Information system managing middle administrative manager training and development* with a mean score of 4.18 (SD = 0.749) (Table 3).

Table 3. Opinions on the impacts of functional factors

Item	Functional Factors (FFs)	Levels of impact		
		Mean	SD	Rank
FF.1	Capabilities of staff responsible for middle administrative manager training and development	4.37	0.671	1
FF.2	Resources (financial, facilities) for middle administrative manager training and development	4.28	0.693	2
FF.3	Information system managing middle administrative manager training and development	4.18	0.749	5
FF.4	Working environment of middle administrative managers	4.27	0.671	3
FF.5	Methods of quality control in middle administrative manager training and development	4.21	0.702	4
	Overall	4.26	0.588	

The interview responses highlighted the essential role of the staff responsible for middle administrative manager development. The 2<sup>nd</sup> middle administrative manager said, "Whether the activities and programs related to training and developing are effective or attractive to participants or not depends heavily on the capability of the staff responsible for human resource. Besides, a professional working environment with positive relationships, effective cooperation, favorable work

conditions are also important factors in creating the satisfaction and promoting middle administrative managers' needs and motivation for learning and self improvement, contributing to the development of the organization". A university leader confirmed, "The staff responsible for human resource often understand clearly the goals of the institution, are aware of the characteristics, strengths and limitations of the members of the organization. They are advisors, proposing to the leaders of

the institution strategies, plans and solutions in training and developing middle administrative managers in order to improve their skills, increase self values, and help middle administrative managers not only in fulfilling personal duties but also in contributing to the institution's values and objectives".

Therefore, the results once again confirmed the importance and influence of adequate investment in resources, mechanism of quality control and assurance, and professional working environment, on the outcome of middle administrative manager training and development. Among these factors, the staff responsible for human resource are considered the most influential factor on middle administrative manager training and development. As a result, universities need to focus on improving the professional capabilities of the staff responsible for human resource before expecting effective policies and programs for middle administrative manager training and development.

#### 4.3. Opinions on the Impacts of Individual Factors

Among 06 individual factors, *Motivation of middle administrative managers* was the only

factor with a mean score equivalent to Completely influential (Mean = 4.34, SD = 0.679). 05 factors with mean scores at Influential, from the highest to the lowest respectively, were *Learning abilities of middle administrative managers* (Mean = 4.19, SD = 0.699), *Professional qualifications of middle administrative managers* (Mean = 4.04, SD = 0.763), *Age* (SD = 0.789) and *Working experience of middle administrative managers* (SD = 0.809) with the same mean score at 3.86. The factor *Gender of middle administrative managers* had the lowest mean score, translating to having the least influence (Mean = 3.43, SD = 1.008) (Table 4).

The survey results indicate the emphasis on motivation as highly influential to middle administrative manager training and development. Personal motivation is highlighted to be the prerequisite in initiating, guiding and sustaining purposeful behaviors of middle administrative managers in self-improvement. Meanwhile, factors related to personal characteristics such as learning abilities, age, working experience, professional qualifications and gender were considered less influential.

Table 4. Opinions on the impacts of individual factors

Item	Individual Factors (IFs)	Levels of impact		
		Mean	SD	Rank
IF.1	Motivation	4.34	0.679	1
IF.2	Learning abilities	4.19	0.699	2
IF.3	Age	3.86	0.789	4
IF.4	Professional qualifications	4.04	0.763	3
IF.5	Gender	3.43	1.008	5
IF.6	Working experience	3.86	0.809	4
	Overall	3.95	0.581	

The interview responses complemented the survey results about the levels of impact of individual factors on middle administrative manager training and development. The 3<sup>rd</sup> middle administrative manager stated, "Age, gender, professional qualifications, and

*working experience have comparably negligible impact on middle administrative managers training and development. Leaders of institution need to focus on ways to create a working environment that can promote motivation and provide opportunities for career*

*advancement and personal development for middle administrative managers. A professional working environment with respect to personal values and individualities encourages middle administrative managers' confidence and proactivity in their duties fulfilment". The 5<sup>th</sup> middle administrative manager believed, "The success of middle administrative manager training and developing programs relies first and foremost on the positive responses and participation of middle administrative managers. Therefore, the institution needs to establish training and developing programs that are practical and meet the basic needs of middle administrative managers to promote their motivation to participate".*

As a consequence, among the individual factors, motivation is the factor with the most influence that drives and propels middle administrative managers into action. It has an exponential impact on an individual's ability and willingness to the organization's human resource training and developing activities. Thus, leaders of universities need to concentrate on the methods and conditions that foster the internal motivation of middle administrative managers towards self training and developing activities. They should also consider the institution's needs for human resource in determining and deciding on objectives, and persevere on learning and training activities to improve personal skills and values that contribute to carry out the goals of the university.

#### 4.4. Overall Evaluation of the Factors

The overall evaluation from the results of 03 types of factors indicates that organizational factors (Mean = 4.28, SD = 0.587) and functional factors (Mean = 4.26, SD = 0.588) are considered Completely influential (equivalent to 4.21 – 5.00 mean score). Individual factors (Mean = 3.95, SD = 0.581) are considered Influential (Table 5).

Analyzing the levels of impacts of the factors on middle administrative manager training and development at member universities of Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City shows that 12 factors were

considered Completely influential (Means ranging from 4.21 to 5.00) and 07 factors were considered Influential (Means ranging from 3.41 to 4.20).

Table 5. Overall evaluation of 03 categories of factors

Factors	Levels of impact		
	Mean	SD	Rank
Organizational Factors	4.28	0.587	1
Functional Factors	4.26	0.588	2
Individual Factors	3.95	0.581	3

Particularly, among the 12 Completely influential factors, 03 factors with the highest mean scores (from 4.34 to 4.43) are the representatives from three categories - organizational, functional and individual, and all related to human aspects, including leaders of the institution, staff responsible for human resource, and middle administrative managers with positive attitudes, capabilities and motivation towards middle administrative manager development, namely *support from the leaders of the institution, capabilities of staff responsible for middle administrative manager development, and motivation of middle administrative managers*. This result confirms the role of humans at different positions, tasks and responsibilities in middle administrative manager development in different ways.

The 09 remaining Completely influential factors (Means ranging from 4.21 to 4.33) focus on the management system, including perspectives, mechanisms, policies, and regulations regarding middle administrative manager administration and development; as well as conditions and resources ensuring the effective implementation of middle administrative manager development. The results imply that the university needs a consistent mental foundation for middle administrative manager administration and development, together with a clear, solid and correspondent legal framework,



and other certain resources availability for middle administrative manager development.

The 07 Influential factors (Means ranging from 3.43 to 4.19) mostly focus on middle administrative managers' personal

characteristics. This indirectly suggests that individual factors have less influence on middle administrative manager training and development, compared to organizational and functional factors (Table 6).

Table 6. Rankings of levels of impacts

Item	Factors	Mean	Rank
OF.7	Support from the leaders of the institution to middle administrative manager training & development	4.43	1
FF.1	Capabilities of staff responsible for middle administrative manager training & development	4.37	2
IF.1	Motivation of middle administrative managers	4.34	3
OF.6	System of policies and regulations of middle administrative manager management and development	4.33	4
OF.8	Support and participation of managerial levels to middle administrative manager training & development	4.30	5
FF.2	Resources (financial, facilities) for middle administrative manager training & development	4.28	6
OF.2	Philosophies in human resource management and development of the institution	4.27	7
OF.4	Mechanism of decentralization in management	4.27	7
FF.4	Working environment of middle administrative managers	4.27	7
OF.3	Institutional structure	4.26	10
OF.5	Objectives and strategies of the institution	4.22	11
FF.5	Method of quality control in middle administrative manager training & development	4.21	12
IF.2	Learning abilities of middle administrative managers	4.19	13
FF.3	Information management system for middle administrative manager training & development	4.18	14
OF.1	Visions, missions and core values of the institution	4.16	15
IF.4	Professional qualification of middle administrative managers	4.04	16
IF.3	Age of middle administrative managers	3.86	17
IF.6	Working experience of middle administrative managers	3.86	17
IF.5	Middle administrative manager's gender	3.43	19

## 5. Conclusion

Middle administrative managers training and development at member universities of Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City is fundamentally influenced by internal factors within the institution with levels of impact ranked from the highest to the lowest as:

organization factors, functional factors, and individual factors. Among these, human-related elemental factors, including the support from the leaders of the institution, the capabilities of the staff responsible for middle administrative manager development, and the motivation of middle administrative managers, are considered to be the most influential towards middle

administrative manager training and development. Besides, a management system, including human resource management, that is transparent, effective, and regularly updated, together with adequately invested resources and conditions, will contribute greatly to middle administrative manager training and development. This study provides practical basis recommended for leaders of member universities of Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City the factors to consider in order to create a positive and supported organizational climate for middle administrative managers to train and develop, contributing effectively to the university's goals.

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