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Leadership and change management in the implementation of the outcomes approach

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ABSTRACT

The Heads of Departments (HoDs) in the South African public sector as well as in some other countries in the world are not appointed on a permanent capacity but rather on a five-year contract. Literature reveals that leadership turnover has its advantages as well as disadvantages. Frequent change of HoDs is further exacerbated by the rapid changes taking place in the environment, which means that change management has to be implemented fast and efficiently, and any delay or disruption can have an adverse effect on the change process. The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect that the high turnover rate of HoDs in the South African public sector has on maintaining the momentum at which government programmes are being undertaken, and the factors leading to the dearth of leadership in the implementation of the Outcomes Approach.

A qualitative approach was used for this research with some elements from the quantitative approach included in the analysis. The findings showed that in some cases the change of HoD influenced the department in a positive manner while in other cases it had negative results. Change management was conducted, to varying extents, in only some of the lead coordinating departments, as there was more reliance on the Outcomes Approach emanating from the National Development Plan. Responses that were obtained from the questionnaires indicated that leadership stability is important, some of the Outcome Facilitators felt that it could be disruptive, while others felt that there should be more fluidity in government. Most of the well-known change management models were developed before the onset of rapid change and the frequent change of HoDs; therefore, the Triple I Change Management Model was developed for this study. The Triple I Change Management Model is designed for the rapidly changing environment in which there is a frequent change of HoDs.