



Human Resources Development (HRD) Policy Issue in Kurdistan Region-Iraq

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Abstract

Education in Kurdistan faces many issues such as quality teachers, Technical Vocational colleges, and Human Resources Development issues. Education in Kurdistan Region- Iraq is planned and implemented in the form of policies. One of the policies is Human Resources Development (HRD) which is the focus of this paper. HRD policy is a key behind success of education. However, this aspect is not fully recognized in Kurdistan Region Education due to many factors such as bureaucracy and an ineffective system. Data was gathered from interviews with 17 policymakers and implementers. The data was analyzed through NVivo software to identify codes and concepts. The concepts are the main points that summarize the challenges which include poor organization structure, unclear instructions, dominance of top down strategy, excessive strategy, inadequate system, faulty implementation of policies, political interference, and so on. These concepts are needed to be addressed to solve the challenges.

Keywords: HRD, Policy Making, Policy Implementation, Grounded-Theory, Concepts, and Ineffective System.

1. Introduction

Education is an important, if not the most important, aspect of human life. Healthy human beings are endowed with ability to learn from early years after birth. Learning is a continuous endeavor that never stops. However, in the modern-world, education has become so essential that it needs to be regulated by the government in terms of education policies. UNESCO defines a policy as “An explicit or implicit single decision or group of decisions which may set out directives for guiding future decisions, initiate or retard action, or guide implementation of previous decisions” (Haddad, 1995). Despite an abundance of policies and instructions, there are still problems with implementation of those policies. Therefore, this paper attempts to find what the challenges are and how to solve them. The scope of this study is Human Resources Development, or HRD within MOE in KRI, which can cover the organization structure, implementation strategies, continuous professional development programs, evaluations, and HRD efficiency.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the rationales and aims used by the policy making officers in the Ministry of Education in designing HRD policy issue?
2. What are the underlying problems and solution strategies for each of HRD policy issue?
3. What are the organization structure, mechanism, strategies, and resources needed for implementing HRD policy issue appropriately?
4. What are the kinds of competencies and dispositions of both the implementers and target groups involved in HRD policy issue?
5. What are the constraints and challenges in implementing HRD policy issue?
6. What are the recommendations of the policymakers and implementers for improving HRD in the education center in KRI?



This paper consists of six sections. Section one introduces the topic and problem statement. Section two is expanding on the introduction with a background framework. Third section provides a literature review of policymaking and implementation. Section four is an overview of the methodology which include information about data collection, data analysis, and participants. Section five is a detailed presentation of the main findings in terms of concepts each of which refers to a challenge. It is followed by the main recommendations for improving HRD. Section seven is conclusion which briefly summarizes the main points.

2. Background of the Research

While nearly all governments emphasize the role of education and investing in education, not all governments achieve successful education for their individuals. Failure in providing quality education for the individuals of a country stems from many factors such as motive, lack of resources, lack of experts and expertise, lack of intellectual capital, poor economy, impact of war and internal conflicts, etc. Among the countries where education is lagging compared to developed countries is Iraq. Within Iraq, there is a recognized autonomous region called Kurdistan Region- Iraq (KRI) which is the focus of this research. Kurdistan region is located in northern Iraq, this region is known for being a safe place compared to south and middle areas of Iraq. The economy of Kurdistan region started to grow very fast after the fall of Saddam's oppressive regime in 2003. Despite having good economy until recently, Kurdistan region has partially failed to provide quality education for its residents. In a recent article published on The World Weekly website, the problem of Education in Kurdistan region is reported. The article calls the education situation in Kurdistan region a 'crisis'. The article, published in 2016, clearly points out many causes of the education crisis in Kurdistan region. Among the reasons for a lagging education, political interference, shortage of school buildings, and an outdated curriculum are reported. In another article published on May 2017 by Paul Iddon on The New Arab website, the freelance journalist reports on 'poverty, war, bureaucracy' as obstacles 'hindering Iraq's education sector'. The writer discusses the negative impact of bureaucracy on education in Iraq and Kurdistan. He wrote the article while Iraq was still fighting the Islamic State (ISIS). He mentions a decision by the Iraqi Ministry of Education. According to the decision, students who have missed two years of school are not return to school. He also mentions how many children were held captive by ISIS for more than two years. And then, he refers to the issue of bureaucracy in solving this issue. Another issue reported is the problem teachers' salaries not being paid in full or in time by Kurdistan Region Government (KRG). This problem has also been mentioned in a UNHCR, a UN Refugee Agency, by Michael Prendergast in 2016. The writer talks about the seriousness of the issue. He states that student numbers are high due to quarter million refugees from Syria and more than one million internally displaced Iraqis. At the time of writing this report, Kurdistan region teachers had been unpaid or partially paid for two years. In some areas of the region, teachers had boycotted, and continue periodically boycotting. This has had a negative impact on education.

This research was conducted in Kurdistan Region – Iraq (KRI). Kurdistan, an autonomous region or sub-country in northern Iraq, has an unshaken belief on the beneficial outcomes of development theory, putting a great trust on education and training for rebuilding itself economically and socially. Kurdistan specifically and Iraq in general have been partially incapacitated by the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) and the Operation Iraqi Freedom (March-May 2003). The Iran-Iraq War cost more US\$628 billion plus a casualty of more than one million soldiers on both sides (Iran-Iraq War: Facts & Summary in www.history.com, 28 March 2017). Both wars have devastated many cities and towns as well as socio-economic infrastructures in Iraq. The reconstruction process of Iraq and Kurdistan has begun since 2003 until 2017, with the help of the USA as well as its allies and world bodies—amid occasional clashes with Islamic militants. Despite US\$ 146 billion of Iraqi money and US\$60 billion aid by the USA government, the reconstruction process has not yield significant results for socio-economic



improvement due to misappropriation and corruption (David Wood, The HuffPost: Iraq Reconstruction Cost U.S. \$60 billion, Left Behind Corruption and Waste, March 6, 2013 in www.m.huffpost.com).

In education since 2003, the Kurdistan region has made remarkable progress in all aspects of its education system, comparing favorably with neighboring countries. According to a review by www.investinggroup.com, number of students increased substantially between 2003 to 2009 by about (98%). However, despite the increase in enrollment, 18.4% of Kurdistan population was still illiterate in 2009. Additionally, a total of 1,327 new schools had been built during the duration of 2005—2012, an average growth of 5% per year. However, indicators of students per class as well as schools working multiple shifts demonstrate the need for further improvements, especially in both quality and quantity of facilities and the education provided. In fact, many public schools had no choice but to run additional shifts (two to three shifts) or share buildings with other schools. Consequently, to accommodate multiple shifts, public schools were forced to reduce instructional period from five hours to four hours per session, thus impairing the quality of education. Nevertheless, students apply at thirteen public universities and eleven private ones after graduation from high schools. The number of university students were estimated at 115,000 in 2009. Public universities are tuition free in Kurdistan (Ministry of Planning of Kurdistan Regional Government, 2012).

This paper investigates the education policy issue of Human Resources Development (HRD). According to Swanson (1995), HRD is “the process of developing and/or unleashing human expertise through organization development and personal training and development for the purpose of improving performance” (p. 208). Swanson identifies two components of HRD which are (1) training and (2) organization development. Training encompasses the process of developing expertise in individuals, and organization development is the process of systematically implementing organizational change. The purpose of both components is improving performance. Thus, it can be seen from the above definition employees need continuous and abundant training to implement change within their organizations. While HRD is a very popular practice in developed countries, it is somehow neglected in developing countries, including KRI. Nearly all the policymakers and policy implementers complained about the amount of training they have received, or receive, in policy implementation and education practices.

The aim of HRD is the human resource development of officials in the Ministry of Education in order to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity of officers in performing their duties, and thus consequently accelerate whole scale the implementation of educational policies in Kurdistan. The major hindrances in policy implementation in any country are poor understanding or misinterpretation of policy goals, poor organization structure and mechanism, poor communication infrastructure, lack of training programs, lack of ownership and commitment of officers and bureaucrats, lack of funds and essential resources, and lack of knowledge and expertise of managers who monitor the implementation process (Hussin, 2002). Arguably it is necessary to have publicity and briefings on a policy to be implemented so that the public and officers are fully aware of policy goals, problems to be solved, and the desired outcomes and benefits. Raising awareness is the pre-condition for acceptance and motivation of people involved in a policy organization structure, or for acquiring public support and co-operation. Positive participation at every level of government machinery is needed in order to create a sense of ownership and citizenship, whereas on the other hand, a top-down directive usually creates a sense of authoritarian compulsion and detachment (Hill and Hupe, 2002). In this regard, the education officers, school heads, and teachers in Kurdistan should be engaged in human resource development programs via seminars and training sessions whenever an education policy is to be implemented on a large scale. In addition, positive disposition of officers in a government’s machinery is necessary to ensure success of a policy (van Meter and van Horn, 1997).



3. Literature Review

All the programs, initiatives, and policies in the (KRG) that have been done so far, especially post-2003, are to achieve a comprehensive development of the society encompassing political, economic, socio-cultural, educational, civil, and spiritual dimensions. This is indeed a monumental task, which requires an immense consolidation of citizenship conscience among the people as well as a major systematic change involving governance organization, reconstruction of socio-economic infrastructure, and improving human capital through a new developmental model of education and training. (Hussin, 2002). For the issue of Kurdistan, reconstruction of citizenship conscience should be the utmost agenda in the process of nation building because it could forge together cohesively the spirit of unity, loyalty, love, and commitment to the society

3.1. The Policy Making Process

Hussin (2002) defines policy as a decision on governance made by either government agencies or private organizations for certain purposes such as pursuing development of society, addressing certain critical issues, maintaining the progress and sustainability of organizations, enhancing the welfare of people, regulating the discipline of people, or allocating resources and benefits to the people. For the issue of a government, the decision is usually called public policy, which can be in the form of directives by various executive bodies, or laws passed by the law-making institutions, or general orders by the top-most leader. Public policy is a choice made by governments to undertake some course of actions, including do nothing or maintaining the status quo, in the interest of public welfare and well-being (Howlett and Ramesh, 2003). According to Matland (1995, p. 154), policy means “the programmatic activities formulated in response to an authority’s decision”. These activities include the programs and plans initiated by policy makers to implement the aspirations expressed by legitimating institutions. These institutions can be a government, a judicial agent, or an executive body. Hill and Hupe (2002) explained policy as an action taken or practiced by the government or leader considered to be beneficial or advantageous to the nation. According to this perspective, policy is a set of decisions taken by the top authority for a certain purpose. Hussin (2007) explained this purpose as “initiating a change of a situation or change of behaviors in the interest of welfare, order, development, and prosperity of a government or an organization” (p. 19).

3.2. Policy Implementation Process

Policies “have their own life cycle” (Hussin, 2007, p. 19), generally consisting of three major phases: formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Formulation of public policies varies from government to government; some adopt the democratic participation of interest groups, while some others adopt the elite top-down approach including top-level leaders or executives. In governments, the bureaucratic agencies of various types and levels are largely responsible for implementing policies formulated, and thus in this case, total comprehension of policy intent and content is critical for implementation. Policy implementation, according to O’Toole (2000), is “what develops between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of government to do something, or stop doing something, and the ultimate impact in the world of action” (p. 266). Gerston (2004) holds that implementation is a “follow-through” component of the policy making process and “represents the conscious conversion of policy plans into reality” (p. 94). Often times policies are not well-implemented due to poor understanding or misinterpretation of policy objectives and strategies, apart from constraints of resources and expertise.

3.3. Vision 2020 of Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)

After decades of political struggles since the 1920’s, Kurdistan gained its autonomy as a self-ruling regional government in 1992 and was recognized as a formal political entity under the authority of the Iraqi Constitution of 2005. From then onwards, Kurdistan launched many



development projects to improve its socio-economic infrastructure, funded by revenues derived largely from the oil and gas industry. The growth of the natural resources sector has inspired more education and scientific research in fields related to science, engineering and technology. In these ways and others, oil, gas and natural resources will serve as one of many enablers that will help the KRG to build a stable and secure society and a diversified, private-sector economy. The development plan report of the Ministry of Planning, Kurdistan Regional Government (2013) states:

The overall development vision of the Kurdistan Regional Government is a Kurdistan Region–Iraq where all the people enjoy the benefits of freedom, health, welfare, and economic security and opportunity (p. xii).

In order to further improve education, the Kurdistan Region has put forth several policy priorities for education such as follows (Ministry of Planning, KRG, 2013, p. 10-11):

Ensuring access to all levels of K-12 education. The government will develop and implement a program to build about 1,000 schools integrated across level and type of education in line with projected student growth and the need to decrease double-shift facilities. Public-private partnerships will be sought to accelerate the program of school construction and renovation.

Providing high quality K-12 education. This will include establishing a high-level committee to review and align academic and occupational curriculum standards across levels of education; increasing K-12 instructional time for students to international standards; reviewing curricula against the established standards; expanding the capacity to provide ongoing teacher development and train practicing teachers on the new curricula; developing curriculum implementation aids; reviewing the curriculum of basic teacher colleges to align with the basic education curriculum; and conducting pilot implementation programs with monitoring and evaluation. It will also include exploring participation in one or more international assessment program to benchmark KRI student learning against those of other countries.

Increasing relevance and success of technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Actions include improving the quality of TVET curricula, facilities and equipment, governance and teacher training at all levels, secondary tertiary, and adult; establishing a high level TVET-private sector coordinating institution to provide inputs in the design of occupational curricula and improve the quantitative match between occupational supply and demand; accounting for employer technical and employability requirements in the revisions of occupational curricula; expanding vocational education capacity and options for secondary students; placing career counselors in schools to advise students on education and career paths; establishing uniform TVET student qualification requirements that meet employer needs based on employer inputs; and coordinating the student-progression process from level to level to ensure that students receiving diplomas from secondary vocational education have the skills needed to continue to the tertiary level.

Increasing transparency and accountability. To achieve this goal, we need to develop and implement the following: (1) teacher evaluation and quality assurance programs at all levels of education; (2) a K-12 student achievement school report card for parents and the general public; (3) a Region-wide uniform standard occupational certificate for two-year technical institutes; (4) establishment of an Education Management Information System.

Building on improvements in higher education. The government will continue and accelerate improving quality; building links with international research centers; investing in people and infrastructure; fostering the independence of the universities; strengthening quality assurance, including establishing an institutional licensing and accreditation system; establishing polytechnic universities; continuing administrative reforms to limit bureaucracy and put students and staff first; and protecting human rights and social justice to improve the learning and working



environment. We will add to our curriculum reforms in languages, information technology (IT), and critical thinking and debate by enhancing our management training, which will benefit both the public and private sectors. Private colleges and universities can make an important contribution to education in the Region, for example by introducing innovative methods and new courses of study. The government will endeavor to continue to welcome them while ensuring that their quality is high.

4. Methodology

The research was conducted using classic grounded theory (CGT). A significant characteristic of CGT is for the researcher to suspend preconceived notions about the topic and allow a theory to emerge from the data collected. Glaser (1998) stated that grounded theory is “the systematic generation of theory from data” (p. 12). Data can be collected from any source such as brief conversations, lengthy interviews, magazines, books, articles, documents, newspapers, videos, artwork, music, photographs, surveys, and personal observations (Birks & Mills, 2011; Glaser, 1998).

My decision to choose CGT was based on the premise of the theory emerging from the data. Unlike many generic qualitative research methods, CGT does not set out to verify a theory, but rather to develop a theory from collected data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). CGT discovers a theory about patterns of behavior that resolve an area of primary concern for the participants in the substantive area (Glaser, 1998). This seemed like a logical approach to research in order to understand what behaviors impact successful aging.

4.1. Participants Selection

All the participants selected for this research were directly involved in either policymaking or policy implementation. Because any policy has two phases, both the policymakers and policy implementers had to be chosen and interviewed. The number of participants were seventeen.

Several criteria were used for selection of the participants. The first criterion was degree of involvement by the participants in the two phases of each policy. The second criterion was position of the participants, whether a policymaker or a policy implementer, whether a top official such as a minister or a school director. The criterion for selection of education officers, teachers, and administrators is seniority of work experience. The purpose of selecting participants that are more experienced is to get more reliable and authentic information. In addition, they were also the “well-informed” (Yin, 2009, p. 108) participants as compared to junior ones. Seventeen HRD policymakers and implementers were interviewed for HRD policy issue. Below is description of each of the interviewees:

HRD Policymaker #1

He is a professor and one of the most successful and well-known scholar and Physicians in the UK as well in Kurdistan. He is the founder of Middle East Research Institute and was holding the position of Ministry of Higher Education in Kurdistan. During his educational journey, regardless to resistance to change, he was able to make great change and educational development in our classical system. During his cabinet, he found Capacity Building Program in KRG, through this program he offered 4000 scholarships to the students to do their graduate studies abroad

HRD Policymaker #2

She is an educational expert and have her education background from the UK. As Cofounder of the Marcy Corp Educational Organization. It has been several years working with the UK Embassy, MOE of Iraq and Kurdistan in order to bring in some new forms and changes for the sake of educational improvement in the entire Iraq.

HRD Policymaker #3



He is dedicated scholars as well as senior teacher in Kurdistan. He left Kurdistan during 1990 and went to the UK. He got his Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology and Sociology. He is involving with policy making at the higher education ministry level. He became a professor at several universities in Kurdistan such as Soran University, Sulaymaniyah University, Salahaddin University, as well as in some UK's universities. Eventually he became vice President of Soran U, and member of the board at the Ministry of Higher Education.

HRD Policymaker #4

He started his educational journey through Baghdad University at the College of Education and became a teacher then director, inspectors, and eventually became Member of Education Committee at the Iraqi Parliament for two terms. He is well dedicated and aware of all educational aspects and activities, as well trying his best to support the MOE in Iraq and to correct all their wrong doing. However, the corrupted system in Iraq doesn't allow him and other experts to do their part properly for the sake of creating healthy environment. During his hard work with our supervision, we were able to accomplish the Law Project of Teacher's Protection and Rights.

HRD Policy Implementer #5

He is one of the Policy makers in Iraqi MoE as well general manager in Baghdad- the capital city of Iraq. He has a long history of serving in educational field, but the outcome of his hard efforts is similar to his colleagues.

HRD Policy Implementer #6

He is member of Iraqi Parliament at the Education Committee. He holds Ph. D in Islamic Studies from Malaysia University. He is well aware of modern and developed educational system around the world. Due to the challenges of the education field. He stopped working at the Education Committee and moved to Oil and Energy Committee.

HRD Policy Implementer #7

He used to be Mayor of Soran City in Erbil-Kurdistan, as well teacher for more than 15 years in Sweden. Through his long experience in education and management as well his strong knowledge and education, I found that he would be one of the important selections for interview and to learn from his views in this regard.

Educational Staff #8

He started his educational journey with teaching and then became a school director. After more than ten years, he became a division director at the MOE in KRG. After we found the District School in Rwanzz City during 2011, he was appointed as District School Director in Rwanzz.

Educational Staff #9

He is School Director at one of the villages at Rwanzz District School, he is working hard and has great passion and willingness to apply whatever he has to serve his students. He had some training and participation with some International NGOs and learned many skills and gained some new skills of ruling the school, especially for making strong connection with the community in order to influence them to cooperate with school system.

Educational Staff #10

He was teacher for about 10 years, then he became Chief of School Supervisors at Rwanzz District Schools. He runs the city center of Rwanzz, subdistrict city of Warte, and all schools of more than 50 villages.

Educational Staff #11

He is a School Director in Hawler-Kurdistan. He has long history of working at the education sector and working as teacher for more than 2 years, and school head for more than 15 years.

Educational Staff #12

She is the Director of Extension Department at the Ministry of Education in Baghdad. She was a teacher for several years and eventually she became a director.

Educational Staff #13



He Graduated from Sulaymaniyah University- College of Sport. In 2007, he was hired as a teacher at school districts, and he worked as Assistant Director and Student Counsellor at the Computer Institute in Kalar City in KRG for four years.

Educational Staff #14

His position is an Assistant Professor of Law. He is the Director of Law College and Founder of Law College at Soran University. He worked as professor at Soran University for several years, and later he became supervisor of the Law Collage. He is also member of Iraqi Parliament. He is considered one of the good legislators and policy makers.

Senior School Teacher #15

She is one of the most accomplished educators in Iraq's history, now she is special education advisor of the Ministry of Education in Baghdad-Iraq. She is well educated and has more than 40 years' experience in education. She is also member of the policy making board at the MOE- Baghdad-Iraq, and she was Ministry's representatives for many conferences abroad and locally.

Educational Staff #16

He has education background in engineering and has master's Degree in Information System. In 2000, he was hired at the Presidency of Salahaddin University. He was also assistant teacher, teaching computer science for three years, then his service was transferred to the City of Akre, and became the Head of Computer Institute in Akre for seven years. Now, he is a GM of Kurdistan Institutes at the MOE in KRG, and his duty is managing the entire institutes in Kurdistan Region for TVE.

Educational Staff #17

He graduated in 2007-2008 from Agriculture College in 2007, and was hired as a teacher. After that, the MOE transferred him to the Department of Supervising Environment. The environment is focusing on two sides, first working environment and second awareness and trainings of environment.

4.2. Data Collection Procedure

In this study, relatively a large amount of time and multiple methods for data collection were used to get a clearer and in-depth understanding of leadership behaviors, best practices and capitals in selected transformed schools. The researcher used in-depth semi-structure interviews. The interviews were the main source of data collection because of the nature of the study which is a grounded-theory approach. This approach is generating theory or findings from the data that comes from participants.

4.3. Interviews

Interviews can help researchers to get in-depth information from participants through interviewing. Merriam (2009) categorized interview 'by structure' as structured (standardized), semi-structured, and unstructured interviews (informal). The most used type of interview in qualitative research is a semi-structured interview (Merriam, 2009; Packer, 2011). The purpose of the semi-structured interview is rapport development and to encourage the participant to speak (Packer, 2011). It includes a mixture of more or less structured questions with a flexibility in wording or order of questions (Merriam, 2009). It allows the researcher to probe or respond to the situation at hand (Merriam, 2009).

Consequently, for this study, semi-structured interviews were used to get an in-depth insight and understanding of policy making and implementation in the KRG. Interview protocols were developed and checked for their suitability by senior officers in the administration system. However, flexibility in questions remained throughout the interviewing process. Probing questions were used where required. Not only this but also interviews with the consent of the participants were recorded in order to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the response of participants. For this purpose, two quality tape recorders were used to minimize obstacle during the interview, and the researcher took notes during interview sessions. Then the



recorded interviews were transcribed for analysis. The site and time of the interviews were decided on the basis of willingness and convenience of participants.

4.4. Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis are a simultaneous process in qualitative research that starts from the first day of data collection (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data collected through interviews, observation and documents were consolidated, reduced and interpreted to make sense of them (Merriam, 2009). Since this research was done using grounded theory, the following initial steps were taken during data collection and analysis:

1. Theoretical Coding: Theoretical codes conceptualize the relationship between substantive codes through the use of Glaser's (1998) coding families which are similar codes combined.
2. Sorting and Theoretical Outline: Fundamental to creating a theoretical framework is sorting memos. The memos are sorted based on emerging theory and by the relationship between the concepts. The theoretical outline with the memos sorted into the outline was the first draft of the final write up. The next stage was to refine the write-up into a final product.
3. Writing: The goal was to discover an emergent theory to better understand how individuals manage issues and challenges of policymaking and implementation, and effectively communicate the theory in a final write-up.

The analysis process of this study was mainly based on Miles and Huberman (1994) and Corbin and Strauss (1990) data analysis procedures. The researcher began with open coding, because of the exploratory nature of the study, every bit of data that seemed to be useful was selected (Merriam, 2009). The selected codes were labelled keeping in mind the research questions and conceptual framework of the study. Then, the researcher proceeded to axial coding and reanalyzed all codes and aggregate similar codes together to form potential categories. The repetitive words used in codes were examined to form categories as well as codes giving meaning were collated together. The codes emerged from data through open coding constant comparison was used to find similarities and differences. The similar codes were combined to form categories and subcategories. The final stage of coding, selective coding, is where the researcher identified the core themes.

5. Findings

Human Resources Development (HRD) policy was the issue that was addressed in this study. It was analyzed in two main phases: policy making phase and policy implementation phase. The first phase was classified to policy goals and policy problems and solutions. The second phase was the implementation phase which was categorized according to research questions one, two, and three: organization structure, competencies and dispositions, and challenges.

The findings in this paper came about after applying a grounded-theory approach of analysis. In this approach, the data gathered and classified into concepts. Strauss and Corbin (1990) outline procedures and canons of grounded theory. There they state "concepts are the basic units of analysis. A theorist works with conceptualizations of data, not the actual data per se" (p. 7). Therefore, the findings are presented in terms of concepts, each of the concepts stands for a challenge that faces HRD in KRI education. Below are the main challenges or concepts according to the interviewees.

Organization Structure

According to the participants, organization structure is an important aspect for holding the components of the ministries together. It is what makes the operations systematic for smooth flow



of the work load. Most of the policy makers and implementers criticized the organization structure of MoE and MHE as inadequate and full of shortcomings. Several of the policy implementers stated that there is no organization structure. The operations run by the ministries are not planned. It is based on random and old structure. There are many examples of poor organization structure. For example, policy making is done by officials at top positions without communication with lower level officials. Implementation, in the same way, is top down. Policy implementers called for more authority to be given to policy implementers starting with teachers, school administrators and all the way up. Another example is having teachers teach classes that are not their specialties. Poor policy implementation is very obvious in all ministries of KRG; however, it is less problematic in private schools, colleges and corporates because in the private sector there is monitoring, evaluation and accountability, aspects which are absent in KRG public institutes. Policy implementers called for change in all aspects of KRG structure to be more modern, especially in ministries of Education and Higher Education.

Clarity

The policymakers criticized the organizational structure, goals, instructions, plans and other aspects as not being clear enough. The lack of special programs and having no plans for educational process was reiterated by the participants. A policy implementer called the organization structure for teacher improvement policy unclear. More importantly, instructions for understanding policies and their implementation are not clear for the implementers. The documents in which policies are written are not available for review. Most of the implementers stated they have not received any documents or instructions.

Top-down Implementation

Policymakers and implementers from public center asserted that all policy implementations are top-down. This is a drawback to policies that have many shortcomings. It may be the reason why there is so much confusion among the policymakers and implementers. The policymakers make decisions from ministerial level without returning to the lower levels. Therefore, when there is a disconnection between the two levels, there will be faulty implementation, poor organizational structure and lack of clarity. In many places of the interview answers the policymakers called for more authority for school leaders so they can make decisions regarding hiring and retaining teachers. These calls stem from lack of authority bottom-up which is the norm in developed countries where individuals at top positions may have their position temporarily but the bottom employees such as school teachers and leaders remain in their positions for a long time. Therefore, lower level employees know more about the issues than the upper level employees. That is the reason why policy implementation should be reviewed in KRI to better serve the education system and stake holders.

Excessive Bureaucracy

The purpose of HRD is to ensure that there is an adequate number of individuals with high competencies within the educational setting to improve function and performance. HRD policymaking and implementation has many obstacles in its way. The first issue, so common to HRD that it emerged as a concept, is government bureaucracy. The four HRD policymakers interviewed expressed their frustration with excessive red tape and bureaucracy. They stated that the excessive processes have become a hindrance rather than help in implementing all policies especially HRD policy. One policymaker attributed this excessive red tape to the nature of organization structure within the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education in which the system is highly centralized with limited authority to the lower level institutions such as schools or universities.

Inadequate System



HRD policymakers also expressed frustration over the administrative system. They stated that the system is completely inadequate. One policymaker gave the example of hiring new teachers. He stated that in developed countries there is comprehensive background check for the new hires, in Kurdistan however, individuals are hired easily without being checked for their readiness to be in the position they have applied at. The whole recruiting system is not merit based. According to this policymaker, there must be a system of reward and punishment for recruiting. Individuals must be hired by contract, short or long term, with rights and responsibilities. Then, those individuals can be promoted or resigned based on their performance. Another policymaker talked about the issue of planning. He stated that programs are not planned, or not clear when planned. He mentioned that planning must be based on research and data analysis. The plans need to be comprehensive and long term. However, it is not the case in Kurdistan education setting because the system is 'stagnant' and not being developed. Individuals perform their duties according to traditions rather than professional customer service. Moreover, as the same policymaker mentioned, in European Union countries there are clear connection between objectives of academia and supporting administrative staff who are professionals and know what they do.

Faulty Implementation

While policies are being designed all the time, and the policymakers claim they are trying to improve policies in the KRG education system, policy implementers complain that policies are designed and written, but not implemented, or the implementation is faulty and has many challenges. The policymakers addressed the main challenges in the way of implementation. For example, there is not clear job description for the implementers. Officials, directors, general managers do not fully know their duties. There is no clear organizational structure within the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, both responsible for education. The duties are not assigned to the right people. Policy implementation is not systematic, rather it is random. There is no clear distinction between top-down and bottom-up implementation. This bad implementation has created a chaos in the education. Each person does things differently, rather than following directions and instruction because there is poor monitoring of policy implementation and lack of training for policy implementers.

Political Interference

Political interference has been, and still is, a major problem in all the areas of government. It is very evident in the field of education. It has hindered good education for years. Political interference is a bad form of corruption that hinders good educational and teacher policies. Even in the presence of a good drafted policy, political interference does not let the policy to be implemented properly. There are many examples of political interference in the KRG education system. For instance, teachers need political clearance and solicitation to be hired. If a teacher refuses to declare political affiliation, they will most probably not be hired or supported. Politically affiliated teachers get good positions regardless of their ability to teach. The opposite is true, politically independent teachers face difficulties in the hiring process and at work place. The system is political rather than merit based. This political interference is evident not only within the scope of lower positions such as teachers, but it deeply rooted in all governmental positions, even higher positions such as government ministries. This issue was addressed and criticized by the policymakers and implementers as well. However, it can be noted in the interview excerpts how the officials belonging to political parties defend the government. They refuse to admit problems.

Right Person at Right Position

An issue that stems from corruption and political interference is the problem of not having the right person in the right position. Because hiring is mainly based on political affiliation, it is not common to have people in positions they deserve to be, especially in higher positions. This is



a big issue that is felt but not addressed because political parties do not question the people they put in high positions. Worse than that is when political parties cover the mistakes their appointed officials make in government positions because they do not want to admit fault. In developed countries, the top officials and lawmakers watch over government performance and question officials over failed policies and implementation. It is very common in these countries to see change of officials, retiring them or even resigning them. If we want improvement, we should start acting like professionals and question officials' performance. We must put aside political affiliation and personal ties and focus on performance. We must periodically make changes in government positions, the high positions, so that people in those positions do not feel they can stay there forever. We must also not feel shy in changing officials due to personal ties.

Recruitment and Retention

It is a fact that in KRI institutions hiring employees is not based on a selective process, rather, it is based on personal connections and political interference. If someone is supported by political parties and officials, they can easily be appointed at different levels of government. This recruiting criterion is not uncommon to teachers and educational officers. All the people applying for teaching positions need a degree to bypass the legal requirement. Besides that, to get appointed in a public institute, school or university, political influence is needed. Policy implementers called for changing policies and recruitment procedures to suit international criteria. They also stated that teachers, specifically, need to be hired based on their qualifications rather than any other factors. Qualifications should include academic, ethical, moral, and psychological factors. Teachers should be knowledgeable in their fields and should have good ethical and moral attitudes. They must have good psychological skills in dealing with students' behavior as school is a place for both knowledge and manners. When teachers are hired, they should be monitored and evaluated for their performance. This can be done by looking at student achievement and behavior. It should also be done through their feedback, especially at higher education institutes as it is the norm in advanced countries.

HRD Efficiency

HRD efficiency was another concept that emerged from the interview data obtained from the participants who discussed it deeply. Among the discussion ideas that emerged were strategies that should be employed in planning and implementation of policies. According to the participant interviewees, all operations and plans should be based on long term needs and strategies. Another idea raised was rotating employees including teachers in higher education. Admission procedures and rules to be changed was another important suggestion. Admission must be based on desire besides grades that should be treated competitively. Policy implementers must work as a team and from bottom-up to top officials. Training officials, teachers, and employees was considered a necessity for improving HRD.

Evaluations

Evaluation is an essential part of HRD. It keeps individuals with competencies at work and reforms administrative staff for better performance. It is necessary to have teachers evaluated and employees monitored to ensure they do not feel they own their positions and ensure they earn their credits and compensations. There are evaluation procedures at both K-12 and higher education. At the level of K-12 system, there is an evaluation system that has been in place since the early establishment of the Ministry of Education. In this system, there are experienced teachers, called supervisors, whose duty is to visit schools unannounced to evaluate and assess teachers' performance and give feedback. However, as one policymaker pointed out, this system is not working properly because there are not enough expert supervisors to assess teacher performance. At higher education level, a system of student feedback has been adopted. It is called quality assurance by which it is meant to keep quality performance of the teachers. It is not



seen as a bad system; however, some policy makers and implementers complained that the results are not used or applied in dealing with findings to promote teachers or criticize them.

CPD Programs

Continuous professional development programs are necessary for keeping HRD effective in advanced countries. Participant interviewees spoke highly of the need for these programs but also complained about lack of employing them. Therefore, it is important that official specialized in HRD issues consider improving those programs and offering them in the form of training courses and workshops as described by policy implementers. Moreover, in the same way teachers were encouraged by the interviewees to participate in training courses, HRD employees were also advised by policy makers and implementers to continue their professional development through self-study, feedback from other employees, participation in CPD programs, and reading.

6. Improving HRD

Human resources development is what governs teachers and educational institutes such as schools and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. Therefore, good HRD policies can help improve the other policy issues. To improve HRD policy in KRI, the policymakers and implementers were enthusiastic in proposing their ideas for better change. To improve HRD policies, following are the main points raised by interviewees:

1. Organization structure of educational institutions should be improved to better serve implementation of policies.
2. Policy implementation instructions must be clarified when given to policy implementers.
3. More focus should be given to bottom-up policy implementations since the current approach is all top-down especially in public sector.
4. CPD programs should be encouraged and improved to train policy implementers and enrich their knowledge of the current policies.
5. Bureaucracy and government red-tape should be decreased and eventually eliminated to ensure policies are implemented properly without hurdles.
6. There should be more communication to solve the disconnection between the concerned government authorities on education, especially between MoE and MHE.
7. Teacher recruitment and retention must be improved. There should be criteria for hiring teachers based on their expertise and knowledge rather than on their political affiliations.
8. Right person must be in the right position. Political interference must be eliminated.
9. Evaluation programs must be reformed to be compatible with the modern evaluation indicators for teachers and supervisors

7. Conclusion

This set out to explore the challenges that face policymaking and policy implementation in regard to Human Resources Development (HRD). The paper introduced the topic and problem statement with a background to the research including the research question. This paper adopted a grounded-theory approach to analysis of data that came from 17 participant interviews. Grounded-theory approach attempts to find answers to research questions by generating results from the data. Data source for this paper solely came from detailed interviews with policymakers and implementers. According to the participants many challenges face HRD in Kurdistan Region-Iraq. These challenges come with the idea of improving the education sector in Kurdistan region. The main findings were combined and summarized into concepts (challenges). According to data from the participants, HRD suffers from the following problems: the system is centralized and bureaucratic, there is little room for efficiency. HRD in Kurdistan educational setting is, if there is any, inadequate. There is no evaluation system from bottom-down to top. There are no clear organizational goals. There are not efficient criteria for hiring and recruiting graduates and professionals. There is lack of experts to do evaluations. To improve HRD performance, it was



recommended that KRG activate modern and systematic programs integrated with the governance systym of KRG.

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پوخته

له كوردستاندا كۆمه لێك كێشه روبه پوی په روه رده ده بنه وه به تايبه تی له بواری مامۆستای جۆری ، په یمانگا و كۆلیزه كانی ته كینکی و، و سه رچاوه گه شه پیدانی مرۆی. په روه رده له كوردستانی عێراق به شیوه ی رێنمایی و جێبه جێکردنی رێنماییه کان دارێژراوه. یه كێك له م رێنماییانه سه رچاوه ی گه شه پیدانی مرۆی یه كه له م لیکۆلینه وه یه دا تیشکی خراوه ته سه ر. سه رچاوه ی گه شه پیدانی مرۆی کلیل سه ركه وتنه له بواری په روه رده و به پێوه بردندا. ئه م لایه نه له كوردستان بایه خێ پینه دراوه و فه رامۆش کراوه به هۆی بیروکراسیه ت و نه بونی سیسته می کارا. زانیاریه کان له میانه ی دیداری راسته وخۆ له گه ل ۱۷ له دارێژه ران و جێبه جێکارانی رێنماییه کان په روه رده یی وه رگیرون. به رنامه ی (ئین قیفۆ) به کار هاتوه بۆ شیکردنه وه ی زانیاریه کان و پیناسه کردن و دیارکردنی کۆده کان و چمکه کان.

ملخص

یواجه التعليم في كردستان مجموعه من التحديات والعقبات في العديد من المجالات مثل جودة المعلمين، و المعاهد و الكليات المهنية و التقنية ، وقضايا تنمية الموارد البشرية. في اقليم كردستان - العراق يتم التخطيط وتطبيق للتعليم من خلال سياسات التعليميه. واحدة من هذه السياسات هي تنمية الموارد البشرية (HRD) والتي هي محور هذا البحث. يعتبر سياسة تنمية الموارد البشرية مفتاح اساسي وراء نجاح التعليم والاداره. ومع ذلك ، فإن هذا الجانب مهم و لا يوجد اهتمام به بشكل كامل في إقليم كردستان بسبب العديد من العوامل مثل البيروقراطية والنظام غير الفعال. تم جمع البيانات من مقابلات مع 17 من مشرعين السياسات والمنفذين في مجال السياسات التعليميه. تم تحليل البيانات من خلال برنامج NVivo لتحديد و تعريف الرموز والمفاهيم.