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Exploring the organizational culture of higher education institutions in Vietnam from faculty's perspective – a case study

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Abstract: *This research aims to explore the nature of organizational culture in the context of the higher education sector in Vietnam. This study hopes to enrich literature on organizational culture, the organizational culture of higher education institutions, and relevant themes in the context of Vietnam. In this research, qualitative methods and a single-case holistic type are chosen to help fulfill the purposes of this study. The findings show that in higher education institutions in Vietnam, morality, professional knowledge, and the teaching methodologies of faculty are the most important values. Additionally, hierarchical order and university rules and decisions should be respected, and faculty members are believed to be role models for students. There is also the emergence of the elements of relationships, salary, and promotion as important components of culture.*

Keywords: *Organizational culture, higher education institutions in Vietnam, teacher training, cultural dimensions, levels of organizational culture*

Introduction

It is essential to understand organizational culture when investigating organizational life (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). This is because culture is the single largest factor that can hinder the development and change of an organization (Gwaltney, 2013). Empirical evidence also suggests that organizational culture has a strong impact on employee attitudes and organizational effectiveness (Gregory et al., 2009). In the domain of higher education, Tierney (1988) claimed that investigating the culture of higher education institutions "equips us to understand and, hopefully, reduce adversarial relationships" (p. 5). In the 1960s, research on the organizational culture of higher education institutions increased with the emergence of large research projects focusing on it (Clark, 1963; Clark & Trow, 1966). However, the study of the organizational culture of universities in particular and the culture of organizations in general only truly became prominent at the end of the 1980s, when it gained the attention of many researchers and various research works on the subject were introduced (Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984; Barley et al., 1988; Denison, 1990).

The higher education system in Vietnam currently has four levels: college, undergraduate, master, and doctorate (World Bank, 2005). Higher education in Vietnam is provided by universities, colleges and academic research institutes. There are different kinds of universities in Vietnam such as technical universities, agricultural universities, and medical universities. Colleges (called Cao Dang in Vietnamese) are those that offer three-year training programs, while universities offer four-to-six-year undergraduate programs, and some also have masters and doctorate programs (Nuffic, 2015). In the 2017–2018 academic year, Vietnam had 235 universities (not including those in the security and defense sectors), 170 of which were public institutes and 65 of which were non-public institutes (The Ministry of Education and Training, 2019).

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As a whole, Vietnam's higher education has a long history with many marked changes caused by national strategies and external impacts. As a consequence of foreign influences, traditional Vietnamese higher education institutions are still "heavily influenced by the 'ivory-tower' education from the ancient Chinese, the 'academic' education from the French and the strong research oriented higher education from the former Soviet Union" (Pham, 2001, p. 55). Also, it is worth noting that although Vietnam has been greatly influenced by foreign factors, it is very distinctive in its culture, traditions, and beliefs (Borton, 2000).

Vietnamese higher education institutions are not given much freedom and are state controlled. As Dao and Hayden (2015) indicated, "in Vietnam, public universities and colleges are not generally able to make their own decisions, especially about matters that are fundamentally important to them as academic communities" (p. 323). Important fields in public institutions (except for the two national universities—Vietnam National University in Hanoi and Vietnam National University in Ho Chi Minh City), such as training programs, curriculum frameworks, enrollment quotas, expenditure norms, and capital expenditure, are still made by the state. However, now there are 23 public higher education institutions that have been given autonomy under a pilot program begun in 2015. This means that these institutions are allowed to make their own decisions, but their tuition fees cannot exceed the ceilings imposed by the government (Vo & Laking, 2020). Similarly, non-public higher education institutions are also bonded to many of these rules to a very high extent (Hayden & Lam, 2010). When it comes to administrative systems, with the exception of the two national universities and a few leading institutes supervised directly by the Prime Minister's Office, most higher education institutions are controlled by different ministries, mainly the Ministry of Education and Training, as well as by state instrumentalities, including state corporations and in many cases provincial governments, mainly the Ministry of Education and Training. These ministries and state instrumentalities advise the government about national policy formulation, national target setting, and financing for higher education (Hayden & Lam, 2007).

In investigating the governance of Vietnamese higher education, Dao and Hayden (2010), Dao (2009), and Pham (2010) identified cultural aspects related to the rector of a university in Vietnam, who is believed to have a decisive role in almost all of the university's activities, including "developing the long-term academic plan for the institution, establishing regulations for the institution's organization and performance, creating academic structures, managing the budget, providing training and development for academic staff and allocating academic titles" (Dao, 2009, p. 48). In higher education institutions, the power of rectors "will remain forever circumscribed by Communist Party policies and processes and a state disposition to govern by means of tight regulatory control" (Pham, 2010, p. 55). Some researchers, such as Pham and Hayden (2019) and Le (2016), also mentioned the existence of "political taboos" in the Vietnamese university environment. Specifically, lecturers often have to pay attention during their teaching and research activities to whether they act with political sensitivity or not, as political censorship exists in Vietnamese universities. In general, Vietnamese higher education institutions are believed to lack connection with external stakeholders. Traditionally, it is only the government that they are accountable to since they receive annual funding from the state (Vallely & Wilkinson, 2008). The cooperation with the private sector and foreign partners in different aspects such as research and technology commercialization and training is also limited. This is partly because of the absence of necessary facilities, flexible policies for attracting outside investment and collaboration, and a tradition of cooperation and information sharing (Spoo & Dao, 2010). Due to the existing funding mechanism, there is also a lack of financial incentives to invest in cooperation programs in many public higher education institutions. Moreover, generally in Vietnam higher education institutions are too narrowly focused on professional training and certification, to the neglect of their other roles. It is not surprising that the public is generally disappointed in them (Pham, 2010). There is also distrust of industry in relation to intellectual property issues when having joint projects with higher education institutions (Spoo & Dao, 2010). Le (2016), while exploring academic culture and academic identity in Vietnam's higher education system, partly showed some features of the organizational culture of Vietnamese institutions, particularly of four

leading, research-oriented universities, with the use of Tierney's (1988) perspective on organizational culture. The study showed that although the missions of universities vary in their direction of interest in research, there is a large gap between the missions proposed and the reality of life in academic departments. Socialization is formed mainly from the work of lecturers in the faculty instead of from the influence of the university. Information flow in the selected universities is generally efficient, and the Internet is considered to be especially useful in helping faculty members stay informed. Regarding decision-making strategies, despite there being both some support and opposition, the majority of participants showed no interest in the topic. The universities chosen in the research were also said to lack an effective management system or process to recognize faculty contributions.

However, research relevant to the organizational culture of Vietnamese higher education institutions mainly investigates a few cultural aspects instead of presenting a comprehensive picture of the culture of these organizations and the researchers rarely go into depth to explain why certain cultural features exist. Additionally, although taking cultural considerations into account, some studies do not consider organizational culture as their focus, and therefore, only a few aspects of organizational culture are mentioned in passing. This study aims to take features of current research on organizational culture and relevant themes as well as the importance of understanding the culture of a higher education institution into account as it discloses what comprises the organizational culture of Vietnamese higher education institutions. The research results will help to create a better understanding of matters related to the organization and management of Vietnamese higher education and serve as a basis for stakeholders to create effective solutions to develop this sector. This study also aims to enrich the number of studies on organizational culture, the culture of higher education institutions, and relevant themes in the context of Vietnam, especially in relation to what are considered to be core values in the organizational culture of a Vietnamese public university, and more specifically, of a teacher training institution.

Theoretical and Analytical Framework for Exploring Organizational Culture

Compared with other theories about organizational culture, Schein's three-level theory (Schein, 2010) has so far been regarded as the most useful classification in which aspects of organizational culture have been put into usable groupings (Ott, 1989). Many researchers, such as Siehl and Martin (1984) and Sathe (1985), applied this theory to their projects on matters related to organizations. The use of Schein's theory is so common that it can be seen as an indication of the start of "a badly needed movement toward general agreement on a conceptual definition of organizational culture" (Ott, 1989, p. 61).

According to the model created by Schein (2010), organizational culture consists of three levels with various features, including artifacts and creations, values, and basic assumptions. Level 1 of organizational culture—artifacts—consists of the constructed physical and social environment of an organization that can be seen, heard, or felt when an individual interacts with the organization. Level 2 of organizational culture consists of shared beliefs and values. Constructs of organizational culture in level 2 include ethos, philosophies, ideologies, ethical and moral codes, attitudes, strategies, and goals that are shared by the organization's members (Ott, 1989). Level 2 is a deeper layer than level 1 in that it consists of less visible elements, which are often expressed in official philosophies of the organization and public statements made by its leaders. Level 3—basic underlying assumptions or values in use—is the deepest layer and the most important level of organizational culture. Schein (2010) defined basic assumptions as fundamental beliefs, values, and perceptions that "have become so taken for granted that one finds little variation within a cultural unit" (Schein, 2010). These implicit assumptions guide behavior and tell group members how to perceive, think about, and feel about things (Argyris & Schon, 1974; Argyris, 1976).

This research specifically chose the framework developed by Tierney (1988) to analyze organizational culture. This framework is based on data gathered from higher education institutions entirely in the United States and has been used by various researchers when they conducted

research on cultural issues in the context of higher education institutions, such as Bartell (2003) and Haftu (2015). There is no emphasis on conflicts or irresolvable tensions of different dimensions of organizational culture in this framework; instead, it explores this type of culture from the integration approach with the hope that it is easier for leaders to make and implement their decisions once they have a complete and accurate understanding of the organization's culture. There are six dimensions in this framework: environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership (Tierney, 1988). According to Tierney (1988), each of these dimensions examines different core issues in an organization's culture from a variety of angles.

This research aimed to use this framework to reveal different levels of the organizational culture of Vietnamese higher education institutions. In order to examine level 1 of the six dimensions, the research used questions that can discover measurable objects, such as "What is?", "Who is?", and "How is it done?" Based on the features of organizational culture in this level as presented by Schein (2010), level 2 answers the question of "What ought to be done (communicated, explained, rationalized, and justified)?" Since level 2 explores perceptions about the activities that people are expected to do in the organization in all aspects, this level was explored in the six dimensions. Regarding level 3, basic values primarily answer the question of "How do you do (perceive, think about, and feel about) things in reality?" In addition to comparing what is regarded as beliefs and values with what really exists in the environment, this research also explored the matter of perception (Schein, 2010). To be specific, this study asked lecturers about the deeper causes of the formation and existence of their expected behavior, values, and beliefs at the university. Similarly, in discussing ways of revealing the deepest layer of organizational culture, Cameron and Freeman (1991) suggested that "underlying assumptions related to organizational culture are more likely to emerge from questions that ask respondents to react to already-constructed descriptions of organizations than from questions asking respondents to generate the descriptions themselves" (p. 32). The analytical framework used in this research is illustrated in Figure 1. The dimensions in the analytical framework are divided by broken lines to reflect the blurred boundaries of the dimensions, as culture is an interconnected web of relationships (Tierney, 1988).

Figure 1. Organizational Culture (Tierney, 1988)

Research Methodology

Research Design

Qualitative methods were chosen for this study to explore the research topic for a number of reasons. Since this study aims to understand the ideas of individuals, it is necessary to have a wide range

of opinions, which can be examined with less difficulty by using qualitative methods than by using quantitative methods (Tettey, 2006). Another point is that organizational culture is very complicated, and values or basic assumptions as representations of organizational culture are hard to measure. However, many scholars admitted in their qualitative analyses that these claims would be useful (Cui & Hu, 2012). To be more specific, Schein (1990) emphasized that culture is always dynamic and includes all aspects of human functioning; therefore, he recommended using interviews and observation to understand basic assumptions, which are very abstract.

Amongst different research designs in qualitative research, in Yin's view (2014), case studies are appropriate when researchers intend to examine a phenomenon with contextual impacts or when the research problem is a phenomenon in a natural context. In addition, case studies are well suited to studies seeking personal insights into a complex phenomenon (Morse & McEvoy, 2014). In this research, organizational culture is a phenomenon in need of investigation, the context is a specific university, and faculty's ideas about their organizational culture are collected. When taking these typical aspects of case studies and unique features of this study into account, the research found that case study research is the right choice.

Case Study

In this research, one public university in Vietnam was chosen as a case study—UE. This is a teacher training university whose main campus is located in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Currently, UE has about 1,000 staff, of which nearly 700 are faculty members. This university was selected as a case study from among more than 200 universities and colleges in Vietnam for a number of reasons. First, the selection of a public institution can represent the overall picture of higher education in Vietnam since public institutions occupy more than two-thirds of the total number of Vietnamese higher education institutions (The Ministry of Education and Training, 2019). In addition, this is a long-established university. Although its operation was licensed in 1976, the university was originally established in 1957. This means that some cultural aspects of the institution have likely been kept since then, especially given that the organization is still functioning as a teacher training institution as it was when it was established. Hence, it is possible to see many of its cultural aspects, some of which take time to form and survive (Ceauşu et al., 2017; Alvesson & Sveningsson, 2008).

Because the case study is a teacher training institution, cultural aspects reflected by the research may not be found in other higher education institutions, as Clark (1983) indicated that lecturers describe themselves, their work, and their purposes as being influenced by disciplinary culture. Hence, ambitious generalizations of ideas gathered from faculty members of this organization to many universities need careful consideration, especially given that most higher education institutes in Vietnam are mono-disciplinary (Le & Hayden, 2017; Hayden & Lam, 2010).

Participants

The researcher interviewed eight faculty members of the university. All participants in this study have been working at the university for at least four years and do not hold any managerial positions. The criterion on tenure is set to ensure the interviewees can deeply understand the culture of their institute after having accessed many of its facets. Those who have management positions on the departmental level or institutional level are not selected for the research because organizational culture studies show that the view of those holding a high position in an organization about organizational culture is different from that of non-leaders. Leadership comes with power and responsibility to shape culture, while employees mainly reflect their own views on and show their behavior in that culture (Cubero, 2007; Avolio et al., 2009; Maner & Mead, 2010; Liden et al., 2014). In addition to fulfilling the criteria established, the study also selected faculty from various departments to ensure the inclusion of the views of various faculty with different professional backgrounds as well as to see the overall impact of organizational culture. Gender ratios were also noted, but this

is not the focus area of the topic. The research used alternative terms—the names of the groups of departments categorized by the university—to represent the participants' department names to ensure confidentiality. Details about the participants are summarized in the following table.

Table 1. Background information of the participants

Interviewees	Gender	Tenure	The groups of departments
Interviewee 1	Female	6 years to less than 7 years	Educational specialization
Interviewee 2	Female	6 years to less than 7 years	Social sciences
Interviewee 3	Male	8 years to less than 9 years	Natural sciences
Interviewee 4	Male	5 years to less than 6 years	Social sciences
Interviewee 5	Female	4 years to less than 5 years	Educational specialization
Interviewee 6	Female	5 years to less than 6 years	Natural sciences
Interviewee 7	Female	5 years to less than 6 years	Foreign languages
Interviewee 8	Female	7 years to less than 8 years	Educational specialization

Lecturers who satisfied the established criteria were contacted via their email addresses, which are available on the university website, for permission to interview them. In the emails sent to them, information on the research topic, the purpose of the research, and other aspects related to the interview and the participant of the interview were provided. Then, those who agreed to participate in the interview were asked about the time and location that were convenient for them. Participants were given the choice of location and time for their interviews. Selected places needed to be private and silent enough so that interviewees could feel comfortable sharing information and so information could be collected and recorded accurately. These conditions also allowed the participants to listen carefully to the questions and not to be distracted during the interviews. All of the interviews were conducted face to face in Vietnamese in 2019 in rooms for lecturers on campus, and the author translated all of the recorded transcripts into English. Among the eight interviews conducted, the longest one lasted for two hours, while the shortest one lasted fifty minutes. The average time of the official interviews was one hour.

Trustworthiness

Regarding research using qualitative methods, achieving saturation is considered by many researchers as a way to increase the trustworthiness of a study (Denzin, 2012; Yin, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015). According to Dworkin (2012), the number normally believed to be sufficient for a qualitative case study ranges from 5 to 50. However, saturation does not occur within this range in all cases. There are eight interviewees in this study, which is within the range recommended by Dworkin (2012), but in fact after the seventh interview, the information provided did not show anything new compared with that in the previous interviews. It is probable that information reached the saturation level. Nonetheless, as one of the characteristics of qualitative methods, it is possible that unreachable participants can provide new information. Therefore, the information provided should be understood in a certain context and with the view that many organizations "can more correctly be viewed in terms of multiple, cross-cutting cultural contexts changing through time, rather than as a stable, bounded, homogenous culture" (Gregory, 1983, p. 365).

The use of member checking is another way to increase the trustworthiness of a study (Creswell & Miller, 2000). In this research, after the data analysis was completed, the author shared the transcript, coding, interpreted information, and translation from Vietnamese into English with the participants to receive comments and feedback on them. This research also designed and used a

protocol (interview schedule) for the interview to help the author follow the same process in each interview and use well-designed questions for the right audience, which ensures the consistency of the research (Russell et al., 2011). Apart from that, the researcher spent a prolonged time in the field to make sure that data gathered were trustworthy, as Creswell and Miller (2000) recommended. Specifically, the participants were asked to spare enough time to thoroughly explore various aspects of the topic in the interviews. After that, the author kept in touch with the interviewees and continued to exchange information if necessary.

Findings

To perform thematic analysis, researchers often use two approaches, including the deductive and inductive approaches (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). The first approach relies on a literature review to prioritize themes before the analysis begins, while the latter refers to finding themes that emerge during and after data analysis. In this study, based on the literature review and the analytical framework, six major themes were created that correspond to the six dimensions of the organizational culture of a university. Though starting from these themes, the research also looked for new themes or sub-themes that might emerge during and after the analysis. In addition to utilizing constant comparison analyses, the research conducted negative case analyses if there were any contradictions in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the data gathered, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Environment

Level 1

All of the interviewees believed that the university has an "*ideal geographical position*". To be specific, it has "*commercial, cultural and academic values as a miniature learning center of the city*" (Interviewee 2), or it exists in "*an educational hub*" (Interviewee 8). Hence, Interviewee 2 thought "*this is an ideal environment for educational activities*."

Level 2 and 3

Working in the environment with these features, the organization members always pay attention to their behavior and costume even though the university does not have uniform rules for its staff members. Specifically, in an educational environment, the university faculty try to form a "habit" of having appropriate and "exemplary" behavior. Apart from that, reality shows that most faculty and staff members dress politely and formally, "*including security men and cleaners. They also have good behavior. This is different from private institutions where everything seems to be 'freer'*" (Interviewee 2).

The lecturers working in this environment are required to enhance their academic abilities, as there is competition with nearby institutions (all interviewees). Professional knowledge, teaching methodologies, and the morality of the faculty members must especially be placed on top because lecturers are examples to students and will be models for many pupils and high school students in the future (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2, Interviewee 3, and Interviewee 4). All interviewees also said that in reality they also have these values, beliefs, and attitudes, giving responses such as "*I care about students; hence, I try to improve my teaching methodologies,*" (Interviewee 6) "*I have striven to improve my professional knowledge,*" (Interviewee 4), "*I try to behave politely*" (Interviewee 5), "*as lecturers and especially those of a teacher training university, faculty members are always 'serious,' and 'exemplary.' Geographical position does not matter,*" (Interviewee 1) and "*whatever the environment is, the lecturers must pay attention to standards of conduct. . . . That is the most important thing*" (Interviewee 4).

Mission

Level 1

In general, the interviewees thought that the mission is long and hard to remember (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2, Interviewee 3, Interviewee 4, and Interviewee 8). After being reminded of the mission, they thought that the mission is not very realistic and too ambiguous with some big words such as "training high-quality teachers." According to these interviewees, everyone does not seem to understand what such words mean.

As shared by the majority of the interviewees, the mission has not been widely and deeply disseminated to many organization members (Interviewee 2, Interviewee 4, Interviewee 5, Interviewee 6, Interviewee 7, and Interviewee 8).

All of the participants found that the mission is a basis for some university decisions, but at the same time, they did not see the link between the mission with some other decisions. The fact that decisions and the mission do not match or support each other may relate to the fact that "*some policies are issued based on the guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Training for all of the institutions across the country*" (Interviewee 2).

Level 2 and 3

Concerning this dimension, all participants asserted that they have to comply with the university's mission and decisions made by the university. Even if they have opinions that are different from what the university has issued, they still have to follow the university's stance because it is their duty.

Other actions are also expected of them. Specifically, according to Interviewee 2, Interviewee 3, Interviewee 7, and Interviewee 8, lecturers need to improve their professional knowledge, teaching methods, and morality.

> *The lecturers must be good examples in terms of morality for students all the time. They also must try to develop their professional skills and knowledge. This is especially true because this is a teacher training university, so the lecturers must have good teaching skills. When it comes to academic research, there are other institutions better known for that*. (Interviewee 2)

> *In my opinion, there are two things the university lecturers must do. The first thing is to develop their teaching skills so that the teaching is of high quality. The other thing is that they need to better their expertise*. (Interviewee 8)

All interviewees thought they must adhere to university decisions because it is natural that the faculty members obey everything that is issued from the university, "*whatever it is*" (Interviewee 7). Furthermore, they are expected to develop their expertise, teaching methodologies, and morality because these elements are associated with the word "lecturers," especially lecturers of a teacher training institution (Interviewee 4, Interviewee 7, and Interviewee 8). All of the interviewees also said that, in reality, they themselves always keep improving their professional knowledge and teaching methodologies through various activities and pay attention to their behavior towards students and colleagues.

Socialization

Level 1

As shared by many lecturers, there is no guidance on this matter for new people provided by the university. Instead, it is believed to be departments' responsibility (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 2,

Interviewee 5, Interviewee 6, Interviewee 7, and Interviewee 8) and there may be disparities among departments in this aspect (all of the interviewees).

Level 2 and 3

In order to socialize with people in this environment, all interviewees said that newcomers must finish their assigned tasks, comply with the university regulations and decisions, and proactively find out information about their department, their peers, and the university (Interviewee 2). They also need to be "*respectful and polite to others while working with them*" (Interviewee 4). These activities are to help newcomers establish "relationships" with others, which is one of the requirements for successful socialization within the workplace. The faculty members of the institution also need to improve their expertise and teaching methodologies (Interviewee 5, Interviewee 6, and Interviewee 8).

All of the interviewees assumed that they have and should have such attitudes, beliefs, and values because these feature lecturers of a teacher training institution always paying attention to their morality, professional knowledge, and teaching methodologies.

> *Morality is very important. This is because in contrast to many other higher education institutions, our university—a teacher training university—is always expected to have lecturers who care about morality. In the Vietnamese's thinking, the word "teachers" has many moral implications. In addition to expertise, teachers should have appropriate ways of behavior with colleagues, with the surrounding community, and especially with students. Being "the teachers of future teachers," faculty of this institution are assumed and required to have these features*. (Interviewee 4)

In addition, one of the underlying reasons for the formation and presence of these features is that lecturers of this institution respect hierarchy, which includes respect for those who have worked for longer and have a higher position (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 4, Interviewee 6, and Interviewee 8). This explains why new faculty members are required to actively communicate with and respect other peers inside and outside their department. As for compliance with the university's decisions, all of the interviewees saw it as a matter of fact which they themselves also follow: "*Usually, faculty have no choice but to abide by the decisions of the university because a decision is like 'the law of the King*'" (Interviewee 5).

Information

Level 1

The participants can find information sent to their personal email addresses by their departments, the university Facebook, their work account, and the university website. There is also word-of-mouth communication such as direct guidance from leaders and information shared by "a little bird" whose name is not publicly and directly mentioned (Interviewee 2, Interviewee 4, Interviewee 5, Interviewee 6, and Interviewee 7). Information from "a little bird" is shared by different individuals and information seekers normally have to actively ask for it. As per Interviewee 7, sharing information in this way is no less popular than in official or formal ways.

All interviewees said that the first holders of these formal sources of information are the university leaders, the deans and vice deans of departments, and the heads and vice heads of administrative sections. These individuals will decide on the extent of information that will be shared with lecturers and staff. Another fact is that since information is mainly disseminated in a top-down manner, there may be some information unavailable to faculty when the person in charge of disseminating information forgets to share it.

The university hardly ever shares information with the outsiders (all of the interviewees), but "*only related to the intake, my university has information sent to the press*" (Interviewee 2). For some other activities, "*if the university leaders contact journalists to promote important affairs, the information is shared with external stakeholders. Normally, it is not*" (Interviewee 2).

Level 2 and 3

After receiving information, the university lecturers have to do what is mentioned and prioritize urgent tasks if the information is related to them.

Some lecturers, such as Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 8, think that they have to analyze information quickly because the transmission of information is hasty.

> *Most of the tasks are very urgent in terms of deadline. Today, they [the leaders] give me the information, but I have to complete the assigned task tomorrow. There is no time for careful preparation. . . . I have to adhere to this culture*. (Interviewee 1)

The interviewees thought that the lecturers of the selected university have and should have such behavior, beliefs, and attitudes in their organization since they comply with what is issued from the university. This is why they have to consider everything carefully and try to complete everything that is assigned to them. In cases where they urgently need to raise their opinions, they must communicate their opinions to their department first out of respect for the hierarchy.

Strategy

Level 1

All participants believed that the rector and the deputy rector (the university leaders) are the decision-makers and they have the highest authorities as well. Almost all of the decisions must have their approval. They also agreed that the deans and vice deans of departments and the heads and vice heads of administrative sections are also involved in decision-making activities.

Some faculty members had no ideas about how decisions are formulated (Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 4) while some argued that decisions at their university are generally made in two ways (Interviewee 2, Interviewee 3, Interviewee 6, Interviewee 7, and Interviewee 8). According to these interviewees, the majority of decisions are made directly from the university leaders while some are based on ideas proposed by departments and/or administrative sections. The latter way is usually used when matters are specific to a department or a section.

Level 2 and 3

All interviewees thought the lecturers of their university are expected to strictly and even enthusiastically adhere to university decisions, even if they are not rational: "*In cases where the provision of information is late, we still have to try our best to meet the deadline*" (Interviewee 8).

If lecturers have ideas, it is also possible for them to share them, "*but in general, the culture of the university does not expect or encourage lecturers to make comments*" (Interviewee 1). The university leaders, especially, are not usually receptive to dissenting opinions. Lecturers are considered "*offenders*" or even "*rebels*" if they contribute ideas contrary to those of the leaders (Interviewee 2).

All of the interviewees said that in reality, they also behave and think according to what are considered to be the expected attitudes and beliefs. This means that they comply with university decisions and rules. Moreover, five participants have never contributed suggestions for the university when it comes to matters related to decision making. This is because, in their views, as university

faculty members, they should comply with the rules and decisions made by the university. To them, this is something natural and unquestionable. Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 4 said that this reality also explains why most decisions are made in a top-down manner.

Leadership

Level 1

Most interviewees believed that the leaders of the university must be recognized by the authority (Interviewee 2, Interviewee 3, Interviewee 4, Interviewee 5, Interviewee 7, and Interviewee 8). To be specific, the rector and the deputy rector are appointed by the Ministry of Education and Training, and other leaders are appointed by the rector.

In order to disseminate the values of the university and call for the support of the organization staff, basically the leaders communicate with staff through documents or sometimes meetings (all interviewees). Additionally, the rector and the deputy rector rely on reports from the dean and/or the vice dean of each department to understand the situation of each section and spread information through these individuals (Interviewee 2 and Interviewees 3). The university leaders also get information on departments from Communist Party members in charge of a certain department, not directly from faculty members (Interviewee 5).

Level 2 and 3

All of the interviewees agreed that under the current leadership, the lecturers in this institution are expected to fulfill their own tasks. They need to respect leaders as well (Interviewee 1). In addition, in cases where they need to give comments, they should behave politely (Interviewee 1). Also, they must be enthusiastic and active in their careers and must contribute to the development of the university as required by the university leaders (Interviewee 2).

Additionally, some interviewees (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 5, and Interviewee 6) said that lecturers are not encouraged to make adverse comments, and they thought that their comments are often ignored by the leaders.

> *I have attended a meeting for the whole staff by the university leaders only once, so I cannot make a comparison. Nonetheless, according to my senior colleagues, who have attended this kind of meeting many times and have been suggesting enhancing the quality of parking lots and laboratories, the issues raised have not been solved yet*. (Interviewee 6)

> *As for rewarding and promotion, they are done based on the rotation rules although there are ideas against this mechanism. Individuals with a high level of seniority are rewarded and/or promoted before others regardless of the fact that these 'non-senior members' have greater performance. It is similar to raises.* (Interviewee 2).

These interviewees said that lecturers should have these behaviors and beliefs, and they also display them in reality because everything at the university follows a hierarchy (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 5, and Interviewee 6). Therefore, lecturers must have respect for the leaders. In addition, lecturers must be supportive and enthusiastic about the leadership's ideas and strategies because it is their tradition to comply with what the university decides without being encouraged to contribute opinions, especially if they are contrary to those of the leadership.

> *In general, lecturers are expected to be observers and not hoped to be questioners. The university has no concern about whether lecturers are satisfied with the university's decisions or not. They are like orders and lecturers must obey.* (Interviewee 2)

Concluding Discussion

To sum up, the organizational culture of universities in Vietnam is made up of different dimensions, the three levels of which reflect its particular features. Concerning the environment, the university selected for this study is situated in an area that is considered an academic hub of the city. The university faculty members always try to pay attention to their dress code and behavior. They dress up and behave politely, even though the university does not have specific rules on this matter. While working in this environment, faculty believed that they must keep improving their professional knowledge, teaching methodologies, and morality. However, the requirements are not limited to the physical environment of an institution. Wherever the university is located, lecturers of public institutions in general and those of teacher training institutions in particular must always be expected to have these features.

As for the mission of the university, Tierney (1988) said that if an organization has a well-developed culture, its mission will be shared and understood by all of its members. In this case, the university rarely shares its mission. Its mission is also rarely emphasized by leaders at events. In addition, the mission is long and difficult for everyone to remember. Lecturers also shared the idea that some programs and decisions have no connections with the mission. This result is similar to that of Le (2016), whose research shows that there is still heterogeneity between the mission and the reality in four selected universities. With this mission and these ways of disseminating it, the interviewees believed that they are expected to abide by decisions made by the university leaders and fulfill their responsibilities.

Regarding support for the socialization of new faculty, there were some negative cases. While some participants stated that their departments offer no guidance to new faculty (Interviewee 1, Interviewee 5, Interviewee 6, Interviewee 7, and Interviewee 8), others affirmed that in their departments, lecturers are permitted and advised to observe other faculty members' classes, given some tasks which help them meet more colleagues, and guided to participate in student affairs and other activities inside and outside the department (Interviewee 2, Interviewee 3, and Interviewee 4). Additionally, in terms of professional skills, new lecturers are encouraged and supported to improve their qualifications, and experienced lecturer(s) are appointed to supervise them for a one-year probationary period (Interviewee 3). The opinions of these three trainers are not similar to the majority of the other participants but do not seem contradictory. This mainly shows that there may be disparities among departments in terms of supporting new faculty socialization while the university lacks official and comprehensive guidance on this dimension. The results of this study are similar to those revealed by Le (2016) in that they showed that the interviewees found that the university gives new faculty members no specific instructions on the factors necessary for their socialization with others in the workplace. Instead, new members must proactively socialize through working with others in their department.

When discussing information in a university, Tierney (1988) argued that if leaders share information effectively with their organization's members and if the organization has informal channels for communication, it is likely that the members of the organization will feel more attached to the organization. In this study, the participants said they are not always able to get all of the information, as there is sometimes some news that is exclusive for some relevant actors. Additionally, although informal channels exist in the organization, faculty members feel these make them confused and annoyed since they need relationships to get information from "a little bird" who is often referred to in this type of word-of-mouth information. In this reality, the expected behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs for lecturers are that they must make a careful and quick analysis of information they get, establish relationships, and possess various skills. Furthermore, faculty must implement what they are sent and/or told. In cases where they desire to share ideas with the university, they should communicate them to the dean and/or vice dean of their department. It seems that rarely sharing information with external subjects goes against the general development trend of Vietnam's higher education since over the last decade, Vietnamese higher education institutions have witnessed a slight increase in the participation of external stakeholders in certain spheres (Westerheijden et al.,

2010). However, this restriction is mainly related to the sharing of some kinds of information, such as information about the political activities of the university. (even lecturers have limited access to this kind of information.) The university still shares some information with external stakeholders, especially when it is not related to politics, like enrollment information or the university's important events. The fact that universities in Vietnam rarely share enough information with a wide range of audiences is also mentioned by Salmi & Pham (2019), who said that even the Ministry of Education and Training seems to have no capacity to force institutions to publicly disclose all of their activities.

From the information that has been provided by the interviewees, it is clear that when it comes to the matter of strategy, the top-down approach is commonly used in the university. If strategies are given in the bottom-up direction, they usually go through different levels. This reflects the general governance culture of Vietnamese higher education, in which higher education institutions still cling to top-down management from the state in almost all fields (Hayden & Lam, 2010). In addition, the characteristics of this decision-making method, where the power is mainly in the hands of the rector, has been reflected in many studies (Pham, 2010; Dao, 2009). According to Hayden and Lam (2010), in higher education institutions, rectors also take the role of Party Committee Secretary, and for this reason, they usually pay more attention to ideas and activities consistent with Party resolutions, while other initiatives or activities are of low priority. This reality, combined with the Confucian culture of high "power distance," in which people in higher positions of authority want their subordinates to conform, leads to the fact that "fear of change has stalled previous attempts to reform from the top down and has constricted the space available for educators to respond to local needs and innovate at the grassroots" (Pham, 2010, p. 55).

Based on the participants' opinions, in the university, those who are officially appointed are considered as leaders. They are the rector, the deputy rector, deans, and deputy deans of departments as well as the heads and vice heads of administrative sections. However, Interviewee 6 and Interviewee 1 think that the university also has informal leaders, since "*the university has the traditional veneration of mentors, so it shows respect for the people who do not need to have titles but have worked at the institution for a long time and have affirmed their prestige. These individuals still have a place in the university*" (Interviewee 1). While further investigation is needed to clarify this belief, it is also worth taking the ideas shared by Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 3 into consideration: "*You, yourself, consider that person to be the leader. He or she is your own leader, but everyone does not think like that,*" (Interviewee 2) as usually, people associate leadership with positions that must be established by the authority (Interviewee 2 and Interviewee 3). Under this leadership, faculty are expected to have respect for leadership and be motivated and enthusiastic to contribute to the development of the institution.

In the analysis of the information provided by the participants, it was found that the university's organizational culture is reflected in all of the six selected dimensions, as well as many of their elements. As mentioned above, to recognize aspects of level 3 of organizational culture, the research selected values and beliefs that appeared in most dimensions of organizational culture provided by the participants' responses to the questions concerning how they behave, think, feel, etc., and why they act like that in reality. The following aspects are considered to be the values in use of level 3 of the university's organizational culture, called the essence of culture or cultural DNA by Schein (2010):

i. Morality, professional knowledge, and teaching methodologies of faculty members are placed on the top.
ii. Faculty members follow a hierarchical order.
iii. Faculty members comply with the university rules and decisions.
iv. Faculty members are role models for students.

These assumptions place emphasis on teacher trainers being role models, and their characteristics can be formed under the influence of many factors, including Confucian ideas, which "imbued much of the country's population with respect for intellectual tradition and certain methods of learning," (London, 2011, p. 8) and a focus on teaching rather than research (Pham,

2013). The influence of the Soviet management model with a highlight on hierarchical order can also be seen in this organization (Salmi & Pham, 2019). In addition, these beliefs and values, which are still held by lecturers participating in the study as core values of their university, may be related to the unique characteristics of the institution, this type of institution, or disciplinary culture, as Clark (1983) discussed. That is why a participant from a non-teacher training university, though agreeing on the existence of lecturers as role models, did not consider this as important, as Le (2016) pointed out in her research: "The golden days were at the time of our ancestors. Those times have passed. . . . Now, young people cannot survive for one day by becoming a legendary model" (p. 162). The participants placing importance on teaching rather than research in their organization also reflects the tradition that most Vietnamese universities are teaching-only institutions, as mentioned by some researchers (Pham, 2013; Pham & Hayden, 2019).

According to the participants in this research, hierarchical order involves not only the positions of individuals at the university but also the age of the university faculty and staff members. The university lecturers respect and ask for advice from older lecturers on many matters. This result is different from what Alvesson (2004) found when presenting seven features distinguishing universities from other organizations. Specifically, this researcher stated that hierarchical division almost does not exist in the university environment, where lecturers have very high autonomy. This may be because what Alvesson provided is based on information from Western institutions, whose culture tends to be dissimilar to that of Vietnamese universities.

These values in use are also considered common features of public universities in general. The difference in culture between the two types of higher education institutions is reflected in the comparisons between the behavior of lecturers in public and private settings. In particular, lecturers of public institutions are expected to pay attention to hierarchy when they communicate or work with other lecturers whose age and position are different from their own. As for lecturers in the private sector, the relationships between and the patterns of behavior towards each other are quite equal. Also, lecturers of private institutions are believed to be able to dress more "freely" and less formally than lecturers in public institutions.

Another noteworthy feature is that the belief that faculty members comply with rules and decisions made by the university also implies the assumption that faculty members are not expected to make inquiries or comments, especially when they are unfavorable toward the university's decisions: "*Faculty have to obey them, cannot change them, and cannot ask leaders to change them*" (Interviewee 5). In short, the concept of compliance at the university is associated with not making comments on the university's decisions and leaders' ideas, especially adverse comments.

Through the information shared by the lecturers interviewed, another new theme emerged, which is called "relationships." This is considered by all interviewees to be a typical feature in the culture of their workplace. Lecturers are expected to have relationships in terms of socialization and information if they hope for success in socializing with others and receiving timely information. Among various methods leaders use to make decisions, the use of relationships is also included as a common strategy. This can be seen through them mainly relying on the opinions of a group of people—other leaders.

Additionally, from the themes provided to investigate organizational culture, the study witnessed the emergence of the elements of salary and promotion in the dimensions of strategy and leadership. This is different from what was discussed by other studies, such as those by Szilagyi (1979), Khatri et al. (2001), Falch & Strøm (2005), Labatmediene et al. (2007), Candle (2010), and Albaqami (2016), since these scholars placed them in the group of regulations and rules rather than organizational culture. Here, the matters concerning raises, rewards, and promotions (associated with raises) are believed to belong to the topic of organizational culture as well, because the formation of the university's regulations on these financial matters is thought to be based on the long-standing norms of the university. In addition, the fact that people are offered a raise, reward, and promotion is often based on the principle of rotation, where priority is given to "senior" members (this is part

of "hierarchical order"—one of the basic assumptions of the university's organizational culture), which is not specified in the university's regulations but is rather a habit or tradition of the institution.

Despite the fact that this study only looks at the organizational culture of the whole university instead of going into the culture of each department or discipline, in many respects, the lecturers interviewed provided data showing the culture of their departments in relation to the university's common culture and the influence of departmental culture on lecturers' intentions to leave the university. In particular, when it comes to the dimension of socialization, the majority of the interviewees believed that the department has a major impact on the socialization of the faculty members, while the university has only minor influences. Also, the same thing is found in the leadership dimension. The leaders in the department, the dean and the vice dean, have a direct and strong influence on lecturers, while the university leaders have influence to a lesser extent.

In general, these cultural features can be found in many other public universities in Vietnam, as mentioned by different studies. The similarities of the results of this research with other related works, even those that were carried out more than 10 years ago, reflect the fact that the culture of this selected university has experienced little change over time even though Vietnam has been trying to internationalize its education. It has been preserving what are considered to be "very traditional features" of Vietnamese higher education institutions, such as placing importance on faculty members being role models, which is typical of Confucianism, and maintaining the top-down decision-making approach, which is distinctive of the Soviet model of higher education. This may be because compared to other types of higher education institutions, teacher training organizations have more strongholds against external influences during the course of their operation (Leutwyler et al., 2017). Hence, this topic is still in need of more investigation in the future to determine if there are new features in the organizational culture of Vietnamese higher education through time.

Limitations

As a limitation, the interview data of this study are gathered from only one public university in Vietnam. Hence, other studies can be broadly scaled up and directed to other university groups. While this research seeks to understand organizational culture through only faculty's perspective, cultural exploration can also be done through investigating other subjects in the university such as leaders, administrative staff and students to create a more comprehensive picture of the organizational culture of Vietnamese higher education institutions.

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Monitoring and Accountability in Professional Development of Teachers in Rural Pakistan

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Abstract: *Both experience and studies suggest that teachers in rural Pakistan either show reduced interest towards Professional Development (PD) or if they avail limited PD opportunities, they hardly bring any significant changes in their instructional practices. One of the assumptions in this regard, although not proved empirically, is that the system where teachers work lack monitoring and accountability mechanism. In this background, this research aimed to understand the monitoring and accountability system influencing teachers' participation in PD. Using focused interview procedure, data were collected from the key stakeholders namely teachers, school leaders, officials of education department and representatives of PD provider organisations. It was found that officials from education department extend surprisingly limited monitoring support to the teachers in schools. Moreover, the system lacks any recognition or reward for PD. Involvement in PD makes no difference in the career of a teacher. Consequently, teachers show reduced interest towards PD. The research suggests that to enhance teachers' participation in PD, the system should introduce a system of appraisal where teachers are made accountable for PD, and rewarded based on the changes they bring in their practices through availing PD opportunities.*

Keywords: *Accountability, monitoring, professional development, rural Pakistan*

Introduction

The importance of Professional Development (PD) of teachers in student achievement has been well established in educational literature (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). Since students of today accessing education are diverse in their backgrounds and abilities, only a well-trained and highly professional teacher tends to succeed in providing quality learning environment to those diversified students (Lohman, 2000). The quality of the teacher, on the other hand, depends on the quality of PD he or she undergoes. As Guskey (2000, p. 4) contends, "one constant finding in the research literature is that notable improvements in education almost never take place in the absence of professional development". Consequently, PD has been the major focus of many reform initiatives to improve the standard of education (Dinham, 2007; Easton, 2008).

In Pakistan, PD of teachers has been a provincial responsibility, and all the four provinces have their own training institutes. A report of National Education Management Information System (2017) indicates that currently, 209 teacher training institutions operate in the public sector offering a variety of pre-service as well as in-service programmes. The Certificate in Teaching (CT) and Primary Teaching Certificate (PTC) programmes have been the dominant models of initial teacher education; preparing teachers for secondary and primary levels respectively. Owing to a growing criticism on these programmes for their lack of quality and relevance (Ali, 2011; UNESCO, 2011), a shift has been introduced in the pre-service training of teachers funded and managed by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Under this programme, replacing the traditional CT and PTC, USAID has introduced a four-year Bachelor of Education (BEd) and a two-year Associate Degree in

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Education (ADE) with an entry requirement of 12 years of schooling. Starting in 2011, the degree is being offered at around 16 teaching institutions in Pakistan.

Moreover, a huge number of non-state actors such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society institutions supplement the government efforts mainly in the provision of in-service PD programmes. Most of these agencies use the conventional external workshop ranging from a few hours to several weeks courses. The projects also vary regarding the aims and content, which are largely determined by the intentions and priorities of individual donors (USAID, 2006). A major concern shown in previous studies is that no visible difference was observed in the classroom practices of the teachers who attended the in-service programmes (Mohammed & Harlech-Jones, 2008; Nawab, 2017). The key reasons restricting the implementation of new practices are found to be the lack of administrative, professional and emotional support for teachers to assist them to translate theory into practice (Hussain & Ali, 2010; Rizvi & Elliott, 2007). Although, empirical evidence lack, follow-up visits to in-service trainees suggest that teachers of private schools attending the PD programmes are more likely to implement their learning compared with their counterparts in the public schools. Perhaps the major reason which is also supported by studies in the developing countries is that unlike teachers in the public schools, private school teachers are more accountable to the school owners as well as to the community (Mbiti, 2016). However, in the context of Pakistan, academics have given surprisingly little attention on how monitoring and accountability affect teachers' involvement in PD activities. In this background, the purpose of this research was to explore the monitoring and accountability system in relation to PD of teachers in rural Pakistan with the aim to raise this important aspect of quality education to the attention of policy makers, PD providers and researchers and to provoke a discussion and further research on the topic. The outcome may contribute to enhanced monitoring and accountability mechanism in the field of teacher PD which may lead to improved teaching and learning practices in schools ultimately resulting in enhanced learning outcomes for students in the rural context of Pakistan.

Monitoring and Accountability in Professional Development

In educational literature, a close association has been shown between the academic achievement of students and the quality of teachers (Guskey, 2002; Darling-Hammond, 2004). Teachers' quality, on the other hand, is said to be linked with the learning opportunities they avail (Fullan, 1993). Given this logic, if a teacher enhances his/her teaching practices availing quality learning opportunities, it is more likely for him/her to enhance academic achievement for students. However, each and every teacher may not avail quality learning experiences. Even if teachers avail such opportunities, they need not necessarily implement their learning. One of the many conditions which drive teachers to learn and to improve their practice on an ongoing basis is said to be the presence of accountability (Hattie, 2003). If teachers' practices are constantly monitored aiming to bring changes in their practice, they tend to look for and avail any learning opportunity. Consequently, improved teaching practices and enhanced student achievement can be possible in an environment of rigorous monitoring and accountability (Reeves, 2005).

Accountability in PD of teachers is said to be an integral part of the very design of PD (Kinnucan-Welsch, Rosemary, & Grogan, 2006). While designing PD for teachers, the planners need to consider accountability as a significant principle and to formulate strategies to make teachers accountable in brining changes in their practices. Making accountability as an integral part of the design also suggests that the entire process of a PD programme, from its design to implementation, should be systematically monitored using the lens of accountability. Presenting a framework for PD in an accountability context, Hochberg and Desimone (2010) suggest considering those features of PD which impact teachers' practices in a positive way. For these authors, the primary goal in the accountability model of PD is achieving particular standards for all students and aligning instruction with those standards.

Thus, as the accountability model of PD suggests, standard for students and instruction to achieve those standards are the main focus for accountability. There are three major actors who

make teachers accountable in this regard. The first category is that of PD providers who extend or supposed to extend monitoring and follow-up support to teachers to make them implement their learning acquired from PD programmes (Ramatlapana, 2009). Next are the immediate supervisors who evaluate teachers in relation to the standards set for students and the instruction to achieve those standards (Wells, 2014). Ideally, such evaluation of teachers by their supervisors can be an ongoing feature of schools (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Teachers should be constantly supported and evaluated especially in relation to the standards set for them and for their students. On the basis of their performance in relation to the set standards as well as their commitment to change and improvement, teachers are recognised and rewarded which result in further innovative behaviours and practices (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves, 2003). Such transparent accountability mechanism also helps to address any inequalities in the system which, if unresolved, may lead to conflicts among staff (Smith, 2014).

Thirdly, although the PD providers and supervisors hold the major responsibility of monitoring teachers and making them accountable, nothing will be as powerful in bringing change in educational practices as teachers' own attitude to embrace accountability and to examine their practices in relation to the standard set for students (Reeves, 2005). Developing teachers having such attitude is perhaps the biggest challenge. Research shows that teachers in high achieving schools embrace more internal accountability mainly owing to the school principals who involve them in setting educational goals and empower them to achieve those goals (Yi & Kim, 2019). It suggests that teachers are more likely to embrace accountability when they are empowered and trusted. Consequently, it is the environment mainly created by the system and school leaders that determine the extent to which teachers are made accountable.

When we relate the existing knowledge on monitoring and accountability in PD to the existing situation in Pakistan, we find a mismatch between the ways these concepts are portrayed in educational literature and practiced in this part of the world. At policy level, there are optimistic intensions with regard to the provision and evaluation of PD. The National Education Policy of 2009, for example, reads that, "All teachers shall have opportunities for professional development through a programme organised on a three-year cyclic basis. Progress in career shall be linked to such professional development" (Ministry of Education, 2009a, p. 38). However, the stated policies in Pakistan have usually remained a 'wish list' or merely rhetoric, barely translated into practice. Although it may be true that the apparent barrier to monitor the progress of teachers through a systematic appraisal system is the lack of staff and resources (USAID, 2006), it is important not to overlook the importance of a comprehensive and clear framework to monitor teachers and to make them accountable (Ali, 2011). Teachers in public schools, for example, are still appraised using the decades old ACR (Annual Confidential Report). The ACR is a summative evaluation conducted by the school leadership at the end of the year and kept confidential from teachers restricting the opportunities to identify and address their areas for improvement. Consequently, the appraisal system not only lacks a potential to enhance the quality of teachers (Hyun & Sajjad, 2018; G. Khan, Khan, Hussain, & Shaheen, 2017) but also results in their demotivation (Nadeem, Arif, & Asghar, 2019). Although, government officials in the public sector pay occasional visits to schools to monitor compliance with standards, their focus is mainly administrative such as enrolment, attendance and so on (Mbiti, 2016). Even if there is some academic accountability, it is about test scores.

Evidence suggests, however, that compared with public schools, private schools in Pakistan apply strict appraisal system consequently leading to improved performance of teachers (Agha, Alwi, & Shaiq, 2020; Hyun & Sajjad, 2018; Khan, Chandio, & Farooqi, 2014). The classroom observations by the school principals, evaluation of teachers' plans, planning before academic sessions and students' report cards were the examples of formative evaluation carried out by the school principals that were not evident in the public sector schools. Teachers are then awarded or reprimanded based on their performance. It is the fear of being fired that teachers in private school perform better (Nadeem et al., 2019). Otherwise, teachers do not see any connection between appraisal and their PD (Khan, 2015).

Although, we have some knowledge on monitoring and accountability in the context of Pakistan, it has two major gaps. Firstly, the nature of monitoring and accountability in relation to PD of teachers has remained unattended so far. While we know many other factors influencing PD of teachers in Pakistan, we do not know what monitoring and accountability mechanisms are in place to appraise teachers for their PD and how these procedures influences their involvement in PD activities. Secondly, the existing limited knowledge also comes from the urban context of Pakistan. Rural contexts characterized by the low achievement of students require greater attention with regard to quality teachers given that the student achievement is associated with the quality of teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2004). However, we do not know how teachers in the rural context of Pakistan are monitored, supported and made answerable in relation to PD. Understanding this scenario may help educational reformers and PD providers to focus on those areas which hinder teachers' participation in PD and the implementation of their learning after attending PD programmes. Students of rural context who have otherwise remained constrained by remoteness would be the ultimate beneficiaries.

Research Method

Aimed to understand the nature of monitoring and accountability in relation to PD of teachers in rural Pakistan, this research used a qualitative approach which allows a researcher to personally interact with the participants and to listen to them in their natural setting (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). The setting for the research was District Chitral, a remote rural region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan. In this region, participants in a reasonably large number were taken from a variety of relevant stakeholders such as teachers, school leaders, government education officials and PD providers. Teachers teaching at secondary level were preferred because, as District Education Office records showed, teachers at this level avail greater PD opportunities compared with their junior school counterparts. Out of the secondary level teachers, the ones who availed PD opportunity during the last three years were considered with the assumption that they could provide more relevant data on monitoring and accountability in the system. Out of 1159 teachers working in the High Schools in the research region (Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, n.d.), as per the record of District Education Office, 88 teachers had availed in-service PD opportunities during the last three years. Using random sampling procedure (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009), invitation letters were sent to 50 teachers, 32 of them agreed to participate in the research. Similarly, out of 38 school leaders who had availed PD during the last three years, 12 were selected using random sampling procedure. Four officials from the Education Department and five PD provider representatives were recruited through purposive sampling procedure (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson 2001) aimed to consult with those individuals having the responsibility of working with schools, teachers and school leaders.

Focus group interview procedure was used to stimulate respondents to recall specific events and to articulate their views through exposing them to the experiences of others (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Similarly, to overcome any issue of status or power (Bloor et al, 2001), separate groups were formed of PD providers, education officials, school leaders and teachers. Each group was interviewed twice, each interview lasting 50 to 90 minutes.

The research used certain measures to ensure authenticity and transparency in the data collection and their subsequent interpretation as suggested by the prominent qualitative research theorists (Guba & Lincolin, 2000; Patton, 2002). The first measure in this regard included recruiting assumedly more informed participants, those having experience of PD. Secondly, data were collected from individuals representing the field at multiple levels, such as, teachers, school leaders, education officials and PD providers. Thirdly, the data were constantly compared within and between groups to draw authentic conclusions. Finally, using the concept of reflexivity (Clarke, 2006), the researcher critically looked at any influences that might affect the collection and interpretation of data.

The data were collected and analyzed simultaneously. The focus group interviews conducted in the mother tongue of the participants were first transcribed, then translated and coded. Next,

frequently occurring patterns were identified out of the coded data. The patterns were then organised under the two major themes, namely, monitoring and accountability.

Findings

The findings under the two major themes, namely, monitoring and accountability are presented and interpreted below.

Monitoring

Monitoring was found to be a significant contextual factor influencing the quality of PD in the research region. Interviews with the stakeholders revealed that the public and private sectors have their unique monitoring systems. Private schools are mostly owned and managed by individuals who either work as principals of their respective schools or employ other individuals to lead the school as a principal. Thus, in the private sector, monitoring of school practices is the responsibility of school leaders. Apart from the school leaders, private schools lack any other formal monitoring body. However, there is another type of private sector in the research region called the Aga Khan Schools. Administered by the Aga Khan Education Service (AKES), a unit of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)[1], these schools usually operate in remote areas of the region where children lack access to public or other private schools. Unlike the other private schools, AKES has a monitoring system where a team of professionals supervises teaching and learning processes in the Aga Khan Schools.

In the public sector, District Education Officer (DEO), Sub-Divisional Education Officers (SDEOs) and Assistant District Education Officers (ADEOs) are responsible for monitoring the day to day routines and activities of schools. The quality of monitoring extended by these officials regarding PD of teachers was, however, debatable among the research participants. Most of the teachers representing the public sector reported that officials from education department seldom visit their schools. Even if they come to their classroom, the time spent is very limited. Teachers, especially the ones who attend PD, expect enhanced support from district education officials. Shafiq[2], a teacher from the public sector, reported that:

> DEO visiting schools is very uncommon. I have not seen him ever entering my classroom. SDEO and ADEOs may occasionally visit class but they do not observe teaching. They may just enter the class and ask students some questions. They do not ask us what we learnt from training and what we need to implement and what challenges we face in the process of implementation.

This view represents a general concern of teachers from the public sector that officials rarely monitor their practices once they return attending PD programmes. Although SDEO and ADEOs occasionally visit teachers, they demonstrate little concern regarding which teachers attended PD, what they learnt, and to what extent they implement their new understandings. Teachers expect more support from their respective officials in addressing their emerging issues during implementation given that PD providers are largely unable to extend such support. However, the occasional visits of these officials and their limited stay in schools were less likely to address the issues of particularly those teachers who were struggling with the new practices acquired through attending PD programmes.

Similarly, school leaders representing the public sector also expressed their concern regarding the nature of monitoring system in the public schools. They were of the view that just providing teachers with PD opportunities was not enough unless they were systematically monitored to implement their learning. Arifa, a school leader from the public sector, stated that:

> More importantly, teachers should strictly be monitored to make them implement the ideas which they bring back from the external trainings. Supervisors should identify the challenges teachers face or the reason behind the lack of implementation. Unless teachers are properly

> monitored by the officials from the system, teachers will never bother to do something innovative or to improve their practices. Monitoring is the lacking element in our system.

This lack of proper monitoring support to teachers is not simply a matter of omission; its lack was also recognised by ADEOs who provided some insight as to why it might not occur. The major challenge in this regard was the inadequate provision of human resources. It was revealed that there were insufficient ADEOs to look after the number of schools involved. As Afzal reported:

> I have 12 days in a month for school visits and there are 275 schools under my jurisdiction. I visit each school once in a year. There will be quite a few schools that I visit twice in a year. When I have to visit three or four schools in one day, I have very limited time for classroom observation or to discuss with teachers their issues and needs.

This excerpt suggests that the main reason behind the reduced monitoring support to the teachers is the heavy workload of the education officials. One ADEO extending quality monitoring support to teachers of 275 schools is almost impracticable. Ideally, an ADEO should observe lesson of each teacher and extend required support. In the given condition, it is unsurprising if the ADEO fails to reach every teacher in his/her jurisdiction during the entire year. Therefore, a one-off visit, or at most two visits, of ADEOs to schools in a year could hardly be sufficient to influence teachers' practices. Research from other developing countries such as Tanzania (Mbiti, 2016) suggests that teachers are unlikely to change their practices when they receive limited monitoring support from the education officials. It has also been argued that instead of brief visits by supervisors, bringing improvement in practices of teachers requires consistent monitoring and evaluation of teachers (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 2011). Such consistent monitoring of teaching practices, however, was a component severely lacking in schools of the research region ultimately leading to less impact of PD on practices of teachers.

Accountability

Lack of monitoring by education officials and PD providers resulted in a lack of accountability. This not only hindered translation of learning from training to classroom but also influenced teachers' involvement in PD activities. Participants collectively believed that the public sector lacked a mechanism to make teachers accountable to implement their learning and to recognise, reward or reprimand them on their growth and performance. It was also revealed that the involvement in PD or otherwise did not make a difference in the career and incentives for teachers. All the teachers were treated equally irrespective of their attitude towards and involvement in PD. There was no actual pressure upon teachers to improve their practices. A representative quote is taken from Nazia, an ADEO from the public sector, who revealed that:

> Whether a teacher implements his/her learning or not, whether they improve their practices or not, no one is there to ask them. If someone attends PD programmes, there is no appreciation. Attending PD programmes or improving practices doesn't make a difference in the career of a teacher.

Teachers' commitment towards improvement is achieved through incentives based on their performance (Fullan, 2007). When the system lacks accountability and reward mechanisms, it is disheartening for those teachers who are committed to improving their practices. Sardar, a school leader from the public sector, had similar view that when a high performing teacher and his low performing counterpart are treated equally, teachers hesitate to take part in PD activities.

Coupled with appreciating teachers for their growth and performance, their commitment toward PD and implementation of their learning might be achieved through considering their capability for promotion. Participants reported, however, that teachers in the public sector were promoted to senior positions based on their seniority without considering their capacity and professional growth. Afzal, an SDEO, remarked that:

> A teacher feels that no one can stop my promotion if I am the most senior. Such policy is required that if a teacher develops himself and brings improvement in his/her practices, he/she will be promoted. If performance is rewarded, it will force teachers to develop themselves. Otherwise, teachers are not willing to improve their practices.

Aligned with the earlier studies (for example, Behlol, Dad, & Raja, 2014; Siddiqui, 2016), promotion is largely unrelated to the actual performance of teachers in low-income developing countries of Asia including Pakistan. The performance of teachers, as revealed by the participants, was evaluated through a process called Annual Confidential Report (ACR). Participants in this study, however, reported several flaws in this system. Firstly, the existing ACR system lacked any weighting for PD of teachers. Secondly, ACRs were written confidentially by school leadership without taking teachers into confidence. Based on such system, teachers did not know their strengths and areas for improvement. In this sense, the appraisal system lacked an 'improvement function' (OECD, 2013), a function of appraisal that helps teachers improve their practices through identifying their strengths and weaknesses.

Participants representing the private sector reported a relatively improved picture of accountability in the private schools. It was revealed that student achievement in the private schools was relatively high compared to student achievement in the public sector schools. Participants reported that one of the primary reasons for better performance of the private schools was the accountability system. Support for this view comes from earlier reports suggesting that better learning outcomes for students in the private schools of North-Western Pakistan are owing to the higher degree of systematic management control over teachers' performance (Bennell, 2004). Participants revealed that compared with the public sector, there was no job security in the private system where teachers were retained only if they performed well. It was also revealed that in the private sector, the local community put pressure on school leadership and school leadership in return put pressure upon teachers. Irfan, a private school leader, revealed that:

> There is competition among private sector schools. Since parents pay for their children, they also want good results. To attract students, private schools have to prove their worth. It will be possible if teachers work hard. I want to see output from teachers. Otherwise, they will be replaced. Teachers show more dedication because they know the consequences.

This view of school leadership supports the earlier findings from Pakistan that in the private schools teachers work hard as they are held accountable by parents, and there is a risk of losing students to other schools in case of poor performance (Andrabi, Das, & Khwaja, 2008). In addition, school leaders hold authority to hire and fire teachers, which makes them more conscious of their practices and growth (Nadeem et al., 2019). On the contrary, when teachers are recruited by a central authority as in case of public schools, it becomes difficult for parents and school leaders to make them accountable (Mbiti, 2016).

Some of the participants also referred to the accountability system in the Aga Khan Schools. Inayat, a representative of PD providers, stated that in the Aga Khan Schools, the implementation of PD learning is prioritised because AKES staff systematically appraise their teachers. Teachers who develop themselves, bring innovation in their teaching and apply their learning in classroom, score higher in the appraisal. Inayat further revealed that through the appraisal system at the Aga Khan Schools, the improvement areas of teachers were identified and addressed. Consequently, the model serves both accountability and improvement functions (OECD, 2013). These functions of appraisal have also been documented through research studies conducted on appraisal system in the Aga Khan Schools in Pakistan (Khan, 2015).

The appraisal system, however, is carried out only at the AKES system. Such a system was lacking in other private sector schools in the research region. Although school leaders from the private sector showed growing pressure on the schools and teachers from the community, teachers representing

the private schools reported the lack of any mechanism to hold teachers accountable for engagement with PD and application of their learning into practice. Razia, a private school teacher, reported that:

> Our management does not encourage us to attend PD. Often they hesitate to send us for external PD saying that there is no one to engage our classes. Even if we attend PD, school management never asks us about our learning and what we need to implement. I had attended a seven-day workshop with the Star Institute. No one asked me whether I benefited from that course or not. The management needs to ask teachers before and after the course what she needed and what the improvement in her practices was after attending the training.

While the private schools exert pressure on teachers to produce better student results, as the above excerpt suggests, no systematic mechanism was in place to evaluate teachers and to make them accountable for learning and implementation. The data suggests that the private schools do want improved results for students, however, they lack realisation that student achievement could be enhanced through developing the capacity of teachers. Teachers reported that they were not encouraged to attend PD. Even if teachers attended PD on their own interest, there was no pressure on them or support to implement their learning. Attending PD appears to be a mere compliance. Ideally, once a new idea enters an organisation there should be structures and cultures to cascade the learning and to make it part of the organisational capacity (Lange, 2014). However, schools in this region lacked a mechanism to support implementation of new learning and to cascade it to other teachers.

Discussion and Implications

A critical analysis of data presented above suggests that the lack of proper monitoring and accountability is a significant factor in the research region that, similarly to other developing countries (World Bank, 2004), affects the quality and outcomes of PD. At policy level, there are pledges to provide teachers with ongoing PD opportunities and then to link progress in the career with their engagement in and use of PD. However, the existing practices in schools hardly reflect the stated policies. Although, limited teachers avail PD opportunities mainly organized by NGOs, the trainee teachers lack any follow-up support either from the PD providers or government education officials to ensure the implementation of the newly learned ideas and skills. Government education officials occasionally visit schools, however, they scarcely evaluate teachers with regards to any innovations in their instructional practices. The responsibility of appraisal rests with the school leaders who use ACR to evaluate teachers' performance during the year. However, this tool lacks any space to evaluate teachers' engagement in PD. The outcome is kept confidential from the concerned teacher, denying any opportunity to understand the areas for improvement. There is no recognition for teachers who take the initiative on their own with regards to PD practices. It does not make a difference in the career of teachers whether they update their practices or not. Innovative behaviours are said to be supported in an environment where teachers are appraised, recognised and rewarded based on their innovations and development (Nemeržitski, Loogma, Heinla, & Eisenschmidt, 2013; Trehan & Paul, 2014). When the system lacks such environment, the participation of teachers in PD activities is quite predictable.

The research showed some evidence of monitoring and accountability in the private sector. In the verge of competition and owing to the pressure from parents, principals of the private schools expect innovative practices from teachers. To meet such expectations and fearing any undesirable outcome for the otherwise, teachers feel the need of learning and development driving them towards exploiting various PD opportunities. The scenario lends weight to the argument that teachers do make changes in their practices, but this happens largely in a systematic and rigorous accountability environment (Wells, 2014).

The apparently simple findings that this research produced exhibit insights resounding remarkable implications for the policy makers, PD providers and educational managers. The research

identified that unless the system where teachers work recognises and facilitates PD, teachers are less likely to engage in or benefit from PD activities. It is argued, therefore, that consideration of system related factors should be a priority if teachers are to be afforded with effective PD opportunities (Hochberg & Desimone, 2010). An initial step in this regard would be agreeing on standards for teachers and outcomes for PD as suggested in the accountability model of PD (Hochberg & Desimone; 2010). A perception has developed historically in this region that anyone can be a teacher irrespective of their capacity and preparation. This perception is to be contrasted with the expert perspectives regarding the knowledge required for effective teaching, such as content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge and curricular knowledge (Shulman, 1986).

A potential strategy to develop standards for teachers would be to utilise the already developed National Professional Standards for Teachers (Ministry of Education, 2009b). While efforts to develop existing teachers' performance to those standards or expecting existing teachers to demonstrate those standards will entail considerable challenges, introducing these standards with all the key stakeholders will serve several purposes. Firstly, it will establish the perception that teaching is a profession that requires certain practice standards. Secondly, these standards will assist teachers to reflect on their identity and to evaluate whether they possess the desired knowledge, skills and attitude required for effective teaching. Evidence suggests that in other contexts where such standards are deployed, teachers use them as a framework for professional learning (Mayer, Mitchell, Macdonald, & Bell, 2005).

Coupled with the standards set for teachers, system-wide recognition and reward for good teaching as well as engagement in and utilisation of PD has the potential to encourage teachers to realise the importance of PD for their career and advancement in the profession. Teachers should be required to demonstrate their ongoing involvement in PD activities, generated by a sense of accountability established through new system expectations. A minimal level of engagement in some type of continuing PD within a stated time frame should be an established requirement for teachers. Merely making PD compulsory for teachers, however, would be insufficient without the addition of rewarding teachers for their involvement in PD activities (Fullan, 2014).

In order to provide teachers with rewards and incentives, the system needs to establish deliberate strategies requiring a systematic evaluation of teachers. There is an existing teacher appraisal system that can be modified to contain a weighting for teachers' involvement in PD and used to evaluate the teachers' performance for both accountability and development functions (OECD, 2013). Rather than maintaining the current practice of keeping the tool and its outcomes confidential, it would be more effective if the outcomes are shared with teachers so that they have greater clarity about areas for potential improvement. Gradually, the system should shift away from appraisal and surveillance toward support and development.

Once decisions are made on teachers' involvement and effective utilisation of PD through systematic appraisal, teachers should be provided incentives and rewards based on their performance. These rewards and incentives could be in the form of increment upgrades and considerations for promotion. Furthermore, high performing teachers may also be acknowledged through honouring them with titles, certificates and even words of appreciation. If PD is made compulsory for teachers and when there are opportunities for recognition, career advancement, growth and achievement, teachers' motivation towards PD will be enhanced (McMillan, McConnell, & O'Sullivan, 2016). Studies suggest that many issues in education can be reduced by investing more on monitoring and accountability (Muralidharan, Das, Holla, & Mohpal, 2016).

Conclusion

In educational literature, a seeming consensus is shown on the features of PD and efforts are made to generalise those features across contexts without considering the realities and other factors influencing PD in particular regions. This research showed that monitoring and accountability mechanisms are the most influential factors in PD of teachers. No matter how effective a PD with

regard to its design features is, unless there is proper monitoring and accountability, teachers are less likely to benefit from those 'well-designed' programmes. The effectiveness of a PD should be evaluated based on how a programme impacts the practices of teachers and achievement of students. Since monitoring and accountability mechanisms are more likely to ensure implementation of training ideas, the focus of planners, policy makers and PD providers should be on enhancing monitoring and accountability systems. Continuing with the existing practices arguably seems a wastage of resources given that those practices have failed to show any significant impact on the practices of teachers. A substantial and timely solution suggested by the relevant stakeholders and supported by educational literature is enhancing monitoring and accountability mechanism in our schools. The prudent way would be to attend to this immediate need without wasting any further time and resources on the activities that yield no positive outcome. The sooner the better.

Notes

[1] Founded and guided by His Highness the Aga Khan, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) brings together a number of development agencies, institutions, and programmes that work primarily in the poorest parts of Asia and Africa.

[2] Pseudonyms have been used instead of the real names of the participants.

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Academic Governance and Leadership in Malaysia: Examining the National Higher Education Strategic Initiatives

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Abstract: *Academic governance and leadership are two inter-related concepts that set the tone and direction for the development of higher education at the system as well as institutional levels. This article examines the academic governance and leadership in Malaysian higher education by focusing on two national higher education strategic initiatives: the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2007-2020 and Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015-2025. From analysing the two national strategic initiatives, we discuss the ways in which academic governance and leadership have been articulated at the systemic and institutional levels. We find that, centralisation persists despite corporatisation and granting of autonomy status, and leadership has become subjected to external yardsticks of quality, performance and standardised transformation agenda, driven predominantly by the ideology of neoliberalism and New Public Management (NPM). Unpacking these drivers of policy provides a basis for reflecting on the purpose, philosophy and fundamental idea of universities in Malaysia for nation building and societal development.*

Keywords*: Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015-2025, National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2007-2020, governance, leadership, neoliberalism*

Introduction

An explosion of knowledge and information has catalysed the rise of the new knowledge economy of the 21st century. The development of knowledge is widely argued to be the key domain for economic growth, and enhancing the corpus of intellectual capital has therefore become a matter of national importance. This intellectual capital requires a critical mass of people with characteristics of being creative, innovative and imaginative, and who have mastery of information and knowledge that will stimulate and drive economic growth and national development. Universities and other higher education institutions (HEIs) have a vital responsibility in supporting this economic endeavour through their roles of teaching, research and service. Higher education is being regarded as a sector too crucial to be left solely to the academic community, such that significant intervention from the State is deemed by many to be appropriate to ensure that higher education fulfils its 'potential' and moves in tandem with a country's national development agenda (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2011; Wildavsky, 2010). Such a development is driven by the ideology of neoliberalism, as Brown (2015) argues as the governing rationality based on market values and enforced onto every sphere of life including education. This subsequently led to a shift in public service towards adopting the practices of private sector, known as New Public Management (NPM), as a response to upholding market values that manifested on performance, outputs and customer orientation (Larbi, 1999).

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Malaysia is no exception to the above. The *National Higher Education Strategic Plan Beyond 2020* (NHESP) (MOHE, 2007b) and the *Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015-2025* (MEBHE) (MOE, 2015) are two major national strategic initiatives designed to steer the development of higher education in Malaysia to meet the needs of the nation in the era of a knowledge economy. This paper seeks to explain academic governance and leadership in Malaysia by examining closely the NHESP and the MEBHE.

Governance may be said to refer to the structures and processes by which HEIs are individually and collectively governed. A distinction is often drawn between the internal and external governance of HEIs to differentiate respectively between the institutional and system-wide levels of governance (Fielden, 2008; Kaplin & Lee, 2014). Leadership is assumed to refer to the actions and decisions of actors who have been assigned key leadership roles in a higher education system. Within individual HEIs, these actors include particularly the members of governing boards, the members of the vice-chancellor's executive group, and the members of academic senates. These actors are collectively involved in what Gallagher (2001, p. 49) described as leadership, that is, in "seeing opportunities and setting strategic directions, and investing in and drawing on people's capabilities to develop organisational purposes and values."

The paper addresses the ways in which governance and leadership have been articulated in the NHESP and the MEBHE, and seeks to examine the extent to which strategies articulated in these national initiatives will influence the future development of governance and leadership in Malaysia's higher education system. The discussion here mainly focuses on public universities, even though private HEIs account for almost one-half of the enrolment in Malaysia's higher education system. The imbalance here reflects simply the almost exclusive focus on public universities in the two national documents (Morshidi & Wan, 2015). Arguably, being publicly funded, these universities must be accountable to the funder and thus need to be guided by government's strategic plans

National Higher Education Setting

Malaysia has a population of 32 million. It is a multi-ethnic society comprised of ethnic Malays and members of indigenous peoples (67%), ethnic Chinese (25%) and ethnic Indians (7%). There are also other minority ethnic groups (1%). The level of GDP per capita in 2019 was US$11,383, and the World Bank classifies the economy as 'upper middle income' (World Bank, 2020). Malaysia's higher education system currently includes 20 public universities, 58 private universities (including ten branch campuses of foreign universities), 33 private university colleges, 36 public polytechnics, 99 public community colleges and 345 private colleges. There are 1.3 million higher education students in Malaysia, and 50% of whom are enrolled in public HEIs (DOHE, 2019; MOE, 2019). The gross enrolment rate (GER) for tertiary education has also increased significantly from a mere 4 percent in 1980 to 48 percent in 2018. However, the most remarkable increment was between 1995 and 1998 were GER jumped from 11 percent to 22 percent within three years and this increment can be attributed to the legalisation of private higher education institutions following the introduction of Private Higher Educational Act 1996 (Act 555).

In January 1959, an autonomous division of the University of Malaya was established in Kuala Lumpur – the other division was based in Singapore. A year later, the two territories (Malaya and Singapore) expressed a desire to change the status of these autonomous divisions by enabling each to become a national university. In 1962, a new national university, also named the University of Malaya, was thus established in Kuala Lumpur. It enrolled only a few thousand students and focused primarily on the training of professionals and bureaucrats for the newly independent nation. It was self-governing and enjoyed the benefits of being fully-funded by the State. Its vice-chancellors, at least up until 1968, were mainly British expatriates, and, internally, the University was governed collegially in the British tradition of the court, the council, the academic senate and the faculties (Lee, 2004; Selvaratnam, 1985). Until 1969, the University of Malaya was the only university in the country. By the end of 1971, three more public universities had been established.

The nature of the university-state relationship began to change in the late 1960s and early 1970s, particularly following the serious race riots of May 1969, but also as a result of the growth of student activism that peaked with the establishment of the University of Malaya Students' Union in 1974. Following the May 1969 riots, the Government introduced a New Economic Policy intended to eradicate poverty and restructure the economic imbalances that existed among the various ethnic groups in Malaya. Higher education was identified as requiring a policy of affirmative action involving an ethnic-based student admissions quota intended to boost opportunities for university participation by young ethnic Malay people. In addition, because universities were identified as likely seedbeds of political activism, a University and University Colleges Act (UUCA), gazetted in 1971, required that they should be governed directly by the Ministry of Education, which would also exercise responsibility for the appointment of their leadership. This approach was reinforced in amendments to the Act in 1974. Up until the mid-1990s, therefore, public universities were firmly 'steered' by the Government, with a particular emphasis placed on nation-building and compensation for national socio-economic imbalances. This period took a heavy toll on institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Section 15(5)(A) of the UUCA, as amended in 1974, proscribed, for example, student membership of political parties. This restriction was not lifted until October 2011, when it was ruled to be unconstitutional by the Malaysian Appeals Court.

In the mid-1990s, another shift occurred in the nature of the university-state relationship. The two major changes were the 'proposed' corporatisation of public universities and introduction of the Private HEIs Act (PHEIA) 1996 (Act 555). These changes were introduced in the context of a public policy commitment to privatising public utilities and national industries in the wake of the Asian economic crisis of the late-1980s. Five public universities were corporatized in 1998 with a view to enabling them to engage in market-related activities, including the establishment of companies able to acquire and hold investments. Importantly, corporatisation changed their internal governance culture, with boards of directors introduced to replace university councils, and with academic senates limited in size to only 40 members (Lee, 2004). Full corporatisation was, however, never entirely permitted, with university governance and leadership remaining heavily dependent on the Ministry of Education. The Private HEIs Act (PHEIA) of 1996 marked the official beginning of a private higher education sector in Malaysia. The Act gave approved private higher education providers permission to confer degrees and to become a recognised part of the Malaysian higher education system.

A further shift occurred in 2004 with the establishment of a Ministry of Higher Education. One of its first initiatives was to commission a review concerning the future direction of higher education in Malaysia (MOHE, 2006). The review committee's recommendations were instrumental in the development of the NHESP, launched in 2007 alongside a national action plan for the period up to 2020 and beyond. The NHESP, which was the first comprehensive strategic plan for Malaysia's higher education system, identified seven areas of strategic priority, referred to as 'thrusts'. These included: widening access and increasing equity; improving the quality of teaching and learning; enhancing research and innovation; strengthening HEIs; intensifying internationalisation; creating a culture of lifelong learning; and reinforcing the delivery systems of Ministry of Higher Education. The Plan envisaged four phases of implementation up to and beyond 2020.

Based on the argument that the development of education from primary to tertiary education must be seamless, in 2013, the Ministry of Higher Education was once again merged with the Ministry of Education. In addition, there were other justifications for a re-merger: "spurring the transformation of education to be on par with international standards by 2020; progress toward one administrative roof for the whole system; harmonization of education strategic plans; improved strategic management of the education system" (Sack and Jalloun, 2017, p. 21). These have resulted in considerable uncertainty for the public higher education sector in particular. The Ministry of Education was too huge to be run efficiently, and there was a tendency for issues related to the education sector to overwhelm top management meetings. The Ministry of Education moved to align higher education within the framework of a Malaysia Education Blueprint that had been issued by the Ministry regarding preschool to school education up to 2025. In 2015, the Ministry produced the

MEBHE, which identified ten areas of 'shift' to be achieved by the higher education system in Malaysia by 2025. These included: holistic, entrepreneurial and balanced graduates; talent excellence; nation of lifelong learners; quality technical vocational education and training (TVET) graduates; financial sustainability; empowered governance; innovation ecosystem; global prominence; globalised online learning; and transformed higher education delivery. Shortly after, the Ministry of Higher Education was re-established. Yet, between 2018 and 2020, higher education was merged with Ministry of Education, and in the latest Cabinet reshuffle in March 2020, the Ministry of Higher Education was re-established for the third time. Education in Malaysia is highly centralised with government playing a central role, especially at the primary, secondary and higher education. Thus, changes in the setup of the ministries inevitably have significant impact to the governance and leadership at the system and institutional levels.

System-Level Governance

Public universities in Malaysia are legally defined as federal statutory bodies (FSBs), that is, semi-government entities having limited autonomy in decision making and subject to close monitoring and control by a ministry (Asimiran & Hussin, 2012). The General Circular issued in 1998 about FSBs stipulates that the Minister has the authority and responsibility to monitor the statutory body, and to appoint members of the board of directors and the chief executive officer (PMD, 1998). In the case of public universities, the chief executive officer is the vice-chancellor (or rector). Supervision by the Ministry occurs through the Department of Higher Education and is implemented by means of representation on each public university's board of directors.

There are three additional supervisory mechanisms of note (Morshidi, Azman & Wan, 2017). The first concerns global university rankings, whereby fluctuations in rankings are inferred as indicating improvement or decline to the performance of a university. The second concerns quality assurance, which is a responsibility of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency, a body that is under the purview of the Ministry of Higher Education. In this regard, the supervisory mechanism is intended to ensure that all academic programmes are comparable and have clear learning outcomes. The third concerns various accountability instruments, such as the Malaysian Research Assessment Instrument, which function internal performance indicators for the higher education system. These accountability instruments, and, to a lesser extent, performance in global university rankings, have some level of influence on State financial allocations to public universities.

Public universities must also conform to a plethora of public service circulars, directives, rules and regulations. These include: human resource directives issued by the Public Service Department; finance and financial allocation directives issued by the Ministry of Finance, the Treasury, and the Economic Planning Unit in the Prime Minister's Department; research grant requirements issued by the Ministry of Higher Education, and by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation; audit requirements issued by the National Audit Department; and, indirectly, the conditions applied to student loans, as determined by the National Higher Education Fund Corporation.

A National Higher Education Council, established in 1997, is the main policy-making body for the higher education sector. This Council is chaired by the Minister of Education and includes top policymakers from key ministries, together with representatives from public and private universities and from expert groups. This body became dormant over the period since 2011 because the Ministry of Higher Education found it to be more expedient to meet directly with key stakeholders for the purposes of addressing policy and strategic matters.

Private universities, which are subject to the Companies Act of 1965, are required under Act 555 to be supervised by the Department of Higher Education in the Ministry of Higher Education. The Minister empowers the Registrar-General to approve their establishment and to approve structural changes such as mergers, partnerships or the creation of new branches. The Registrar-General may also take punitive action, such as by closing them down or by not allowing them to recruit students. The Registrar-General also has the authority to approve the use of languages of

instruction, as well as study courses offered and study course requirements. Private universities may also be subject to the rules and regulations imposed by external parties, particularly if they are franchising universities conducting programmes on behalf of or in collaboration with an established university. Like public universities, all courses offered by private universities must be accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. The volume of public service circulars, directives, rules and regulations that public universities must address rarely affects private universities.

Institutional Governance and Leadership

Typically in public universities, and since the corporatisation exercise in 1997, the highest governing body is the board of directors. The board's duties include oversight of the university's finances and safeguarding the mission of the university. In addition, the board is expected to nominate, oversee and support the vice-chancellor (MOHE, 2015). The board is made up of representatives of key ministries (forming a majority), academics and industry representatives. Within public universities, a senate is the highest authority on academic matters and is led by the vice-chancellor. The senate typically includes the senior academic leaders and a number professors, with the number of professors varying from one university to another. The General Circular of 1998 stipulates that the Minister has authority to appoint members of the board of directors and the vice-chancellor of a public university (PMD, 1998). The Minister's power in this regard has existed since the amendment of the UUCA in 1975. The Minister is also empowered to appoint deputy vice-chancellors in public universities. By 2018, all 20 public universities have been granted institutional autonomy in the form of freedom from various bureaucratic requirements, but this freedom has not included permission for boards of directors to appoint vice-chancellors (Wan & Abdul Razak, 2015).

The MEBHE proposed a separation of the academic responsibilities from the administrative and management responsibilities of vice-chancellors of public universities. This proposal reflected clearly a neoliberal preference for having 'managed professionals' (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000), a trend that typically increases the number of non-academic, managerial and professional staff members in universities at the expense of the number of academic staff members. As Smyth (2017) illustrated, this trend reinforced the influence of neoliberalism in reconfiguring the governance under the pretext of 'excellence' in terms of rankings and quality assurance. Requiring the vice-chancellor to focus on administrative and management functions, and to delegate academic and research responsibilities to a deputy, implies a hierarchy of university that would result, ironically, in the core academic functions of a university becoming secondary in nature to the administrative and managerial functions.

The appointment process for vice-chancellors has also become deficient under provisions in the UUCA, as Morshidi, Abdul Razak and Azman (2012), and Dzulkifli (2015), have pointed out. Even with the establishment of a search committee to make recommendations to the Minister, as stipulated in the UUCA (as revised in 2009), there remains a lack of transparency in the search process. Members of the search committees do not always represent faithfully the range of stakeholder interests, and at times, there have been marked mismatches between institutional missions and characteristics of the appointees to leadership positions. For instance, to become globally reputable, public universities in Malaysia need an appointment process for vice-chancellors that will result in the appointment of leaders who are "visionary, able to celebrate diversity and have an international outlook" (Morshidi et al., 2012, p. 512).

The matter of leadership was identified as one of the 'shifts' identified in the MEBHE, where it was proposed that the talent pool for HEI leadership needed strengthening. The Higher Education Leadership Academy, established by the Ministry of Higher Education in response to the NHESP, has been given the task of profiling individual candidates for leadership positions and maintaining an up-to-date database on these candidates. The Academy is also conducting training courses on leadership and related matters. Granting more institutional autonomy to selected public universities has highlighted a major role for boards of directors to develop leadership succession plans (MOHE, 2011a).

All the same, shortfalls remain in the existing process of appointing leaders for public universities. First, while boards of directors are being expected to plan for leadership succession, search committees making recommendations to the Minister may not be be privy to the strategic interests, needs and requirements of the universities to which leaders will be appointed (Morshidi et al., 2012). In other words, the search process may not fully take into account any succession plans developed institutionally. Furthermore, contrary to normal practice in many international settings, there are no terms of reference or composition requirements for search committees in for university leaders in Malaysia, which means that they may be very unrepresentative.

There seems also to be a lack of expectation that search committees should extend beyond existing public universities when looking for future university leaders. At an international level, leading national universities compete globally for the best and most qualified candidates to lead their institutions, irrespective of the person's gender, nationality, religious beliefs or race. The MEBHE could well have made some reference to this need in Malaysia's context. University leaders appointed from an international field of candidates might, however, be more inclined to insist on less external interferences in their university.

The situation is different in private universities, where the chief executive officer is appointed by the board of directors, subject to approval by the Registrar-General of Institutions of Private Higher Education located in the Ministry of Higher Education, and where there is no requirement for the establishment of academic senates. Many of these institutions were established by privatised national corporations, government-linked companies and political parties (Lim & Williams, 2015; Tierney, 2010), and so their boards of directors are commonly comprised of individuals from these corporations, companies or political parties. Interestingly, many of the more successful private universities in Malaysia have been led and managed by former vice-chancellors or deputy vice-chancellors from the public sector. That being the case, the main factor contributing to leadership weaknesses in the public sector may be systemic in origin, rather than necessarily being the result of deficiencies in the appointees. Clearly, though, the private sector has a big advantage in matters of leadership because of its capacity to decide matters independently.

Local, Regional and Global Drivers

Recent developments in the governance and leadership of public universities in Malaysia may well be influenced by regional and global trends and circumstances, but by far the most obvious driver is the Government's commitment to economic neoliberalism, particularly in the form of NPM (see Larbi, 1999). A commitment to neoliberalism may be traced back to the late 1990s when corporatisation of public universities first became popular. More recently, it is evident in a preoccupation with public sector efficiency and effectiveness, and with flexibility, measurement and outputs (Besosa, 2007; Larbi, 1999). This situation has given rise to some deep tensions and is seen by some to be at odds with the underlying philosophy of the Malaysian education system, as expresses in the National Education Philosophy (Dzulkifli, 2015). According to this Philosophy, important goals for the education system include: to 'produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonic', and to 'produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent' and 'who are responsible and capable of achieving high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, society and nation at large'. Also considered by some to be at risk is the notion of higher education as a process involving the dispassionate pursuit of knowledge and philosophical reflection, and as having a special role assigned to universities to unify, safeguard and transmit knowledge in the interests of the nation state (Readings, 1996). These aims are intangible in nature and cannot be simply measured by means of reference to efficiency and outputs

The NHESP's main references to governance and leadership were in the context of strengthening the internal governance of public universities by strengthening their leadership. This aspiration was seen to include: identifying and defining the required leadership roles of HEIs, institutionalising

the right processes in areas of selection, development, evaluation and renewal of leadership, and developing a talent pipeline (MOHE, 2007a). Reference was also made to the desirability of a change in the mode of ministerial guidance of public universities, from one based on regulation to one based on facilitation. Subsequently, in the action plan, a Higher Education Leadership Academy was established, and the Ministry of Higher Education also developed a Code of University Good Governance, a University Good Governance Index, and a Guide for Preparing and Conducting an Audit to Determine Readiness for Autonomy (see MOHE, 2007a & 2011b). During the granting of the status for the first time in 2012, the Minister of Higher Education explained would mean that these universities would no longer be burdened by bureaucratic rules and processes. Furthermore, the supervisory role of the Ministry for these universities would be handed back to the board of directors of each of the institutions concerned (Priya, 2012). Some universities have taken advantage of this new level of autonomy, as, for example, in the case of the Universiti Sains Malaysia and the Universiti Malaya which they admitted students directly rather than as part of the Ministry's centralised admissions process. The direct admission by the two universities were discontinued in 2017 and are currently part of the centralised process. In general, however, there remains a lack of understanding about how the new level of autonomy might be applied.

More recently, the MEBHE has introduced the notion of 'empowered governance', with two strategies identified. The first is concerned with redefining stakeholder roles and decision rights – including the need to redefine the role of the Ministry in relation to public HEIs, and the need to revise the governance structures and decision-making rights of all HEIs. The second is concerned with balancing institutional autonomy and accountability – including the need to define new performance contracts, to strengthen the quality assurance framework, and to develop best practice frameworks for institutional governance (MOE, 2015). It remains too early to comment on the impact of these strategies and the associated initiatives, but the strategies indicate a move in the direction of strengthening the influence of neoliberalism. In the meantime, public universities, and the higher education system more broadly, remain firmly under the grip of the UUCA, with no sign evident of any plan by the State to retreat from this position. Also of note is that the MEBHE has been almost solely concerned with the public sector, with little attention given to the circumstances of the private sector.

Three aspects of the present situation that clearly illustrate the influence of neoliberalism on the governance of higher education may be highlighted. The first concerns the prominence being given to accountability, especially in the MEBHE, where 'empowered governance' is explained in terms of balancing autonomy with accountability. Accountability has been tied to performance contracts, another characteristic of NPM (see Larbi, 1999), and, in turn, performance contracts outline key performance indicators (KPIs). These indicators are measurable performance targets used to drive industrial productivity and are different conceptually from key intangible performances (KIPs), which are largely immeasurable and where the 'softer' dimensions of governance and leadership generally fall. KIPs address characteristics like passion, sincerity, ethics and the like, which are of vital importance in providing a lasting working foundation for a higher education institution. Fundamentally, the question is one of whether to use the conventional measurable (quantitative) items and/or immeasurable (qualitative) items to examine higher education and the functioning of universities. In choosing the measurable and ignoring the immeasurable, Cole (2009) argues such practice as mainly a 'lazy' way of understanding and approaching quality. There are many important elements of a university that cannot be measured in concrete terms, for instance, engagement with society and humanity, where this is increasingly becoming relevant as the 'third mission' of universities, especially in the context of education for sustainable development. Hence, there is a need to strike a balance between measurable/tangible and immeasurable/intangible indicators, which we argue has much to do with the deeper articulation of accountability and quality in the plans; more so, when skewed by the paucity of meaning and depth beyond just numbers, percentages and figures as dictated by neoliberal philosophy. Therefore the mere focus on 'countable' measures, such as number of publications, amount of research grants, or percentage of students graduated, may

not paint an accurate picture of the quality of a university in terms of its impact and contribution to knowledge, society and humanity. Such a focus lacks the 'soul' of what the ethos of education stands for, and, in other words, it fails in the realm of 'human governance' as embodied and lived in the human person.

In so far as the initiative of strengthening the existing Rating System for Malaysian HEIs (SETARA) is concerned, which has been outlined in the MEBHE, the approach further illustrates the emphasis on measurable/tangibles. Conceptually it is no difference in the use of metrics to measure and benchmark, as adopted by many global university rankings, to express quality or world-class. The fact is that global university rankings is another legacy of neoliberalism in higher education, which is a misleading way to show quality by 'comparing' universities purely through a number game – limited category at that (Hazelkorn, 2015). Therefore, by relying mainly on metrics and measurable indicators in constructing ratings and rankings may lead us a superficial understanding of, if not undermining, our universities in terms of quality of contributions and impact, and the over-reliance on measurable/tangibles articulated in the MEBHE through instruments such as SETARA continue to have huge bearing of neoliberalism and accountability on the state of governance and leadership of the university.

The second aspect relates to the effort to develop best practices for institutional governance, whereby it is clear that the MEBHE proposes to develop a comprehensive framework for enhancing the effectiveness of institutional governance. This proposal further illustrates that the NPM and neoliberal influence are apparent since the guideline suggested for developing the framework is to be adopted from corporate and private management models, including the Malaysian Code on Corporate Governance developed by the Securities Commission of Malaysia and/or the Government-Linked Company (GLC) Transformation Programme Green Book by the Putrajaya Committee on GLC High Performance. In other words, the corporate governance mechanism of a profit-driven institution will be utilised as a template for assessing the performance of a public university that exists with an entirely different *raison d'etre* and therefore warrants a different approach

Furthermore, the initiative to be partial to corporate and private management models signals an intention by the State through the Ministry of Higher Education to intensify the culture of audit, another legacy of NPM. While some forms of internal and external audit based on business and corporate cultures could be adopted or adapted for universities as an acceptable form of check-and-balance, there is a need to keep sight of the ideal of the university as an institution with a long tradition and a capacity to develop its own successful forms of checks-and-balances. A collegial system for electing leaders democratically, peer review processes for determining quality publications and for academic promotion, opportunities for intellectual discourse through public lectures, fairness through the use of external and independent thesis examiners, the *viva voce* process of doctoral education that is open to public, are among the long list of practices that continue to exist in academe and that are seen to be essential forms of check-and-balance. The value of fundamental research cannot be instantly evaluated through products and commercialisation, and so using for evaluation purposes corporate and business concepts based on income generation will result a mismatch of expectations about the need for and value of fundamental academic research.

The third aspect, however, suggests potential benefits for public universities in Malaysia which are limited by bureaucracy. This aspect concerns the decentralisation of management, which, according to Larbi (1999, p. 17) is yet another of the strands of NPM. Public universities by virtual of its establishment are classified as federal statutory bodies and academic and support staff have the status of civil servants, which means that public universities in Malaysia tend to be highly bureaucratic (MOHE, 2006). The many, and often superfluous, bureaucratic impositions on public universities, together with the many corporate managerial regulations imposed internally by university offices, result in a hybrid of bureaucratic and corporate culture (Azman, Morshidi & Muhammad, 2011). This culture has caused public universities to lag behind their private counterpart in matter of governance and leadership. Hence, initiatives to unshackle the bureaucratic processes and reform the civil service mindset by decentralising management are to be welcomed. In this regard, the

MEBHE expressed clearly an intention to grant autonomy to public universities and transform the role of the Ministry from being a tight controller to being a regulator and policymaker. However, if not accompanied by significant change in the structure and status of these institutions, the granting of autonomous status to public universities may not change much (see Asimiran & Hussin, 2012; Fauziah & Ng, 2015; Wan & Abdul Razak, 2015).

This situation points to yet another issue, that is, that the notion of autonomy is not fully appreciated and understood by the bureaucrats (Dzulkifli, 2012), leading to the lack of articulation about the relevant strategies in the MEBHE to undertake structural changes in public universities drastic enough to facilitate the institutions to comprehensively exercise the autonomy accorded to them, not just limited to managing human resources or finance. Although there are good intentions on the part of the Ministry of Higher Education in so far as autonomy is concerned, the power and requirements of central agencies such as the Treasury and Public Service Department are paramount. It is therefore important for the Department of Higher Education in the Ministry of Higher Education to argue that any flexibility to be accorded to the public universities as a form of autonomy must continue to ensure that the government of the day is protected and insulated. If this assurance cannot be guaranteed based on the operating procedures drawn up by public universities with the autonomy status (in particular with respect to flexibility in relation to financial autonomy), the Treasury in particular and other governmental agencies will not agree to the proposed changes as part of the autonomy requested by the Department of Higher Education and public universities. Importantly, the idea that the State is the master and public universities are servants, even with autonomy, needs to be re-examined because the granting of autonomy would mean nothing if a master-servant relationship persists. Thus, to date, it is difficult to envision to what extent decentralisation of management and the granting of autonomy can bring into reality an empowered form of governance in public universities.

Discussion and Conclusion

From an analysis of the NHESP and MEBHE, specifically in terms of what these documents have to say about governance and leadership initiatives for the higher education system, it is clear that neoliberalism is continuing to be influential and NPM is having a particular impact on public universities. This trend presents risks, most notably that the higher education system will develop in ways that loosen its connection with the country's National Education Philosophy.

The NHESP and MEBHE initiatives certainly reflect Malaysia's ambition for a more vibrant higher education sector, but they do not go far enough in empowering universities, especially public universities. Though announcements have been made that the State wishes to adopt a more arms-length relationship with public universities so that they can be more autonomous in shaping their own future, there are no convincing signs of a retreat by the State from playing an interventionist roles in key policymaking, administration and management matters relating to public universities.

If the influence of neoliberalism and NPM in the governance and leadership of public universities, of the higher education system, is not properly understood and addressed, it will continue to raise much concern. While decentralisation of management, as suggested in the MEBHE is a way forward, there are other constructs that need to be disentangled, given that the NPM has been engaging the attention of the civil service for almost half a century. Some of the hostilities have eroded the academic values, cultures and practices, and shaped the university into an disinterested custodian of knowledge. For this to happen, a transformation as advocated by the NHESP and more comprehensively the MEBHE needs to take root. It must be made very clear that universities in Malaysia should chart its own course toward a relevant and engaged institution of learning that embraces whole-heartedly the National Education Philosophy as its starting point and guiding principles. This means that governance and leadership aspect must be aligned to this aspiration, and resisting attempts to transpose the higher education landscape as mere training grounds for skilled workers, journal-paper churning factories, or an efficiently managed organisations with no higher purposes directed towards humanity and the survival of the planetary system.

These are what universities are intended for: to play a significant role to educate responsive global citizens and contribute to the creation and dissemination of relevant knowledge to the community, society and humanity at large. This is reiterated in the 2015 World Education Forum with the theme of "Transforming lives through education" for post-2015 and beyond. The Incheon Declaration that is adopted includes important statements, many unprecedented in such declarations, for example on free and publicly-funded education; the centrality of equity and inclusion; the quality of education including in emergency situations like worn-torn and disaster-ravaged countries; the recognition of civil society participation and engagement, including indigenous knowledge and wisdom; and commitments to sustainability and global citizenship education. These and more are the trajectory for the future. Malaysian higher education system and universities must clearly have the right structures in place, not least in relation to governance and leadership if they are to be relevant and actively participate in "transforming lives through education."

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Portrayal of Invaders and Conquerors of Indian Subcontinent: Analysis of History Textbooks Studied in Pakistani Schools

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Abstract: *The textbooks are believed to be containing true and authentic historical narratives and it also remained the sole tool employed by a state to impart a certain notion of its identity. The qualitative perspective best suited this research, and within it, the qualitative content analysis method was chosen to analyze the content of textbooks. This study analyzed history textbooks of classes six to eight published by the three state textbook authorities in Pakistan. The focus of the textbook analysis was to identify discourse strategies used to construct, reinforce and strengthen a certain notion of pupils' identity. The study revealed the use of representation, unification, avoidance, and trivialization strategies as the textbook writers created images of invaders, conquerors and rulers of the Indian subcontinent and the impact on Indian people and society. This study suggests that history textbooks should present history with multiple interpretations using multiple sources to construct a historical narrative.*

Keywords: *Muslim invaders, Muslim rulers, Indian subcontinent, Identity, History textbooks, Hindu rulers, Hindu religion, Hindu society*

Introduction

Textbooks are studied for quite some time now with varying purposes, such as cultural and social aspects of textbooks; promotion of harmony and understanding among different ethnic and religious groups; identifying stereotypes, prejudices, and misrepresentation (intentional or unintentional); women and their representation in textbooks; social, cultural and religious influence on textbooks; the process of textbook design and publication; politics of textbook writing and approval; politics of textbook content, its selection and writing, teachers' classroom pedagogical practices; and textbooks didactical quality (van Wiele, 2008). The textbooks are also analyzed to develop inclusive society (multiculturalism, peace education) especially through history, geography, civics, and language textbooks as democracy, intercultural and international awareness, and human rights are relevant to these textbooks.

The History (including Social Studies), English and Urdu textbooks are inextricably entwined with each other in Pakistan because all these textbooks contain historical narratives. The History and Social Studies encompass pre, and post-partition history while the English and Urdu textbooks focus on the post-partition history of Pakistan. This study is delimited to Social Studies and History textbooks of classes 4 to 8. The purpose of this study is to identify how different invaders were imagined and presented to pupils in the historical narrative in textbooks analyzed here. This study will also reveal how writers silenced history as they choose not to present a particular era in the textbooks to pupils. This paper will also reflect, briefly though, on the impact of the images of Muslim invaders and Muslim rulers of the Indian subcontinent presented in the textbooks.

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Literature Review

History Textbooks, Religion and Identity

Identity and affinity to a certain history are formed through textual resources, especially national history narrative found in history textbooks. These narratives become "transparent windows on reality" (Bruner, 2002, p 6) to pupils where they view the past through these narratives. It is suggested that "identities by themselves do not exist; they are constructed by identity narratives" (Martin 1995, p. 15). Wodak, De Cillia, Reisigl, and Liebhart (2009) pronounce that there is "no such thing as one national identity" because "different identities are discursively constructed according to the audience, setting, topic and substantive content" (p. 4). The narrative also "impose a structure" of how the past should be imagined "a compelling reality on what we experience, even a philosophical stance" (Propp, 1968, p. 89). It is argued that a narrative is a narrator's perspective, but it also requires the narrator to synchronize itself with the narrative, which manifests itself through its writing style and the language (words and phrases) used in these narratives. The narratives are a site of shaping and reshaping national identity and identities which are conflicting and varied within a nation and a state, thus negating the idea of a singular identity of a citizen and of a state because of various groups promoting sets of identity narratives (Ozkirimli, 2000, 2005).

The debate on identity could not be completed without discussing religion and its impact on identity construction. The debates in the West about Western identity and in the Muslim world about Muslim identity were reshaping the national discourses on identity as religion became a core point of discussion shaping national identity discourses (Berggren, 2009; Kurth, 2007; Myhill, 2006). The new meanings of identity with religion as a core component of the identity construct and search for a new meaning of identity in a diverse society (ethnic, religious and linguistic) became the focus of many debates and studies in both the West and the Muslim world. The European and American identities and Christian values became synonymous, while Muslim identity was coupled with Islam and its values (Berger & Lorenz, 2008; Berggren, 2009). This debate also contributed in the history writing exercises of different countries and some history textbooks gave space to minorities (migrant groups in the Western societies) and in some, it still continued to be debated by the states and their textbook regimes and minorities struggled to get acknowledged in the national discourses, especially in Muslim majority countries.

The founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah recognized in his very first speech to the members of the first constituent assembly of the newly created state of Pakistan that there were "majority and minority communities - the Hindu community and the Muslim community" (Government of Pakistan, 1947). He highlighted the differences within Muslims (Shias, Sunnis, Pathans, Punjabis, Balochis) and Hinuds (Brahmins, Vashnavas, Khatris, also Bengalese, Madrasis) and suggested that these differences would vanish under state's narrative of equality, justice and fairness. Jinnah's address continued to be discussed by both sides of the divide on Pakistani identity as they addressed the roots of Pakistani identity and Jinnah's vision of Pakistani identity and both sides found references to support their argument, be it the conservative or liberal groups.

A few recent studies (Ahmed, 2017; Durrani, Dunne, Fincham, & Crossouard, 2017; Kalin & Siddiqui, 2017; Shah & Ishaque, 2017) noted that religion and identity remained integral to Pakistan's national identity narrative and continue to embed it in Pakistan's national security narrative. The textbooks (especially Social Studies, History, Geography, English and Urdu) continued to be the sole source of communication of the national historical, political, cultural, and religious narratives to pupils and reinforce and reconnect the national narrative with Pakistan's security. The Government of Pakistan (GoP) focused on using religion as a tool to promote national integration and assimilation of different ethnic groups presuming that the assimilation model would make these groups abandon their socio-political and cultural loyalties and make these differences irrelevant. The differences between and among ethnic, religious, social and cultural groups would diminish because the government would use its known and unknown means and devices to enforce the differentialist

model, which was to negate the pluralist Pakistan, imagined by Jinnah in his first address to the first constituent assembly of independent Pakistan pronounced

> You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the State (GoP, 1947)

History Textbook Revision in South East and South Asia

The history textbook revisions were a product of conflict between groups within a country and concerns shown by other countries. The textbook revision exercises in South East Asia and South Asia are examples of this. The studies about history textbooks in Japan, China and South Korea generated heated exchanges between these countries where China and Korea used history card, "a tool available for shaming, pressuring, and gaining leverage on the Japanese government" (2008, p. 110) observed Schneider. The changes in the Japanese history textbooks perspective became a political hotspot between the ruling party and the conservative politicians and groups. The changes made in Japanese history textbooks turned out to be political warfare between these countries (Biontino, 2018; Duus, 2017). The history textbooks in South Asia, especially Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, went through various revision exercises though these countries shared historical past, its rulers, culture, arts, monuments and literature. Though the majority of the Indian subcontinent (under British rule) belonged to the Hindu religion with Muslims, the second minority group consists of many other small ethnic and religious minority groups such as Sikhs, Christians, Zoroastrians, Buddhists and many small indigenous religious groups. The history textbook revision exercises were influenced by religion as it became a key pillar to construct the national political, cultural and historical narrative around it. The Indian history textbooks removed references to Muslim rulers and added more references of Hindu rulers in their history textbook (Dalrymple, 2005; Emerson & Levi, 2020; Habib, Jaiswal, & Aditya, 2003; Rahman, Hamzah, Meerah, & Rahman, 2010; Rosser, 2003; Sen, 2012; Sharma, 2020). These studies also revealed how Bangladesh and India were reinventing their history and reinterpreting different historical events shared by these countries to suit their narrational, political, cultural and religious narratives. The rewritten historical narrative created 'us and 'them' where parts of history were given more space and presented in a positive way (positive representation strategy) while some parts of history were either trivialized (given little space) or avoided (given no space) in history textbooks, deemed unworthy and unacceptable by the state because of its being incongruous with its political, cultural and historical narrative.

History Textbook Revision in Pakistan

History textbooks in Pakistan have gone through many phases of revisions, and two forces, wars with India (1948, 1965 and 1971), and the Zia-ul-Haq's Islamizing education and curriculum policy continue to influence textbooks. These forces shaped not only the history curriculum but other subjects, such as English, Urdu, Ethics, Islamic Education, Sciences, and Mathematics. The earlier studies highlighted that the ruling elite focused more on state-building and paid little attention to nation-building, and this continues to be the focus of history textbooks (Durrani, 2013; Durrani et al., 2017; GoP, 2009; Joshi, 2010; Qasmi, 2019). The defeat of the Pakistan Army in the Eastern wing of Pakistan (that resulted in the emergence of East Pakistan as a separate country, named Bangladesh), reignited the debate on state-building. This time around, the state decided to use Islam as the tool to be employed to construct a certain notion of Pakistani identity, an imagined identity, derived and rooted in the Muslim invaders and Muslim rule in the Indian subcontinent. The conflict with India and wars with India ware used to reinforce this identity.

The second phase of curriculum revision (Zia-ul-Haq's Islamizing education) used Islam as the only force that would shape the curriculum and textbook content, and this revision resulted in changes

that were well documented in different studies. Since this study was focused on history textbooks, only historical narrative and history textbooks would be discussed here. The studies (Hoodbhoy & Nayyar, 1985; Kurin, 1985; Zaidi, 2011) highlighted the writing of the history curriculum under Islamic influence and aimed to promote a particular version of Islam, its history and impact on the world and the Indian subcontinent. The historical narrative found space in other textbooks (English and Urdu, the two core subjects studied by pupils from grade 1 to grade 12) showed the emphasis on a certain notion of identity, which these scholars considered 'distorted' because it was founded on a distorted version of history.

Education Policy and History Textbooks

Pakistan, in its 73 years as an independent country, had seen eight education policies and numerous education commissions. The focus of each of these policies and commissions was to produce 'good citizen' (read patriotic citizens) and the latest education policy adopted in 2009 was not different from the previous ones. However, the 2009 education policy was formulated under a moderate regime which was not the case with the education policies that came out in 80s and 90s. The curriculum content (textbooks) in 60s and 70s were written to promote conservative Islam but the 80s and 90s saw it shifting towards fundamentalist Islam. General Zia-ul-Haq's regime brought about changes in curriculum policy to appeal to a vast religious constituency, Sunni Muslims, and to seek the political legitimacy of his military rule (Lall, 2008, 2012).

General Musharaf's military regime tried to undo the Islamizing curriculum policy but failed (Muhammad & Brett, 2017) because the ruling elite, made up of Sunni bureaucracy, Sunni military leadership and Sunni business and trading classes opposed it. This document was prepared by the liberal civil society groups with minimum interference from the powerful bureaucracy. The document presented Pakistan as a pluralistic society and vowed to promote a globalized pluralistic worldview in its curriculum policy. This document was opposed by the religious groups and members of the National Assembly and the Senate refused to adopt it unless modified as per their demands. The policy document was sent to the bureaucracy that ensured that curriculum policy did not shift its focus from Sunni version of Islam and the antagonistic approach of curriculum towards India (Muhammad, 2015). The adoption of the modified 2009 education policy showed that it was difficult to shift the focus of Sunnified education and curriculum policy. It was predicted (Ahmad, 2008; Ali & Rehman, 2001) that the Zia regime's Islamization of the education and curriculum would be difficult to reverse because Pakistan became dependent on Islam and Islamic nationalism as the sole source of its identity and of it becoming an obstacle in constructing a globalized identity of the people of Pakistan.

The latest education policy stated the purpose of education as "to play a fundamental role in the preservation of the ideals, which lead to the creation of Pakistan and strengthen the concept of the basic ideology within the Islamic ethos" (GoP, 2009, p. 17). The education policies considered the Objective Resolution as the primary document and emphasized on presenting and promoting the distinct identity of the people of Pakistan to pupils, which was different from the people of India. The differences between the Pakistani and Indian identity were of religion; the former was rooted in Islam while the latter was embedded in the Hindu religion. The textbook writers highlighted these differences, especially the religious difference, and these descriptions created 'us' and 'them' not only in the Indian subcontinent but elsewhere as well (Mohammad-Arif, 2007; Naseem, 2005; Naseem, Ghosh, McGill, & Mcdonald, 2010; Qasmi, 2019; Saigol, 2003, 2005; Zaidi, 2011), The differences between Muslims (us) and non-Muslims (them) were highlighted and presented to the pupils by eulogizing the former and presenting the latter as the opposite of the former.

Two recent researches were important because they were related to the history writing project of Pakistan. Chughtai's (2015) doctoral thesis analyzed how the textbook regime in Pakistan produced history textbooks while Qasmi (2019) in his research article, analyzed how Pakistan's history writing project that started in 1947 shaped the pre-partition and post-partition historical narrative.

He concluded that the individuals and institutions (government backed) involved in history writing project severed the historical, cultural and linguistic ties "with the region that had nurtured the idea in the first place" (p. 38). The territorial, cultural and linguistic links with the Indian subcontinent were perceived and presented as a threat to the Pakistan and its population (Muslims). The history writing exercise trivialized the Hindu ruled subcontinent, its people, their religion, culture and landscape by giving no space to Hindu rulers and their social, cultural, and political contributions to the Indian subcontinent's society. Chughtai (2015) concluded in her thesis that though Pakistan's foundational ideology became rooted in Islam and its fundamentals, yet Pakistan's ruling elite, through its different apparatus including textbook regime failed to create a "demand for a politically extremist religious nationalist state" (p. 200). She concluded that it showed that the majority of the people of Pakistan were not inclined to make Pakistan an Islamic political extremist society and country.

Representation (us and them) in Pakistani Textbooks

The construction of contested historical narrative in Pakistan was drawn from "the historical themes, the periodisation, the geographical imaginings, and the heroes and villains of this historiography were drawn from the pre-partition discourse of Muslim nationalist historiography" (Bajwa, 2009, p. 5). The textbooks' narratives chose heroes, villains, and events to be glorified and remembered, and those that should never be mentioned and made part of Pakistan's historical narrative. The textbook writers found a master narrative (Thijs, 2008; Wertsch, 2008) imposing a certain shape on the identity narrative written in textbooks whereby 'Islam' became a common link to understand and construct past. This construction of the past established the nation-state 'Pakistan' and its demand in the earlier history of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent and Islam's dominance in the Middle East, North Africa, and Southwestern Europe. The narrative was rooted in religion, that is Islam, and this was also used to create 'us' and 'them'. The Indian subcontinent was viewed in terms of Hindus and Muslims continuously fighting for land and control over its resources for centuries. The latter won most of the wars and brought about positive changes that otherwise, would not be possible to implement; while the former being inferior not only in terms of military prowess but also in their social, cultural and religious outlook of society.

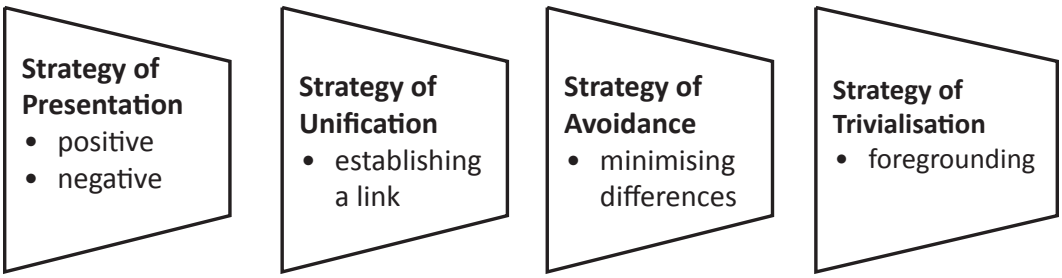
The representation of Hindus as 'them' in Pakistani textbooks could be traced back to the earlier years of Pakistani textbooks (Aziz, 1993). He identified many fallacies and incorrect information in textbooks and his work, considered as the benchmark and trendsetter in such studies in Pakistan as many academics (Durrani, 2013; Durrani & Dunne, 2010; Durrani et al., 2017; Fazila-Yacoobali, 1999; Giunchi, 2007; Saigol, 2003, 2005; Yaqian, 2011; Zakaria, 2018) followed Aziz's work and continued working in this area. The idea of non-Muslims (Hindus in particular) being the only enemy of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent was given significant space in textbooks, and all platform, political, social, cultural, and religious were used cement the differences between Muslims and non-Muslims. The concept of Hindus as the enemies of Muslims and Islam was extended to Indian National Congress which was presented as a project envisioned by the Hindus, and the British, the enemies of Muslims, to weaken Islam and Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. The Hindus and British worked together to weaken the Muslim rule and Islam as they confiscated not only powers from Muslims but also their resources, their land, their livelihood and businesses and redistributed it amongst non-Muslims.

Research Methodology

This study analyzed history textbook content using a qualitative approach due to its ability to unravel the history textbooks content and understand how the Indian subcontinent and its history were imagined and presented to pupils. This approach provided "an in-depth, intricate and detailed understanding of meanings, actions, non-observable as well as observable phenomena, attitudes, intentions and behaviours" (Gonzalez, Brown, & Slate, 2008, p. 3) presented to pupils through the actions of different invaders, Muslims and non-Muslims, found in narratives.

This study made use of a qualitative content analysis method to analyze date (textbook content). It was becoming popular amongst academics and researchers working in the arts, humanities, and social sciences fields. The rapid advancement in science and technology and computer applications also contributed to make research plans, organize, and execute research projects in a systematic fashion, especially the analysis of complex and huge data (Neuendorf, 2017). Content analysis was explained as "systematic, objective" whereby researchers through "careful examination" of the language used in textbooks "predicted relationship among variables measured in the content analysis" (Neuendorf, 2017, p. 72). The data analyzed in this study was complex because of the nature of the data, content from history textbooks due to the naturalistic settings of these textbooks. The categories (see Figure 1) were thematically derived from the textbook content after the careful reading of textbooks.

Figure 1: Analytical framework



This study analyzed nine history textbooks published by three government created textbook boards which are Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (PCTB), Sindh Textbook Board (STB) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textbook Board (KPKTB). The first reading of the textbooks helped in creating a list of invaders found in history textbooks, while the second reading was used to identify words and phrases used to describe them. A profile of each invader was created using the words and phrases used in the textbooks. Some of the profiles were short, and some of them were long, and this showed that some of the invaders and conquerors were given little space, and some were given more space in textbooks, highlighting the value and importance of different Muslim invaders and Muslim rulers of the Indian subcontinent in Pakistan's historical narrative.

This study used an analytical framework (see Figure 1) borrowed from Wodak et al. (2009) and Klerides (2008). These two studies analyzed at texts (textbook and interviews) and identified strategies used (by textbook writers and citizens) to construct, reconstruct, deconstruct, and strengthen their identity. The strategy employed mostly by textbook writers and given considerable space in the textbook was the presentation of invaders, which communicated both positive and negative images (representations) to pupils. The second strategy found a common link connecting all the images, while the third strategy revealed the difference or differences between and amongst different images and representations. The fourth strategy used by writers was of foregrounding history.

Findings and Discussion

Indus Valley Civilization, Aryans and Muslim

Strategy of Representation

The Indus Valley Civilization was the first image of South Asia, and writers juxtaposed two groups, Muslims and non-Muslims, against each other and asked pupils to compare these two groups (see Table 1). They employed the positive representation strategy for the former and the negative

representation for the latter. They also compared religions (Islam Hinduism and Buddhism) and presented Buddhism as a positive influence on society and portrayed Hinduism as a negative influence (see Table 2) because of its practices. There were two opposite sets of words, the positive representation, (peaceful, kind, generous, welcoming, a developed community, developed city) and the negative representation (cruel, unsympathetic, no civic sense, fighting and quarreling all the time, taking advantage of others' generosity and kindness). The artefacts displayed in museums in Pakistan also reflected the glory of Gandhara and Indus Valley Civilizations (Buddhist). The Museums had nothing that would be reminiscent of Aryan civilization and Hindu rule and reflective of their achievement (Amstutz, 2019). It showed that writers wanted pupils to connect themselves to Gandhara and Indus valley civilizations and not with the Aryan civilization because what was attributed to the former was also attributed to Muslims and Islam.

Table 1: Profiles of Indus Valley Civilization and Aryans

Indus Valley Civilization	Aryans
a religious state, followers of Buddhism, peaceful, farmers and agriculture-related industry, developed complex system of government, the state collected taxes, build grain stores to store grain, build cities with all amenities (sewage system, roads, public meeting and recreation places), public schools and universities, rich culture, knowledge flourished, generous, tolerant and welcoming, a constructive force,	once refugees in the land, hungry and looking for shelter and food, cruel, ungrateful, unsympathetic, no civic sense, always fighting and quarreling with each other, physically strong, forced out local people from their land and captured their area, made them work as slaves, forced their religion (an early form of Hinduism, primarily focusing on separating society into groups, that is, the caste system in modern Hinduism), excluded a large population (untouchables) from the community life, fond of dance and music, a destructive force

References: KPKTB, 2017a; PCTB, 2017a; and STB, 2017a

Table 2: Differences between Buddhism and Hinduism

Hinduism	Buddhism
• Belief in caste system	• No caste system
• Brahmans had an important role	• Brahmans were criticized
• Spending lavishly on religious rituals and customs	• No spending on rituals or customs
• Vedic books are sacred.	• Vedic books are not accepted
• Some sort of belief in God	• No belief in God
• Animals sacrifices were offered	• No animals were sacrificed
• No central prophet in Hinduism	• Buddha was the central Prophet

Reference: KPKTB, 2017a, p. 21

The next list of images was of invaders from present-day Afghanistan, Middle East, Central Asia, and Europe. The writers compared the Muslims invaders with the local (Hindu) rulers and presented the former using the positive representation strategy while the latter was described using the negative representation strategy, just the opposite of the former (see Table 3). The scholars (Avari, 2007, 2013; Bose & Jalal, 2017) identified "Aryans, Greeks, Scythians, Parthians, Shakas and Huns before the eighth century, as well as Arabs, Persians, Turks, Afghans and Mongols between the eighth and the twelfth centuries" (Bose & Jalal, 2017, p. 22) invading the Indian subcontinent. The analysis of textbooks revealed that textbook writers chose only a few of them and made them part of history textbooks such as Aryans, Greeks, Muslims from Persia, and Central Asia.

Table 3: Representation of Muslim Rulers against the Local rulers (Hindu)

Muslim Rulers	Rajputs (Hindu Rulers)
brave, intelligent, lenient, generous, kind, gave money and land to build temples, opened schools (Islamic), build mosques, welcome traders, industrialists, developed infrastructure, improved agriculture, art, and literature flourished, treated local population (Hindu) with respect, gave them land and money to build temples, did not interfere in their religious customs and rites	scheming, cunning, greedy, against Muslims and Islam, no contribution in Sciences, literature, art, united by religion

References: KPKTB, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; PCTB, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; STB, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c

The textbook writers presented all Muslim invaders and rulers were connected through religion, Islam, and this connection was aimed at creating a just and fair society in the Indian subcontinent. To do it, the writers created two categories, (a) person and (b) ruler. The first category described the personal traits, and the second category presented the attributes as a ruler. The majority of the Muslim invaders and rulers shared personal qualities such as god-fearing, religious person, pious, observant of religious practices, justice-loving, kind, generous, and sympathetic. Though there were a few Muslim invaders and rulers (Ameer Taimur and Nadir Shah) who were presented as 'foreign invaders, attacked the Indian subcontinent because of its riches, plunder the land, took its looted wealth and went back to their lands.' Some Muslim invaders and rulers 'fell into merry-making (Sultan Mubarak Shah Khilji), and un-Islamic way of life (using alcohol, drugs)' after becoming the ruler and their lifestyles provided an opportunity to Hindu Rajas to become strong and attacked Muslim territories in the Indian subcontinent. The textbook writers used trivialization and foregrounding strategies when it came to Hindu rulers, their governance structure, and society under the Hindu ruler and Hindu religion's influence.

Strategy of Unification

The textbook writers used unification representation strategy by linking the Indus Valley Civilization and the Muslim invaders and rulers; both were presented as a positive influence due to their social, cultural, religious system while the latter was a destructive force because their religion (Hinduism) was divisive, cruel and unsympathetic. Though there existed a long gap between these two eras, the Muslim invaders and rulers were presented as the saviors of the Indian subcontinent's and its return to the glorious Indus Valley Civilization era, after a long Hindu occupation of the Indian subcontinent. The textbook writers unified the Muslim invaders and rulers of the Indian subcontinent with the rulers of Indus valley civilization, and they shared the same social, cultural, religious, political values.

Strategy of Foregrounding

One would also find the use of strategy 4 where images of the destruction of wars, expulsion, famine, and religious conversion were foregrounded, suggesting that nothing of these happened in the Indian subcontinent under the Muslim invaders and rulers, that is, the defeated army (Hindu) was not treated as an enemy army; they were no expulsion of Hindu rulers, Hindu aristocracy and Hindu population after those lands were conquered; there were no forced or incentivized religious conversions; the subcontinent became rich and prosperous, and there was no famine in the land. There are studies that have highlighted how the Muslim invaders and ruler used tax system and

offered incentives (land and title) to encourage the conversion of people (rich and the poor, especially the lower caste Hindus) to Islam as was suggested in earlier studies on Indian history.

> I encouraged my infidel subjects to embrace the religion of the Prophet, and I proclaimed that everyone who repeated the creed and became a Mussulman should be exempt from the jizya, or poll-tax imposed on non-believers. When this information came to the ears of the people at large, great numbers of Hindus presented themselves and were admitted to the honour of Islam. Thus they came forward day by day from every quarter, and, adopting the faith, were exonerated from the jizya and were favoured with presents and distinctions (Lane-Poole, 1906 as cited in Al-Sahli, 2013, p. 39)

The textbooks studied in this study started the South Asian region's history with the Indus valley civilization, describing the Aryan period briefly, and explaining in great detail the Muslim and the European and British invaders and rulers. The quick jump to Muslim invaders and rulers' history in the Indian subcontinent left a huge period uncounted in the history of the Indian subcontinent. The history was divided into four parts (i) Pre-historic era (until c. 2000 BC), this includes the Indus valley civilization); (2) Vedic and post-Vedic era (2000 BC to 300 BC), this includes the Aryan rule; (3) The era of the Great Empires (c. 300 BC to c. AD 500), this includes Mauryan Empire, and (4) The feudal era(from c. AD 500 to c. AD 1200 and beyond) which includes the Muslim invaders and rulers from Arabian Peninsula (Arabs), Central Asia (Turks) and Europe (Avari, 2007). There were two interpretations of Aryan; the first presented them as barbarian invaders with no civic sense, greedy and quarrelsome; while the second interpretation described them as landless people, a wandering tribe. It was summarized as follows

> There was no Aryan invasion, but there was a migration of an Indo-European speaking group of nomadic people from Iran and Afghanistan, who called themselves Arya, or the noble. The Indo-Aryan culture has developed uniquely within India herself over the last four millennia, but its origins lie in the fusion of values and heritages of the Arya and the indigenous peoples of India (Avari, 2007, p. xvii)

Strategy of Avoidance

The other strategy employed here was avoidance, that is, minimizing differences; though these two groups (Indus valley civilization and Muslim rulers) practiced different religions and have a different religious outlook, their religious differences were minimized in order to establish a political connection between these groups. The writers did not highlight the conditions of non-Muslins under Muslim rule and only presented to pupils the positive aspect of Muslim rule and Muslim rulers. The textbook writers presented Muslim rulers as generous and caring; they distributed land and gave money to Hindus to build temples and abolished and reduced jizya (Islamic tax) on poor non-Muslims. The textbook writers suggested to pupils that Hindus converted to Islam because of the generosity, kindness, tolerance and equality shown by Muslim invaders and rulers towards the weak segments of society. There were other versions of the history which were missing from the textbooks (Sarkar, 2009) suggesting the otherwise, that conversions were due to heavy jizya imposed on non-Muslims, incentives and rewards to those who converted to Islam and back the Muslim invaders and did not join Hindu kings.

The European Invader

The European invaders and rulers were presented as a positive (see Table 4) and a destructive force (see Table 5) but mostly the latter for the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent.

Table 4: European Invaders' Profile (Negative Representation)

robbers, exploited local population, attacked and robbed Indian vessels, made people captives, forced people to work for them, kept them in dirty labor camps, demanded undue privileges, bribed locals, martyred Muslims, confiscated properties of Muslims, expelled them from services, abolished Arabic and Sunsikrat, promoted the English language, promoted western education and science, destroyed local industry, unemployment and poverty increased, harsh laws for dissenting opinion, hated natives, afraid of Muslims, abusive and cruel, no jobs for Muslims all jobs for Hindus, imposed new taxes Muslims, Muslim educational and religious institutions mal-treated, closed Muslim institutions, discouraged Islamic laws, Christian preachers established missionary schools, preached their religion, Islam and Islamic education system targeted. Converted locals (low caste Hindus) to Christianity.

References: KPKTB, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; PCTB, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; STB, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c

Table 5: The Europeans Invaders' Profile (Positive Representation)

Improved infrastructure and communication services, discouraged caste system, encouraged female education, prohibited Sati, allowed widows to remarry, prohibited killing of newborn babies or burying them alive, fixed marriageable ages of girls and boys, abolished dowry

References: KPKTB, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; PCTB, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c; STB, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c

Strategy of Representation

The negative portrayal of Hindu religion continued as the (dowry, marrying girls at a very young age, women killing themselves with their husbands or staying single, female infanticide) as prohibition and discouragement of such practices was presented as the positive contribution of the European invaders and rulers. The negative presentation was similar to the Aryan's description, using force to intimidate people, making them slave due to their better-organized army and weapons, annihilating their (Muslim) language (replacing English with Urdu and Persian) and social, cultural and religious practices (through the establishment of educational institutes, and social services such as establishing hospitals and structured bureaucracy). The establishment of Missionary schools and the state support of such education and health institutes were considered a tool to convert the local population.

The textbook writers' representation of the contribution of Muslim and European invaders and rulers is dichotomous as the former was presented as a set of rulers who brought about positive changes and made a significant contribution in the social, cultural, political, economic and religious lives of the people of the Indian subcontinent while the latter was presented as a force of destruction not only for the land and its resources but also for its people, especially Muslims and people from lower social and economic segments of Indian society. The Muslim invaders and rulers chose the Indian subcontinent as their land and made it their home. In contrast, the European invaders and rulers' laws and policies brought about positive changes and prosperity for those at the top tier of society, Hindus, and destroy the multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-religious aspects of the Indian subcontinent built by the Muslim invaders and rulers over their long rule.

Conclusion

The historical narrative of Muslim conquerors, on the one hand, made Muslim heroes as the savior and messiah who came to the Indian subcontinent only to defend themselves from the attacks of Hindu rulers. The narration of Mahmood Ghazali's invasion from Central Asia happened due to continuous incursions of Hindu rulers' in his kingdom and to overtake his kingdom. The seventeen invasions resulted in huge plunder of land, and all of the loot was taken back to his kingdom in Central Asia, which he used to build mosques, religious schools, support the teaching of Islam and to fortify and expand his Islamic kingdom in what is now Afghanistan. This narration of events belittled the resistance of the local rulers, and people and textbook writers presented these rulers

cruel and because of their cruelty, the local population did not support the rulers in wars against the Muslim invaders and rulers from Central Asia and Persia. The textbook writers used the positive representation strategy to present Muslim rulers, including Ghaznavi, eulogizing their attacks and what they did in their kingdoms with all the loot they gathered from the rulers and people of the Indian subcontinent. The misery and the struggle of people after these attacks were not explained to pupils though the textbook writers ensured that pupils learn about the negative impact of European invasions and European rule in the Indian subcontinent on Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. The use of trivializing strategy by the textbook writers, on the one hand, ignored the struggles and miseries of non-Muslims caused by Muslim invaders and rulers. On the other hand, the misery and struggle of Muslims under European invaders and rulers was explained in detail to evoke hatred and dislike of the European invaders and rulers.

The winner in this battle of the construction of the historical narrative of Muslim invaders and rulers from Central Asia and Persia was the all-powerful hegemonic bureaucratic and ruling structure in Pakistan. The ruling elite (civil and military) continued to exploit textbooks to achieve their hegemonic design on the ordinary people of Pakistan by presenting to them the 'official historical knowledge' which lacked 'historical knowledge.' The history writing and rewriting exercises were undertaken since the independence of Pakistan by the bureaucracy and by the bureaucracy backed individuals and organizations as was discussed and highlighted by Qasmi (2019). He called it an exercise initiated right after Pakistan became an independent state and continued till today to construct a master narrative of pre and post-independent Pakistan and of the Indian subcontinent's history. The textbook writers used positive representation and unification strategies as they constructed a historical narrative of the subcontinent and linked the Muslim invaders and rulers and Muslim rulers with the group of Muslim landed elite who established All India Muslim League in 1906. It was established by the Muslim landed elite of the Indian subcontinent that emerged as the only representative party of Muslims in the 1945-46 elections. The leadership of the All India Muslim League was presented as the continuation of the Muslim rule in the subcontinent and presented the creation of Pakistan and Pakistan movement as a struggle against the Hindu rule. The emergence of Pakistan was constructed as the beginning of returning to the glorious era of Muslim rule in the subcontinent.

The master narrative of Pakistan's history trivialized the Hindu rulers, and the people of the Indian subcontinent, Hindus, their religion, culture, and values. The master narrative of Pakistan's history of the Indian subcontinent started with the arrival of the first Muslim ruler from the Arabian Peninsula, named Muhammad Bin Qasim, and his arrival was also portrayed as a result of local Hindu ruler's vicious treatment of Muslims in his kingdom. The textbook writers foregrounded the Indian subcontinent's history under Hindu rulers. The textbook writers created a clear distinction between the society and people living under Hindu and Muslim rulers. The Hindu population living under Hindu rulers portrayed as unhappy, suppressed under the unjust tax system to support the ruling elite while the Muslim rulers broke all those chains and made them feel safe. The textbook writers used the concept of caste and satti (burning of wife on her husband's pyre) in Hindu religion as the evils of Hindu religion, which made Hindu religion the most disliked by the local population. The Muslim conquerors and rulers transformed the Indian subcontinent and they shaped it according to the Islamic teachings of equality, justice, and fair treatment of all, men and women, irrespective of gender and social status, opposite to caste system in Hindu religion.

The history textbook mirrored what was conceived in the education policy, Pakistan a nation-state and Islam gave it a unique character, an ideological country. The Pakistani historians backed by the bureaucracy conceived and presented Pakistan as a nation-state, a monolithic group of Muslims and where national integration project could only be materialized when Islam would be presented as a unifying force and India as an enemy country (Jaffrelot, 2002; Qasmi, 2019). The education and curriculum policies portrayed Pakistan as the only country in the world founded on the ideology that Muslims were different from other religious groups (read Hindus) and they should have a different country to practice their religion. This was translated into history curriculum and textbooks whereby

Islam became a historicized force in history curriculum that would unite Muslims in Pakistan against its enemies (India and non-Muslims). The textbook regime in Pakistan tried to create harmony in the ethnically, linguistically and religiously diverse Pakistan by trivializing the differences between different Muslim groups (Islamic sects). Shafqat (2009) observed that history textbooks presented Islam as the "sole reason for the creation of Pakistan" and the founding fathers promised it as a land to preserve "'Islam' and not simply 'Muslims of undivided India' as opposed to Hindus; they prefer Islamic belief over the group as the primary source of identity" (p. 2).

Religion guided and shaped the history writing exercise in South Asia in particular because India and Pakistan both continued to present the other's religion and rulers from other's faith as the enemy. Pakistan's portrayal of Aryans and Hindu nobility and rulers during Muslim rule in the subcontinent was the opposite of how India viewed and presented it to its pupils in its history textbooks. The subcontinent's history remained shrouded in mystery, and an Indian historian noted "it is a well-known fact that with the single exception of Rdjatarangini (History of Kashmir), there is no historical text in Sanskrit dealing with the whole or even parts of India" (Majumdar (1951) as cited in Witzel, 1990, p. 1). This claim was made in the voluminous Oxford History of Historical Writing (Volume 1 and Volume 2) in chapters on Indian history and history writing traditions (Ali, 2012; Thapar, 2011). The ancient history of the subcontinent continued to be written using Vedic text (religious texts of Hindu religion) as the sources of events, its chronology which may not have any evidence of its occurrence and this frustrated many early visitors to the Indian subcontinent such as Alburani who struggled to understand and comprehend the chronological order of subcontinent's history. Thapar (2011) suggested an explanation of this. He argued that time in ancient India was understood as "four yugas (cycles or ages) is often viewed as cosmological time" and "Indian texts suggest a heterogeneous time calculation. Even in the span of four yugas, the present is not a repetition of the past, since each age differs from the previous one" (p. 555).

The historical consciousness after the partition of the Indian subcontinent and the "scrutiny of the nationalist historiography became a significant task" for both the newly created countries and its ruling parties. The researchers explained the differences between Indian and the European understanding of history where the former was founded in "oral traditions, myths, and folktales" and the native historians "argued for a different and older relationship with the past" where "investigation of the Indian past was combined with a search for Indian frameworks of interpretation in post-independence historiography" (Mukherjee, 2011, p. 515); while the latter looked at history in the chronological pattern which "emerged from the Enlightenment, with an emphasis on sequential narrative and chronology, and a focus on political authority" (Thapar, 2011, p. 553). The Indian history project conceived and initiated after it becoming an independent country was viewed as "mostly hagiographic in kind, celebrating India's 'glorious past' and 'heroic struggles' with a good dose of reverence and sentimentality" (Mukherjee, 2011, p. 517) while the same was evident in Pakistan's history writing project as was noted by Qasmi (2019). Each country has its own pre and post-independence heroes and martyrs and wars between these two neighbors made the states choose and present their heroes and villains to pupils in textbooks. The Pakistani history textbooks presented Muslims and Islam as the true successor of Indus valley civilization and Buddhists rulers while the Indian textbooks presented all coming from the Central Asian and Chinese side as enemies, invaders and intruders because these descriptions fitted well in the nationalistic historical narrative of both India and Pakistan.

Recommendations

It is important that the next textbook revision exercise should make textbooks an authentic and accurate account of historical events and personalities, inclusive of their achievements, struggles, and failures. The history textbooks revision exercise should be guided by historians who founded their historical study in the inclusive, humane, and expansive canvass of historical studies and evaluation of different past events with an objective approach. The historians and history textbooks

writers should ensure that all dots (historical facts and events) are connected, presenting a complete picture to pupils focusing only on information and not on imagined history. The mythicized historical narrative and history was written to indoctrinate young minds to a certain ideology (making the core of identity) and to construct their concepts of 'us' and 'them.' The Indian subcontinent and its history is to be viewed and constructed as the one that had the "ability to accommodate, if not assimilate, an immense diversity within a very broadly and loosely defined framework of unity which has given Indian cultural tradition durability and appearance of unbroken continuity" (Bose & Jalal, 2017, p. 22).

This study also suggests that the state authorities, bureaucracy, military and civil leadership revise the education and curriculum policy and make it reflective of an inclusive Pakistan, a place where minorities (ethnic, linguistic and religious) are given much-needed acknowledgment and space in Pakistan's historical narrative. The curriculum policy should ensure the historical narrative of Pakistan (pre and post-partition) is rewritten to make it inclusive and reflective of history of the people of Pakistan. The pre-partition historical narrative should inform pupils (read Muslims) about the leaders from minorities who worked along with the leadership of the All India Muslim League and supported them to make Pakistan a reality. The post-partition Pakistan's historical narrative needs to recognize the contribution of minorities in Pakistan's social, cultural, political and economic development.

Notes

[1] Known as Quaid-e-Azam, a title bestowed upon him by the state and people of Pakistan. Its English translation is the greatest leader.

[2] Jizya or jizyah is a per capita yearly taxation historically levied in the form of financial charge on permanent non-Muslim subjects of a state governed by Islamic ruler. In return for payment of the jizyah, non-Muslim populations, specifically Jews and Christians were granted protection of life and property and the right to practice their religion. Under this policy they were called *dhimmī*s (protected people).

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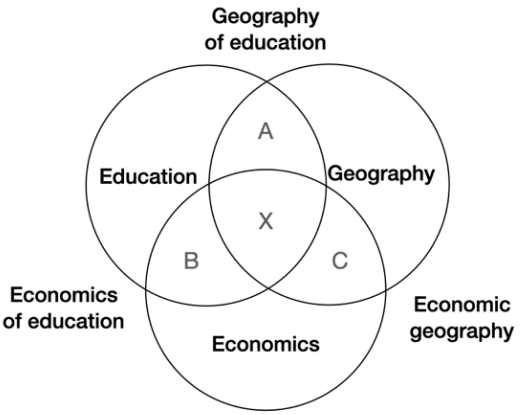
BOOK REVIEW

Geography of Education: Scale, Space and Location in the Study of Education. By Colin Brock (2018), 240 pp. ISBN: 9781350063907, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Of the many inspirations from Colin Brock's original book, I would like to discuss three synergic frameworks that paved the way to the creative and exciting world that fuses both Geography and Education. All three frameworks are in the form of Venn diagrams below, accenting Brock's love for, and ingenuous use of such diagrams.

Brock is the first scholar to articulate the nature, purpose and content of Geography of Education. He stated his book's prime aim to "further the understanding of the work of each about the other" between Geography and Education. He argued that the two disciplines have much in common and much to offer in harness. Given both are composite disciplines, he regarded the come into being of both having a 'geography' in itself-- through an interactive process in time-space of learning from, and teaching to, across a wide range of subjects in Arts and Sciences, meanwhile also contributing to other disciplines and fields. Based on his definitions of both Geography and Education, the Geography of Education espoused in this book can be defined as the following: the spatial and locational analysis of human and physical phenomena from the edge of space to the earth's surface and below about the production and dissemination of knowledge and of learning and teaching, and the factors that enable them to operate.

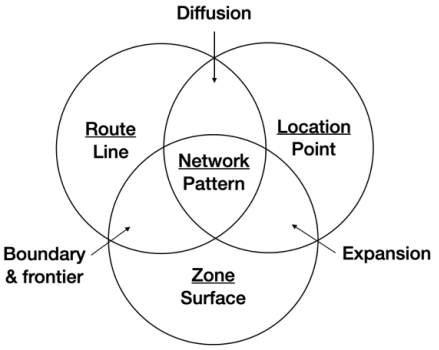
Figure 1. Overlaps among Education, Geography, and Economics



He embraced the purpose of Geography of Education as applying all sub-disciplines of Geography to the study of education. Hence, he left a clue to expand the content of Geography of Education as locating the overlap among Geography, Education, and a third discipline that Geography and Education may both have a sub-discipline of. For example, by putting Economics, Geography, and Education into a Venn diagram (Figure 1), then the issues of Geography of Education may be 'uncovered' from area X which all three disciplines share. Moreover, if replacing Economics in Figure 1 with other disciplines, such as Politics, History, Management, Cultural Studies, among others, the more the issues of Geography of Education can be mapped out.

A second contribution is Brock's creative application of Walford's (1973) dynamic model of Human Geography as a signature method of the Geography of Education. The model consists the four basic concepts of geography (Figure 2): point as location; line as route; surface as zone; and pattern as network which combines any of the two or all three concepts (Brock 2018 p.56). Moreover, Brock proposed to apply Walford's two freestanding circles representing manufacturing processes and social problems respectively, with economic relationships to educational provision and sociocultural educational issues (Brock 2018, p.55).

Figure 2. Brock's Application of Walford's Model of Dynamic Themes in Geography



With this model, he argued for the centrality of the individual and the local milieu as the "ultimate base level" that "human and environmental survival and sustainability will likely depend" ((Brock 2018, p.60, p.173). He regarded the local scale as the locale, a particular place as a unique point, the base unit which consists of, and is embedded in, other spatial concepts such as line, surface, and network. He argued that education was too singular, complex, and context-based to be dealt with a simplistic, universal welfare policy (Brock 2018, p.172-173). Therefore, he placed the individual school and the individual person relating to the school (often the learner or the teacher), as the fundamental concern of Geography of Education. He argued that the understanding of that individual could be made through the understanding the locale as a cultural milieu.

A third contribution is Brock's emphasis on the importance of scale. Scale in geography refers to an actual or imagined framing of the space. He regarded the national scale as the normal regulated space produced through national educational policy, however, the national total or average view in education statistics is often misled by the complexity of education provision. Therefore, he argued that the local-global dynamics in education should be understood with reference to, instead of absence from, national and regional scales that connect and contrast the local and the global. Figure 3 is made to illustrate his view of connected scales from local to global.

Figure 3. An Interpretation of Brock's Model of Analytical Scales for Education

Hence, Brock identified the school as a space occupying a locality and operating in a networked social space, which may extend from a local to a global scale, through connecting points, lines and zones. He provided both a concentric and nested view to illustrate the local-global dynamics in which a school operated (Brock 2018, p 60-61). Both views portray the school in interaction with multiple scales as a space-spanning agency, where relationships are changing relative to the school and to each other, in both a space of flow and a process through time.

Brock also argued that education should uphold the duty of a humanitarian response to achieve three types of sustainability: sustainable survival, sustainable stability, and sustainable development. More importantly, he argued that it was the 'local resonance' as the way to achieve all types of sustainability. He quoted Schumacher that the "production of local resources for local needs is the most rational way of economic life". He then asserted that the 'local' in education in the school curriculum and the mutually supportive objectives of all its components. He defined school curriculum as consisting of both liberal and technical education with relevance and responsiveness to local needs. Here again, he regarded the local as the entry point to the local-global dynamics.

Brock concluded with deep concerns for the survival and sustainability of people and the environment. In particular, he argued for the imperative for Geography of Education to not only understand but also advocate for the right to education of the marginalised, the excluded and the remote, the dislocated and the disparate under the seemingly uniform national welfare policies. He aligned a special goal for Geography of Education with the role of education as a humanitarian response, and he clarified the unique impact of the spatial and locational factor in forming the sociocultural identity of the individual, especially the disadvantaged.

Brock's book on the geography of education provides a much-needed systemic way to understand education through spatial, locational and ecological analysis. Please let me share a quotation he selected to conclude his book:

> *"Is there a conceptual framework that can accommodate all these changes, that would help us understand the transformations and inter-connections, inform our thoughts and decisions through a particular comprehensive perspective? This book answers these questions with one affirmation: geography. (de Blij, 2012 as cited in Brock 2018, p.188)*

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