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Exploring decentralisation for improving
education administration
in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq

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Abstract

Decentralisation features in most education reforms around the world. However, the rebuilding and development of education in the Kurdistan region of Iraq has yet to include movements towards increased school autonomy. With international development partners' agendas and local interest in increasing the autonomy of local level authorities and schools, it is an opportune time for education stakeholders to participate in change plans.

This study gathered the perspectives of a sample of school principals, education academics and education officers in the Kurdistan region of Iraq through a questionnaire designed around four elements of decentralisation in education. Reflective interpretation using a phenomenological approach identified shared themes and synthesised them to reveal the essence of the shared experience of the participants in terms of the current school administration structure.

Some of the central shared themes found were the call for closer connection between decision-makers and school needs, concerns about accountability, and a bid for equality. Unique findings showed some innovative ideas, a belief in the power of local networks to ensure accountability, and also that there is a need to develop confidence and a belief in the possibility of improvement in education.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background

The education infrastructure in Iraq had been left severely damaged in the aftermath of decades of conflict and instability (O'Leary, McGarry, & Salih, 2006; Osler & Yahya, 2013). In addition, equally long years of isolation from the world through United Nations (UN) sanctions, internal blockades and an international embargo meant that the education system was archaic and a far cry from that which was once regionally renowned (United Nations, 2010; Vongalis-Macrow, 2006). After the overthrow of the Ba'ath regime, a new constitution of Iraq ("Iraqi Constitution," 2005) ushered in the federal entity of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) (Osler & Yahya, 2013) in the northern area of Iraq which quickly established a Ministry of Education (MoE) uniting the education administration for the entire region. The newfound autonomy afforded the opportunity for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) to capitalise on the relative stability of their region and begin to not only rebuild but also reform education. The 2007 'New Education Policy' was developed further to become the 'New System of Education' (Osler & Yahya, 2013; Vernez, Culbertson, & Constant, 2014). New curriculum and accompanying teaching methods were implemented along with changes to school structure and teacher qualifications (Vernez et al., 2014). The spirit of the reform was modernisation - identifying modern approaches that have been successful in other countries and implementing them in Kurdish schools (De Santisteban, 2005; Kalinowski & Cho, 2012; Ministry of Planning, 2013; Vernez et al., 2014).

The Middle East is known for authoritarian political landscapes and Iraq is no exception. Structures remain highly centralised and represent a top-down hierarchy approach to leadership (Basham, 2012; Geoplicity, 2009; Ministry of Planning, 2013; Stansfield, 2012) not unlike that of New Zealand pre-1989 (Fancy, 2007; Lauder & Wylie, 1990; Sheerin, 2008). With most countries right across the globe having decentralised their education structure in some way (Channa & Faguet, 2012), those who have not yet are under pressure to consider it a necessary part of education reform. In the KRI and the wider Iraq, decentralisation of governance is a theme being discussed at political levels (Francis, 2016; NRT, 2015) and actively promoted by the donors and other large players in the nation-wide development programmes (Brinkerhoff & Taddesse, 2005; Cravens & Brinkerhoff, 2013). The United Nations openly promotes decentralisation as an issue of 'public good' (Handoussa, Hay, Osman, & Kandil, 2004) and Codd (1989) insists that education reform which maintains the top-down structure cannot really be considered true reform and will have limited impact. Beare and Boyd (1993) also suggest that "to

understand the education-reform manoeuvres in any country, one is forced to confront the concepts of centralisation and decentralisation, which seem to underlie so much of the discussion and writings about restructuring of schools” (p. 2). Nonetheless, the education reforms in the KRI lack any movement towards dismantling the bureaucratic structures that supervise and control schools (Smyth, 1996; Vernez et al., 2014).

1.2 Research focus

With the growing globalisation of ideas and goals, the interests of international donors and development partners may determine the approach taken to reform of educational administration in the KRI. Rather than wait for an external agenda to be imposed, there is an opportunity to explore approaches to educational administration from the bottom up and to offer the perspectives and contributions of stakeholders to be tabled in the ongoing debate. Therefore, the primary focus of this research is to gather perspectives on the effectiveness of the current administration and management approaches practiced in schools in the KRI along with suggestions for related improvements. In line with this, two research questions have been developed:

How effective are the current school administrative processes considered to be?

What improvements are considered important for increasing the effectiveness of school administration?

1.3 Aims and objectives

Decentralisation in education is currently a theme under discussion at political levels in Iraq and the Kurdistan region due to local frustration with bureaucratic processes and corruption (Francis, 2016; NRT, 2015). This research aims to make contact with those who would be involved in implementing any changes in educational management and administration. However, rather than directly discussing views on decentralisation, the research focus on the effectiveness of education administration leaves room for identifying experiences and suggestions for change. After using literature on decentralisation to add understanding to the perspectives of stakeholders in the KRI, the findings have potential to be offered to decision-makers for consideration in their discussions surrounding education reform.

1.4 Overview

The rest of this thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter two is a literature review focusing first on the concept of decentralisation of education as identified in international literature. The focus then narrows to describe some key parts of a framework

that will guide the focus of the research. Finally, literature regarding decentralisation of education in the context of the Middle East is reviewed.

Chapter three constitutes an overview of the methodology used in the study. It covers the research focus, approach, procedures and then the approach to analysis. It also notes the relevant limitations and ethical considerations.

Chapter four is a presentation of the findings. The headings align with a framework identified in the literature review. Under each heading statistics, questionnaire extracts, quotes and narratives are used to reveal and describe the themes identified in the data.

Chapter five is where the themes identified in the data are further discussed and an interpretation of their meaning is developed. This chapter is organised to present responses to the research questions and further sub-divided to identify essences interpreted from the findings.

To conclude the study, chapter six offers a summary of the key findings and puts forward some possible implications followed by suggestions for further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The first section of this literature review explores meanings and understandings of decentralisation. Related terminology and some interchangeable terms are also identified and discussed. Recognising the wide variation on understandings, various perspectives are presented.

In the second section of the review a decentralisation framework is identified. This includes the angles, shapes, levels and approaches which education reform towards decentralisation can take.

The final section reviews literature on educational decentralisation in Iraq and the Middle East region and seeks to identify what forms of decentralisation have been or are currently being implemented. Also discussed is the reasoning behind what is being done and what the recorded or expected impacts are.

2.1 Decentralisation

The term ‘decentralisation’ which is used for such a wide range of activities is described by Bray and Mukundan (2003) as “slippery” (p. 2). Bimber (1993) agrees that there is some contention over the meaning and implications of the term decentralisation. The implication is that there is power at the centre which is brought ‘down’ to be shared with those at lower levels (Beare & Boyd, 1993). As a broad term, decentralisation is generally understood to refer to the democratic ideal of reducing state control of public functions and movements towards increasing individual responsibility (Channa & Faguet, 2012; Lauder & Wylie, 1990). It is frequently associated with the phrase ‘closer to the people’ (Channa & Faguet, 2012; Hashem & Tietjen, 2004; USAID, 2005). As such, the term and its related reforms can be applied to governance as a whole, to aspects thereof, or to any or all of public sector services.

2.2 Decentralisation of education

Decentralisation as a part of educational reform has been a trend reported to be taking place all across the globe (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Channa & Faguet, 2012; Eacott, 2015; Levin, 2001). By 1992 Caldwell and Spinks (1992) had labelled the movement as a megatrend meaning that it is a large scale change on a global level with wide reaching impact. These types of trends are expected to change the shape of the future, and in this case, the future of education. Over the years there has been much accumulated literature on decentralisation of school management (Bimber, 1993, 128, ; Caldwell, 2012; Wohlstetter & Odden, 1992). Decentralisation of education takes many shapes and forms right from delegation of some educational administration responsibilities to lower levels to virtually privately managed schools

(Mulheron, 2014; USAID, 2005). As defined by Litvack, Seddon, and Ahmad (1999) it represents “the transfer of authority and responsibility for public functions from the central government to subordinate or quasi-independent government organizations or the private sector” (p. 2), a definition on which there is some agreement (Bimber, 1993; Lauder & Wylie, 1990; Levin, 2001; USAID, 2005; Winkler & Yeo, 2007). Therefore, in the case of education, where central government holds authority or responsibility for the provision of education, decentralisation calls for lower levels to take control. The levels to which authority is relocated, the aspects of authority yielded and the degree of authority and accountability assigned are what make the implementation of decentralisation in education unique to each country and context (Campbell, 2000; Grauwe et al., 2005; Bimber, 1993 #20; OECD, 2011). Arising from these variations are an equal variety of terms used to refer to the various models of decentralisation. In the following sections, some of the most widely used terms will be defined along with the related models of decentralisation. In seeking to define these terms, Angus (1993) warns us that “the apparent simplicity of these notions is deceptive. Their meanings must be understood in context - in relation to the broader educational policy agenda, which is itself sensible only in relation to broad social and economic policy directions” (p. 12).

2.2.1 Local governance

Central to decentralisation, is the expectation that there will be an increase in participation by citizens in the administration, leadership and responsibility for educational provision (Lauder & Wylie, 1990; Levin, 2001). According to many, this is often the main purpose of decentralisation (Keddie, 2015b; Lauder & Wylie, 1990; Levin, 2001) and has been called ‘local governance’. Although the terms ‘local governance’ and ‘decentralisation’ have been used interchangeably, El-Kholy and Tschirgi (2010) contend that they must be understood as distinct from each other. Local governance is more related to planning, decision-making and representation. As such, it may represent an aspect of decentralisation of systems where authority is transferred to a local level. But it may also be far broader encompassing not only local government, but also representation of civil society. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines it as “a set of institutions, mechanisms and processes, through which citizens and their groups can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligations” (Sarrouh, 2003, p. 5). Oates argued back in 1972 that decentralisation would allow a local response to local demand (as cited in Falch & Fischer, 2012). This is based on the logic that local bodies are best positioned to determine their own needs and decide how to meet them (Levin, 2001). Lauder and Wylie (1990) strongly question these arguments pointing out the political interest in relinquishing collective responsibility and misguided placing of power in the hands of those who may or may not be

competent to manage it. Others, however, cite evidence that local governance is proving effective in increasing public accountability and transparency in many countries (Arcia, Macdonald, Patrinos, & Porta, 2011; Litvack et al., 1999).

2.2.2 Devolution

While local governance primarily refers to local representation, 'devolution' is where power and responsibility for service delivery are transferred to a lower level (Lauder & Wylie, 1990). Devolution in education takes place when what was a function of public education is handed over to a local level authority and functions more like the private sector (Faguet, Fox, & Pöschl, 2014; Mulheron, 2014). Whitty, Power, and Halpin (1998) offer a number of terms that are also used to describe this type of reform or aspects of it: 'deconcentration', 'deregulation', 'dezoning', and 'desegregation' (pp. 9-10). When used in conjunction with 'decentralisation', the implication is that there is a top-down initiation involved. However, devolution can also take place through a bottom-up initiation when there is a demand for change at the grass roots rather than a politically planned reorganisation (Whitty et al., 1998). Again, devolution is often just one part of a larger process of education reform implemented (Channa & Faguet, 2012). Caldwell (2012) suggests that devolution offers an opportunity for communities to effectively address their own needs. OECD and the World Bank cite recent evidence showing that when devolution of autonomy is coupled with accountability there are measurable associations with better student performance (Arcia et al., 2011; OECD, 2011). Lauder and Wylie (1990) note that devolution has often been seen to be an exercise of rhetoric whereby governments allow the illusion of power in the hands of the people while they still exercise their central control through other means. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID (2005) points out that even the power devolved is at risk of being dominated by the elite rather than the general public. Citing an example from Chicago, Illinois, it is shown how school councils were effectively organised to contribute to political ends rather than improving education (Patrinos & Fasih, 2009). Nevertheless, devolution continues to be recognised as an important opportunity for education despite the many challenges faced in implementing it effectively (USAID, 2005).

2.2.3 Self-Managing Schools

According to the UNDP, decentralisation assumes that restructuring will transfer tasks or functions to "the lowest institutional or social level that is capable (or potentially capable) of completing them" (Sarrouh, 2003). Levels can include national, state, regional, provincial, municipal, school and classroom level (Karkkainen, 2012). Much of the writing on decentralisation of education assumes that the shift in

authority should be down to the level of schools resulting in self-managing schools (Caldwell & Spinks, 1992; Eacott, 2015; Ladd, 2014; Levin, 2001; Wylie & Press, 2012). Other terms used are ‘local school management’ (Chapman, 1990), ‘school-based management’, ‘self-governing school’, ‘school-site autonomy’, ‘decentralised management’, ‘site-based management’ (Whitty et al., 1998). The transferring or sharing of authority with schools is often argued to empower schools to be more responsive to the real needs of their communities (USAID, 2005).

Its basic premise is that people who have the most to gain or lose—students and their parents—and those who know what actually goes on in the classroom and school—teachers and school principals—should have both greater authority and greater accountability than they do now with respect to school performance. (Patrinos & Fasih, 2009, p. ix)

The process has been labelled as a more “immediately sensitive process of accountability” (Chapman, 1990, p. ix). Criticisms abound primarily regarding the lack of evidence of significant impact and surrounding the assumptions that this approach is a simple and magical remedy to many of the complex challenges facing education (Chapman, 1990; Levin, 2001; Mayer, Donaldson, LeChasseur, Welton, & Cobb, 2013; Patrinos & Fasih, 2009; USAID, 2005). More recent evidence is also emerging surrounding the transferred role of school principals from educational leadership to administration and management showing increasing demands and less time for educational considerations (Cranston, 2014; Eacott, 2015). The differences in the impact of self-managing schools related to the country’s level of development (Hanushek, Link, & Woessmann, 2013) and to the capacity of those governing the school (Dinham, Crowther, Robinson, McNaughton, & Timperley, 2011; Robinson, Ward, & Timperley, 2003). Amongst the many models of self-managing schools are found free standing schools operating on the private market and charter schools with public financing but considerable autonomy. Forms of decision-making include those where the authority rests with the school leadership, with the teachers, with the parents or community, or where it is equally shared amongst all of these parties (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998).

2.3 Drivers of decentralisation

Consideration and implementation of decentralisation in the administration and management of schools is a change that usually takes place when problems and inefficiencies are being identified in the existing form of centralised management (De Grauwe et al., 2005; Fancy, 2007; Hansen & Roza, 2005). Bureaucratic governments are often characterised by red tape, hierarchical decision-making,

burdensome regulations, complicated procedures, and bottlenecking processes (Hansen & Roza, 2005; Keddie, 2015a; Smyth, 2011). In such an environment, local level management is attractive in that it would simplify processes and allow for more efficiency (Bimber, 1993; Levin, 2001). Representation is the other rationale commonly given for localised management of schooling, making schools more responsive and accountable to parents (Bimber, 1993; Falch & Fischer, 2012; Smyth, 2011). With schools able to make autonomous decisions, budget, organise and use resources independent of government control, there is the opportunity for schools to provide a better needs-based service to their local community (Lauder & Wylie, 1990; Levin, 2001; Wylie & Press, 2012). Another argument raised to promote decentralisation is the increased potential for innovation and productivity (Bimber, 1993; Fancy, 2007; Keddie, 2015a). This assumes that when schools are left to self-manage, optimal solutions will be reached that better use resources. It recognises the professionalism of teachers and the uniqueness and diversity of communities. A further argument more recently driving decentralisation is that of its “international inevitability” (Smyth, 2011, p. 104). With educational decentralisation part of World Bank policy (Arcia et al., 2011) and endorsed by OECD (2011), there is the impression given that education reform without decentralisation is outdated and places a country at disadvantage (Codd, 1989; Smyth, 2011; USAID, 2005).

All of these arguments portray decentralisation as an important strategy for improving the quality of education and have proven effective in creating the necessary enthusiasm to drive decentralisation forward with support from all levels of stakeholders (Bimber, 1993; Smyth, 2011). Under decentralisation models, teachers and principals have authority and feel more empowered, and parents have a greater say and can keep schools accountable (Kurd, 2011; Smyth, 2011; USAID, 2005). However, looking back more than two decades later since initiation in New Zealand and Australia, academics point out that the drivers of the decentralisation policies were primarily economic (Court & O’Neill, 2011; Fancy, 2007; Keddie, 2015a; Smyth, 2011; Wylie, 2013). Governments with insufficient resources were struggling to provide quality education and identified a method to shift the burden and avoid difficult economic decisions (Smyth, 2011). Smyth (2011) calls it a “legitimation crisis” (p. 104) and says that the movement was politically driven with absolutely no educational purposes. He even goes further to suggest that the packaging of the restructuring as a social and educational good was a ‘trick’ to get the buy-in of all stakeholders.

2.4 Framework for decentralisation of education

With such diversity in the distribution of function, responsibility and authority in centralisation/decentralisation models it is useful to identify the various elements that all such models must incorporate and balance. In considering the public function of education and what aspects can be controlled, Caldwell and Spinks (1992) suggest that education can be understood to be made up of a number of resources. Decisions related to each of these resources could be controlled at a central level, a decentralised level or somewhere in between. An adapted version of the framework is seen in (Table 2-1).

Table 2-1: Caldwell and Spinks’ List of Educational Resources

Title	Resources	Description
Human resources	People	the allocation of people in matters related to teaching and learning
Decision-making	Power	authority to make decisions
	Material	the use of facilities, supplies and equipment
	Time	the allocation of time
Curriculum	Knowledge	curriculum, including decisions related to the goals or ends of schooling
	Technology	the means of teaching and learning
Finance	Finance	the allocation of money

(Adapted from Caldwell & Spinks, 1992, p. 5)

Although other literature offers alternative explanations and frameworks, this particular framework is widely cited (for example Anderson, Briggs, & Burton, 2001; Dimmock, 2013; Lumby, Middlewood, & Kaabwe, 2003) and has influenced much of the discussion in literature on educational decentralisation. Cited as authorities in the field (Eacott, 2015; Hansen & Roza, 2005), Brian Caldwell and Jim Spinks have co-authored a series of six books on decentralisation of schooling between 1988 and 2013. The authors and their books have been a resource in designing decentralisation policies around the world. Court and O’Neill (2011) mention them as the “two most influential advocates of this so-called ‘self-managing school’ model” (p. 119). Others frequently turn to their writings when defining or describing self-managing school models or similar (for example, Arcia et al., 2011; Patrinos & Fasih, 2009). The framework is not without its critics and is considered narrow by some (Angus, 1993; Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Campbell, 2000).

2.4.1 Human Resources

When considering education reform and decentralisation policies, decision-makers must remember that “teachers are the key resource in any nation’s education system” (USAID, 2005, p. 12). As such, careful consideration must be given to how this resource is managed. Management of staff and teachers in particular involves more than just employment decisions. Beginning with recruitment and appointment, it also extends to monitoring duties such as suspensions, transfers, leave, dismissal, promotion and incentives (Bullock & Thomas, 2002). It includes decisions regarding pay scales and compensation packages and further still it is concerned with terms of service, monitoring, appraisal and supervision systems (Litvack et al., 1999). This also relates to supervision of pedagogical performance and extends to issues of standards, qualifications, certification and ongoing professional development and support (Gaynor, 1998). Gaynor divides these responsibilities into two aspects as seen in the following table (Table 2-2).

Table 2-2: Teacher Management

Teacher supply	Teacher management
For example:	For example:
Qualifications	Standards
Salary	Monitoring
Recruitment	Supervision
Appointment	Professional development
Transfers	Support
	Appraisal

(Adapted from Gaynor, 1998)

Decentralisation of the responsibility for human resources rarely constitutes a complete devolving away from central involvement. Numerous models exist, each with their own advantages and disadvantages and with research evidence still undecided on the various impacts or any ideal model (Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Gaynor, 1998; Gunnarsson, Orazem, Sanchez, & Verdisco, 2004; Litvack et al., 1999; USAID, 2005), decentralisation of human resource management is considered radical (Bullock & Thomas, 2002). Authority for some aspects of human resources is often decentralised to the regional level or to professional bodies such as teachers’ unions (Gaynor, 1998). Many countries, however, see advantages in maintaining tight controls either in employment or at least with maintaining central rules and regulations (Gaynor, 1998).

In terms of hiring, there are advantages in school autonomy such as the freedom to set up compensation packages to attract local talent, to recruit in accordance with school/community needs,

and in having the freedom to vary the pay scale according to the working conditions (Litvack et al., 1999; USAID, 2005; Winkler, 1993). However, when the resource of teachers is limited or in the context of financial constraints, decentralisation in hiring could easily lead to inequities (Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Gaynor, 1998; Gunnarsson et al., 2004; Litvack et al., 1999). “Decentralization can also exacerbate inequality: variations in living conditions (rural areas versus urban centres, for example) can lead to a skewed distribution of human resources as the best civil servants choose to live in the more developed areas” (Litvack et al., 1999, p. 39). It is the isolated schools that are most likely to be disadvantaged (Gunnarsson et al., 2004). Nepotism and favouritism (hiring for reasons other than objective criteria and merit) are a danger when schools manage their own recruitment (Lewis & Pettersson, 2009). Decentralisation of salary scales risks employment of ‘cheaper’ teachers, bidding wars, or budget constraints forcing schools to hire fewer teachers than needed (Gaynor, 1998; Litvack et al., 1999).

After appointment, it is teacher performance that largely defines the performance of education (Lewis & Pettersson, 2009). Decentralised management allows for greater creativity and innovation (Fancy, 2007), yet centralised management has been credited with offering more consistent professional and expert support to teachers, particularly pedagogical (Gaynor, 1998). Gaynor also found evidence to support the position that decentralisation was appropriate for coordinating in-service training and pedagogical supervision, while centralised administration of standards and teaching qualifications was more favourable.

2.4.2 Decision-Making Power

USAID (2005) suggests that decentralisation can be divided into two distinct areas; decentralisation of service delivery responsibilities and functions, and decentralisation of service delivery decisions. Falch and Fischer (2012) call these the “right to act” and the “right to decide” (p. 3). The right to decide can belong to the central bureaucracy or be shifted to regional, local or school levels or even to semi-autonomous groups. The ways in which decision-making power is decentralised have been described by Fiske (1996) and Sarrouh (2003) as deconcentration, delegation, and devolution. Deconcentration is the weakest form where decision-making responsibility is shifted to a lower level, but with tight accountability to the central level remaining. Delegation is to redistribute or “lend authority” (Fiske, 1996, p. 10) to a lower or different level (Kurd, 2011). Accountability is also expected and the authority can be withdrawn. Devolution however, refers to a total transfer of authority (Fiske, 1996). It results in full independence and autonomy and is a decision that cannot be revoked. An example of this would be

the boards of trustees elected by parents in New Zealand which represent one of the world’s most highly devolved education structures (Court & O’Neill, 2011; Sheerin, 2008).

What makes each model of decentralisation of decision-making unique is their individual combination of ‘who’ has the power, power over ‘what’ elements, and ‘how much’ decision-making power they have (Patrinos & Fasih, 2009). For example, the following four models (Table 2-3) are offered by Patrinos and Fasih (2009) suggesting who might have the decision-making power under different arrangements.

Table 2-3: Four Models of Decentralised Decision-Making

Administrative control -	School principal
Professional control -	School teachers
Community control -	Parents
Balanced control -	Shared between parents and teachers

(Patrinos & Fasih, 2009, p. 98)

Authority for any of the different elements of education can be decentralised. Many point out that decision-making power can be further divided into administrative power and political power (Bimber, 1993; Channa & Faguet, 2012; Fiske, 1996; Litvack et al., 1999). Administrative decision-making powers relate to the planning and management of education while political decision-making powers are about making decisions *about* education (Fiske, 1996). Decentralisation of political decision-making powers is usually in the interest of increasing community participation and citizen representation in directing education (Litvack, Ahmad, & Bird, 1998; Robinson et al., 2003). Hansen and Roza (2005) suggest that “decentralizing decisionmaking as close as possible to the organizational level where key services are performed has been viewed, inside and outside of education, as a way to increase efficiency and spur adoption of more effective means of reaching performance goals” (p. 2). Finally, how much decision-making power is decentralised can vary anywhere along a continuum from very limited authority and just token gestures right through to a point of complete authority for decisions where autonomy is very similar to that of a private school (Patrinos & Fasih, 2009).

The impact of decentralisation of decision-making is difficult to evaluate as it can take on many forms (Falch & Fischer, 2012; USAID, 2005) and there are so many other factors involved such as accountability, assessment and use of information (Arcia et al., 2011). Brown (1993) points out, “decentralisation of decision-making appears to work effectively when it is a part of an organisation that is already functioning well” (p. 228) and in a review of self-governance in New Zealand, Robinson et al.

(2003) concluded that “local decision-making becomes self-referential and ghettoized unless it is informed by consideration of the national context” (p. 278).

2.4.3 Curriculum

In the conversation of decentralisation it is recognised that diverse student needs call for diversity in curriculum provision (Angus, 1993). Watkins (1993) loosely defines curriculum to be “the work of teachers, what they teach and what students learn” (p. 142). The importance of curriculum is expressed by Astiz, Wiseman, and Baker (2002): “The curricula are major technical inputs to the schooling process; they are also the corpus of cultural knowledge; and they can even represent attempts at social control and domination” (p. 71). Education reform necessarily considers the distribution of control of curriculum particularly in terms of its construction, its delivery, and its assessment (Fancy, 2007; Watkins, 1993). Control extends to decisions about the curriculum aims, content areas, concepts, targets, sequencing, time allocation, guidelines, examples, teaching materials, textbooks, assessments and qualifications (Karkkainen, 2012). On a general level, curriculum is widely understood to be composed of two aspects: content (what is taught) and process (how it is taught) (Karkkainen, 2012; Moutsios, 2000).

Karkkainen (2012) suggests that centralised curriculum control comes with the advantage of research based innovations and expert input. In some countries the movement towards decentralisation of curriculum *processes* was accompanied by increased centralised control of curriculum *content* (Astiz et al., 2002; Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Moutsios, 2000). It has been found that decentralised autonomy over curriculum allows experimentation and community innovations that may otherwise not take place (Fancy, 2007; Karkkainen, 2012; Wylie, 1999). Karkkainen (2012) therefore proposes that neither extreme decentralisation nor centralisation of curriculum is preferable, but rather a balance which takes advantage of the influences of all stakeholders.

2.4.4 Finance

There are many decisions related to finances to be made in the administration and management of educational institutions. These include remuneration, ongoing school costs, supplies and equipment, school improvements, and capital costs and maintenance. Along with these come the expectations of financial planning and budgeting, securing funds, and accountability such as through audits and reporting. Anderson et al. (2001) consider effective and efficient financial management to be crucial to the success of education and Hannaway and Carnoy (1993) argue that it is the most important administrative function.

The administration of finances is perhaps the most common aspect to be devolved and the core of most decentralisation policies (Hannaway & Carnoy, 1993). Indeed, economic reasons are frequently cited as the stimulus for education reforms and restructures (Anderson et al., 2001; Kurd, 2011; Winkler, 1993). It is argued that autonomy over finance means that there will be a closer connection with local needs and market prices hoped to result in better use of funds (Sarrouh, 2003). As such, decentralisation could be seen as cost-effective. Furthermore, the autonomy may result in altered incentives and local accountability pressure and thus better cost controlling, equity and efficiency (Bardhan, 2002). The other argument for decentralisation of the financial level is that of efficiency (Tooley & Guthrie, 2007). Central administration is understood to be expensive with greater uniformity in spending, whereas decentralised models can give more concern to efficiency or cost implications at the local level (Bardhan, 2002; Winkler, 1993).

Decentralisation of financial responsibility calls for complex decisions particularly on three fronts. The first is about generating revenue, whether it be through local resources, taxes or community contributions, whether it takes the form of privatisation and user fees, or whether national transfers of funds take place (Bardhan, 2002; Fiske & Ladd, 2001). National funding can involve various proportions of the budget and take place through a variety of models (Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Hanson, 1998). Models include a transferring of the total budget, co-financing arrangements, funding formulas, and transfer of earmarked funds (Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Fiske & Ladd, 2001; Hanson, 1998). Decentralised sourcing of education revenue runs the risk of introducing inequities amongst education jurisdictions (Shah, 2004; Winkler, 1993).

The second front is expenditure and resource management. Here, if a decentralisation policy incorporates local responsibility for remuneration, issues may arise such as pay parity, teachers' unions and equity across schools and regions (Hannaway & Carnoy, 1993). Responsibility for ongoing school costs introduces decisions regarding the minimum/maximum cost per child and ensuring equity and quality of education (Winkler, 1993). Bardhan (2002) notes the risk of decentralisation in that schools and even local governments are "vulnerable to capture by local elites, who will then receive a disproportionate share of spending" (p. 192).

The third front is that of accountability and regulation. As Litvack et al. (1998) point out;

"if the central government is, in effect, using local governments as agents in executing national policies—for example, to provide primary education at a specified level through-out the

country—then it is important to make the transfer conditional on the funds actually being spent on education or on the attainment of some level of educational performance.” (p. 13)

Decisions include determining the degree of autonomy and expectations of reporting and auditing both vertically and horizontally. Again, Bardhan (2002) warns of the potential for corruption with pressure from local elites. He says that there can be a big difference between resources being committed and the actual delivery of services. However, there is much to be said for accountability pressure where there is local expectation for schools to demonstrate good return for funds (Tooley & Guthrie, 2007).

2.5 Decentralisation of education in the Middle East

2.5.1 Models

In reviewing literature on decentralisation in the Middle East region it is evident that the situation in Iraq is unique (Aarts, Statema, & Kibrit; Al-Sese & Al-Arawi, 2014; Francis, 2016; Kahuwa, 2013; Kanalan & Celep, 2011; NRT, 2015). El-Kholy and Tschirgi (2010) say that while decentralisation in the Arab region is “in its infancy” (p. 13) the political decentralisation in Iraq is one of the strongest in the region. Decentralisation is enshrined in the Iraqi constitution (“Iraqi Constitution,” 2005; NRT, 2015) and the Kurdistan Region, now a federal entity of Iraq, has been granted significant political, financial and administrative autonomy (Järvinen, 2013; Younis, 2011). However, there is much agreement in literature that public services in Iraq including education are still operating under a system not dissimilar to the totally nationalised and centralised system active during the time of the Ba’ath regime (Aarts et al.; El-Kholy & Tschirgi, 2010). There is some deconcentration to the level of local authorities (such as education departments) although tight central control is maintained (AbouAssi & Bowman, 2015). That which is taking place could be best described as ‘administrative deconcentration’ where neither power nor financial responsibility are devolved (El-Kholy & Tschirgi, 2010). AbouAssi and Bowman (2015) describe a similar model in Lebanon and suggest that local government could more accurately be understood as an “expansion of the central apparatus” (p. 7). In a similar situation, progress beyond this level has not yet taken place in Yemen although they are 10 years into a decentralisation programme (Hashem & Tietjen, 2004).

2.5.2 Rationale

Despite decentralisation of education being an international trend, the unique context of Iraq and the Middle East raise issues less pertinent to countries in other regions. Conflict, political transition,

economic instability, community divisions and the damaged or developing state of education are just some of the significant issues impacting decisions regarding the control of education.

Arguably, some of the biggest players driving decentralisation efforts in Iraq and the Middle East region are international (Al-Sese & Al-Arawi, 2014; Kahuwa, 2013). These include United Nations organisations (UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF) (Sarrouh, 2003; UNESCO, 2005), the World Bank (AbouAssi & Bowman, 2015; Patrinos & Fasih, 2009) and USAID (Murray, 2008; Patrinos & Fasih, 2009). Decentralisation is explicitly detailed as part of their development plans both for education and for country development as a whole (Channa & Faguet, 2012). They provide rationale with links, for example, to Education for All initiatives (UNESCO) (UNESCO, 2005) and the Millennium Development Goals (UNDP) (Sarrouh, 2003). Arguments in favour of decentralisation in the Middle East and conflict/post-conflict countries go beyond the classic preference-matching argument where decisions are brought closer to the people in order to better match education provision to local preference or demand (Channa & Faguet, 2012). Decentralisation of education in Iraq is promoted with the distinctive purposes of contributing to poverty reduction with more equitable distribution of resources (Hashem & Tietjen, 2004; Sarrouh, 2003), contributing to peace-making by modeling inclusion and participation (AbouAssi & Bowman, 2015; Al-Janabi & Anderson, 2011; NRT, 2015), rebuilding by ‘building back better’ with more efficient and effective education services (Al-Dahash & Kulatunga, 2015), and democratisation where opportunity is created for local communities to make choices and contribute to decisions affecting them (AbouAssi & Bowman, 2015; El-Kholy & Tschirgi, 2010; Hashem & Tietjen, 2004). On the whole, educational decentralisation is put forward as a ‘public good’. AbouAssi and Bowman (2015) believe there to be consensus that decentralisation is the optimal administration structure for development plans in conflict-affected countries and should be the default reform option.

There are those who point out that these well laid plans and policies for decentralisation themselves often lack consideration of local level views and as such are not tailored to each unique context (Järvinen, 2013). The significance of this is even greater in the context of a “messy” (El-Kholy & Tschirgi, 2010, p. 23) conflict-affected country. Murray (2008) suggests that although international powers often talk of local ownership and participation, they use these words symbolically only. Parasiliti (2012) goes even further to say that “external powers all too easily meddle” (p. 127) and Aarts et al. (2012) and Murray (2008) are skeptical of the impartiality of UN agencies and other external actors. Indeed, Brinkerhoff and Mayfield (2005) believe it to be common knowledge that the US decentralisation and reform plans for Iraq were first and foremost an external mandate and part of the “battle for the hearts

and minds” (p. 66) of the Iraqi people. With Iraq’s economy highly dependent on financial aid, external players tend to have a strong influence (Blunt, Turner, & Lindroth, 2013). However, even with local participation in the structuring of decentralisation, collisions in understanding can arise. For example, local councils in Yemen considered themselves the best aware of the community needs, yet education officers believed that their expertise should take precedence (Hashem & Tietjen, 2004). In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), some believe that decentralisation of public services (including education) would serve to further unite the region (NRT, 2015) while others consider it a threat to the fragile unity that has been years in the making (Francis, 2016). Indeed, according to the Parasiliti (2012) analysis, “there is a deep-seated and fundamental lack of consensus about governance among Iraq’s leaders” and even the “federal, decentralized state model, enshrined in the Iraqi constitution, is openly contested” (p. 127).

Although decentralisation is often presented as a neutral or ‘apolitical’ issue, this has been widely disputed with many pointing out that the association with power makes it a particularly political issue (Al-Janabi & Anderson, 2011; Järvinen, 2013; Murray, 2008; Sarrouh, 2003; Smith, 2010). Decentralisation is concerned with the allocation or redistribution of power, authority and resources (Sarrouh, 2003). Even education itself is understood to be political and ideological (Murray, 2008). Decisions about any decentralisation policy in Iraq have many complex political issues to take into consideration. According to Blunt (2012) decentralisation is “arguably the politically most contentious subject on the agenda of government in Iraq” (p. 342). An issue significant in a country in transition is that of recognising the need for nation building and national unity and the need to develop the legitimacy of the state (AbouAssi & Bowman, 2015; El-Kholy & Tschirgi, 2010; Smith, 2010). Such issues call for some degree of centralisation to remain. However, there is the concurrent need to develop citizenship, which calls for participation and inclusion and as such, some decentralisation (Smith, 2010). Finding an appropriate balance can be difficult and many have raised the political concerns that can result from too much decentralisation including abuse of power, corruption, a weakened state, deepening of ethnic, tribal and political divisions, and even a possible increase in violence (El-Kholy & Tschirgi, 2010; Järvinen, 2013; Sarrouh, 2003; Smith, 2010).

2.5.3 Impact

‘Weak’, ‘hesitant’, ‘uneven’ (AbouAssi & Bowman, 2015; El-Kholy & Tschirgi, 2010; Sarrouh, 2003) are terms that have been used to characterise the movement towards any decentralisation of education in the Middle East (Al-Sese & Al-Arawi, 2014; Kahuwa, 2013). In Lebanon, AbouAssi and Bowman (2015) observe that decentralised education has in some places become shaped by dominant religious

doctrines. In some North African countries, local government management of education has resulted in a large variation in literacy and enrollment (Sarrouh, 2003). In Yemen, despite some positive results, decentralisation in places with lower local capacity has proved ineffective (Hashem & Tietjen, 2004). The devolution of power to the federal region of Iraq has, according to Younis (2011) resulted in divisive and dangerous situations. She attributes this to the establishment of regional security forces supporting political violence, and various religious or community groups wishing to further divide Iraq to their advantage. Younis goes on however, to point out that the Kurdish region is different and has positively supported federalism. With little educational decentralisation to speak of in Iraq, Al-Janabi and Anderson (2011) believe that had it have been implemented sooner, a great deal of Iraq's problems could have been avoided. At the country level, they suggest war and sanctions to be caused by the centralised approach to decision-making in government, and at the education level they believe that the low quality of education is a direct result of the centralised approach to its management (Al-Janabi & Anderson, 2011).

2.6 Summary

Decentralisation in education is understood to be a shifting of authority from the central level to lower levels. The literature reviewed in this chapter revealed that there is no single model of decentralisation, but rather, each model for each context is a unique combination of factors. Terminology for various approaches to decentralisation include local governance, devolution, and self-managing schools. Each term lends understanding to an approach to educational decentralisation, some use the terms in place of 'decentralisation', and others argue that they make up only one aspect of decentralisation. In a bid to improve education, decentralisation is driven by the need to reduce bureaucracy and to increase representation and innovation. It is also seen to be a standard part of education improvement and, as such, an inevitable part of education reform. However, in reality, a hidden political or economic agenda has often been found to be the real driver. When considering a decentralisation policy for education, what to decentralise, to what level and to what degree; there are multiple elements of education to consider. School teachers and staff are a major resource to education and authority over their employment, support and development must be carefully considered. The layers of decisions that must be made for the smooth running of schools are many and determining who makes these decisions is a large part of decentralisation. The significant role that curriculum has in defining the quality of education means that determining responsibilities for its content and the process of teaching is crucial. Finally, authority for financial aspects of schooling relate to revenue, expenditure and accountability.

The drive towards decentralisation as seen in literature has had an impact on Iraq and the Middle East. The context raises an array of unique issues including the interests of international development partners and the role decentralisation can play in peace-keeping, poverty reduction, democracy and citizenship. Literature identified both positive roles and damaging roles. An effective policy is more likely to be developed if it takes into consideration the issues and the understandings of the issues from those at the forefront of education. Based on this, an analysis of the experiences and perspectives of education professionals in Kurdistan may contribute to an aligning of the elements of a decentralisation policy with the realities on the ground.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In considering the research focus and research questions, an appropriate method of research was selected. This chapter summarises the selected method along with relevant rationale. This is followed by an outline of the procedures used to conduct the study. Details of the research site, the data collection tool and the participants are included. The process of analysis applied to the resulting data is then described. The final sections identify any limitations and ethical issues that were encountered.

3.1 Research Focus

This research is focused on the administrative processes currently operating in education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) with a particular focus on the public school system. In Arab countries, El-Kholy and Tschirgi (2010) identify a gap between research on decentralisation and locally generated analysis of local level dynamics. Al-Dahash and Kulatunga (2015) believe that inclusion of the voice of the local level, or as they say, 'end-user' in programme planning, is vital in post-conflict countries. They found that any resulting development was far superior when this bottom-up approach to policy development was adopted.

This research, therefore, is intended to gain insight into the perceptions of leaders in education. The research procedures are designed to invite participants to evaluate key aspects of the current school administrative approaches and also to offer suggestions for related improvements. Findings from this research are intended to contribute to discussion considering the possibilities of decentralisation in education for the KRI. Selection of this focus arose from the researcher's professional interest in exploring the options of decentralisation, a call for increased research to inform political decisions in the region (USAID, 2012), and recognition of a move towards decentralisation already beginning (Brinkerhoff & Taddesse, 2005; Cravens & Brinkerhoff, 2013; Francis, 2016; NRT, 2015).

3.1.1 Research Questions

In line with the focus, two research questions were designed to guide the methodology:

How effective are the current school administrative processes considered to be?

What improvements are considered important for increasing the effectiveness of school administration?

3.1.2 Theoretical Framework

Guiding this research study is the theoretical framework of interpretivism. This theory recognises that knowledge of the world goes beyond only observation to also include ‘understanding’ of what is being observed or experienced. Therefore, the emphasis is placed on the individual human reflection and subsequent interpretation as a way of knowing (Ritchie et al., 2013). Some refer to this as the study of ‘lived experience’ (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005; Smith, 2011). It gives consideration to the connections between the experience and the individual with all of their context and background through which they develop their understandings and knowledge (Ritchie et al., 2013). Denzin and Lincoln (2009) even assert that all knowledge is interpretive and research cannot be conducted objectively without consideration of the context of those it involves. They say that qualitative research is an attempt to “make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009, p. 3)

From this theoretical framework, the research approach was designed to gain understanding of lived experience from the participants’ perspectives. This framework also plays a role in how the research is conducted encompassing all stages including the development of the data gathering tool, the analysis and the way results are interpreted.

3.2 Research Approach

To formulate findings in response to the research questions, an experiential qualitative approach was selected. This choice was based on the research questions seeking information on perceptions rather than only facts, figures or statistical data and in line with the theoretical framework. Phenomenological research is a research design with an emphasis on experiential as opposed to objective data (Creswell, 2012; Morse, 1994; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005; Sandelowski, 1995; Smith, 2011; Smith & Osborn, 2015). While grounded theory focuses on social processes and what actually happens and ethnography on people and cultures; phenomenological research is less concerned with what is happening than with how people make sense of it (Smith, 2011). Focused on the reaction of participants to what is happening to them, phenomenological research explores an area of concern without a predetermined hypothesis and tries to get an insider perspective (Groenewald, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2015). The intention is to explore the meaning that a particular phenomenon has for individuals who have experienced it (Morse, 1994). With the expression of the participants unique, an underlying pattern or convergence of meaning is then sought (Morse, 1994; Smith, 2011). Therefore, the central assumption of phenomenological research is that there is an essence to human experience, some

commonalities shared with others (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Morse, 1994). Using this approach, the issue of school administration could be broached with key leaders in the education field in the KRI inviting them to share their experience and insights. Their responses could then be analysed in search of the essence, both unique and shared with others in the sample.

Experience is not tangible so the research process involves what Smith (2011) calls “double hermeneutics” (p. 10) whereby the researcher must make sense of the participant making sense of their experience. This type of analysis of data is not particularly straightforward involving complicated processes of engagement and interpretation (Reid et al., 2005; Smith, 2011). Furthermore, the results of phenomenological research do not gain the status of facts but are interpretive. As such, transparency and plausibility are emphasised in report writing (Reid et al., 2005).

Nevertheless, phenomenological research is considered useful for situations where perspectives on particular experiences are sought. As a ‘bottom-up’ approach, phenomenological research considers the participants experts in their own experiences (Reid et al., 2005). As a result, this methodology is suited to unexplored issues and has potential to provide unforeseen and significant meanings.

3.3 Research Procedure

3.3.1 Research Site

Sulaimaniyah city was chosen as the site from which data would be collected. Sulaimaniyah is located in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq near the border to Iran. It is one of the main cities and centres of population in the Kurdish Region.

The federal entity of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) was established in 2006 based on the new constitution of Iraq ("Iraqi Constitution," 2005; Osler & Yahya, 2013). As such, the region has constitutional authority to govern and manage its own affairs (Cravens & Brinkerhoff, 2013). While Iraq as a whole continues to struggle and build a stable government, the federal status of the Kurdistan region has allowed democracy and modernisation to move forward at a quicker pace (Ministry of Planning, 2013).

Even before the constitution recognised the regional authority of the region, Kurdistan had been functioning autonomously since the 1992 UN establishment of the area as a ‘no-fly zone’ (Ministry of Planning, 2013; United Nations, 2010). This protection allowed the local government to create an official armed force and provide security to the region. Since then, this force has continued to strengthen; it

provided assistance to the coalition forces during the liberation of Iraq in 2003 and continues to lead in the opposition to the Islamic State (IS) offensive in Iraq and Syria (Ministry of Planning, 2013). Although IS continues to be a growing concern in Iraq, the Kurdish region has remained largely removed from the dangers and is known for its security in a region fraught with conflict and insurgency (Jimenez & Kabachnik, 2012).

Decades of conflict and instability characterised by border disputes, military crackdowns, genocidal campaigns, mass displacement, humanitarian crises, and civil war left the education infrastructure in Iraq severely damaged (O'Leary et al., 2006; Osler & Yahya, 2013). In the autonomous KRI, a Ministry of Education (MoE) uniting the entire region was established (Vernez et al., 2014) and with these new found freedoms, the KRG was afforded the opportunity to begin modernising their stagnant education system. By 2007, the MoE was in the process of implementing a major education reform called the 'New System of Education' based on the ambition of modernisation of the education system (De Santisteban, 2005; Ministry of Planning, 2013; Osler & Yahya, 2013; Vernez et al., 2014). New curriculum has been implemented accompanied by new teaching methods, changes to the school structure and qualifications of teachers (Vernez et al., 2014) paving the way for further reform. The following statement from the Ministry of Planning (2013) vision document captures the position of the government; "we must maintain open relations with the rest of the world and remain willing to learn from anyone who can provide information of value" (p. 3).

The researcher is a previous employee of the Ministry of Education of the Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq and was stationed in the General Directorate of Education in Sulaimaniyah city. Part of the motivation for this particular research project was the researcher's interest in contributing to potential further education reform in the region. The researcher was located in New Zealand during the study but could, in the future, return to an educational leadership role in Kurdistan.

3.3.2 Data Collection Tool

A questionnaire was used for collecting data in this research study. Semi-structured interviews are the most commonly recommended tool used in phenomenological research designs (Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Smith & Osborn, 2015). This is due to their flexibility, the richness of the data that can be obtained through dialogue, and the opportunity they afford for probing into unexpected areas (Reid et al., 2005; Smith, 2011; Smith & Osborn, 2015). However, it is also recognised that there are alternative methods, one of which is a questionnaire (Reid et al., 2005). The decision to use a questionnaire in this study was based on the limitations on the researcher in being unable to directly access the participants. Due to

time differences between New Zealand and Iraq, access to communications, and logistical issues involved in remotely interviewing participants, the researcher instead chose to develop a questionnaire which incorporates some of the advantages of semi-structured interviews. To compensate for the reduction in the richness of data that would be obtained through each questionnaire, the sample size was adjusted to include a larger number of participants than what would be involved if semi-structured interviews were used (see section 3.3.3).

One of the key features of data collection in phenomenological research is that the researcher introduces an area of interest (Smith & Osborn, 2015). The questionnaire developed for this study was structured around the review of literature regarding decentralisation of education. A framework was identified, the parts of which characterise efforts to decentralise education around the world. These were deemed areas of interest about which it was necessary to gain perspectives from those directly experiencing the education administration in the KRI.

A further feature of data collection significant in phenomenological research is that the respondent must be free to introduce further issues the researcher may not have anticipated. Therefore, three key strategies are suggested by Smith and Osborn (2015, p. 63) for the structure of questions:

- 1) Questions should be neutral rather than value-laden or leading
- 2) Avoid jargon or assumptions of technical proficiency
- 3) Use open, not closed, questions

According to this guidance, the questionnaire is made up of 14 questions; each question allows the respondent to provide a rating followed by an opportunity to offer their own suggestions. Therefore, the questionnaire is primarily composed of open-ended questions allowing respondents to use their own words to answer the questions. The rating aspect of each question is included primarily to lend understanding to the associated open-ended question response rather than as a stand-alone statistical result. A final question invites respondents to add any further comments. The term 'decentralisation', while a focus of this study, was not used in the questionnaire at all, partly to avoid jargon, but primarily to avoid leading the respondent to any particular response they might think the research is seeking. There are two versions of the questionnaire that are essentially the same with differences only in wording to appropriately address the targeted participant. All versions of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

Questionnaire	Example of wording difference for question 1
Questionnaire for schools	How would you rate the current approach to selection and employment of teachers and staff in your school?
Questionnaire for education officers and academics	How would you rate the current approach to selection and employment of teachers and staff in public schools?

Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) recommend trialling data collection tools prior to research beginning so that any problems can be resolved in advance. Because the questionnaires were for use in the KRI, translation was required. The researcher was able to do this translation and the resulting questionnaire was trialled by a school principal in Sulaimaniyah city. He was invited to comment on the wording, structure, and his understanding of the questions. This allowed for some minor improvements in the wording, particularly in the Kurdish version that was used.

3.3.3 Sample

Participants

With the interest in this study being the experience of the school administrative approach as mandated by the government in the KRI, participating persons were considered sources of information. Public school principals were selected as a primary source of information. They were considered to have first-hand experience of the implementation of government school administration. In the interest of adding a variety of diverse perspectives, participants from other settings with different experiences were also included. According to Sandelowski (1995) this is called “phenomenal variation” (p. 181).

Three types of participants were selected to respond to questionnaires.

- 1) School principals
 - a. Public schools
 - b. Model schools
 - c. Private schools
- 2) Education Officials
- 3) Education Academics

Table 3-1: Participants

Participating persons	Public School Principals	Model School (Public) Principals	Private School Principals	Education Officers	Education Academics
Justification for inclusion	Direct experience of the issue	Variation of experience of the issue	Alternative experience of the issue	Variation on perspective (indirect experience of the issue)	Variation on perspective (no direct current experience of the issue)

- The primary sample and information source is principals from public schools who are implementing government mandated administrative approaches.
- Model schools, while still public schools, have been given some liberties to implement innovative approaches. They are schools selected by the government to pilot new methods, and to operate semi-autonomously.
- A sample from private schools operating under their own policies offer experience of independently determined administration approaches. Private schools are run by non-governmental organisations with an agreement with the MoE. They have alternative funding arrangements which include full/partial fees, private funding, or a shared private/government funding arrangement.
- Education officers experience school administrative approaches indirectly and from a different level of management. They work in various posts in either the MoE or Directorate of Education (DoE) and may not have current first-hand experience of the phenomena.
- Education academics have knowledge of education administration in the schools. While they may not currently be directly experiencing the phenomena, they all will have extensive prior experience in education and their difference in perspective offers variety to understanding of the phenomena under study. They also may have access to international literature and global knowledge on education.

Sample Size

Table 3-2: Planned Number of Participants

Participating persons	Public School Principals	Model School (Public) Principals	Private School Principals	Education Officers	Education Academics	Total
	20	5	5	5	5	40

Decisions regarding sample size for this research design were guided by both the need to produce credible findings adequate for answering the research questions and a realistic understanding of the limitations on resources and time (Sandelowski, 1995). Being a phenomenological investigation, information sources were chosen to represent a source of information, but not as representative of a population (Creswell, 2012; Morse, 1994; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Sandelowski, 1995). Therefore, comparison to the total population was not relevant in determining sample size. The intention was not to generalise with a statistically representative sample, but rather to generate enough information to support the researcher in reaching an analytical goal (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009; Sandelowski, 1995). Denzin and Lincoln (2009) explain this lack of focus on traditional generalisation by saying that “every instance of a case or process bears the stamp of the general class of phenomenon to which it belongs. However, any given instance is likely to be particular and unique” (p. 245).

The biggest sample (20) was taken from those who most directly experienced the issue at hand; public school principals. Although not the focus of the study, model schools and private schools offered a more diverse experience of the phenomenon and thus had a smaller representation in the sample. Education officials and academics were also represented by a small sample because, while their perspective was of interest, they may not always have first-hand experience of the school administration.

Phenomenological research, interested in experience and its essence, should include about six participants according to Morse (1994), and Creswell (2012) recommends ten. Interviewing has the potential to yield more data (Reid et al., 2005; Smith, 2011; Smith & Osborn, 2015), but because this research study used semi-structured questionnaires, the sample size was increased to compensate. Morse (1994) and Sandelowski (1995) do suggest that when the phenomenological research has a particular goal intended (in the case of this study, recommendations useful to policy makers) a sample of 25 is better. Furthermore, to allow for some statistical analysis of the rating scale in the

questionnaire, the minimum size of 30 is exceeded (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Nevertheless, the research remains primarily qualitative and a phenomenological design, so any analysis is not for the intention of representation of a population or generalisation of the findings. Statistical analysis was used for providing an alternative representation of the findings and in particular, the rating scales.

Selection

The sample included in this study was purposive because it was necessary to include participants that represented the unique interests of the study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009; Smith & Osborn, 2015). However, within the purposive sample, a short list was developed using some random procedures to ensure that there was no selection bias on the part of the researcher. Furthermore, in order to avoid any conflicts of interest, participants were only included if they were previously unknown to the researcher, either personally or professionally. The steps outlined below were followed to select the sample.

- 1) Obtained complete lists to select from
 - a. List of schools in the Sulaimaniyah area
 - b. Staff list from the General Directorate of Education (GDOE) of Sulaimaniyah
 - c. List of education academics in the University of Sulaimani
- 2) Assigned each potential participant a number and through a randomised process (<http://randomnumbergenerator.intemodino.com/en/>) developed a short list
- 3) Reviewed the short-listed participants to eliminate any previously known to the researcher
- 4) Replaced eliminated participants with another randomly selected
- 5) Replaced any participants who declined to participate or did not respond by adding additional randomly selected participants

Table 3-3: Actual Number of Participants

Participating persons	Public School Principals	Model School (Public) Principals	Private School Principals	Education Officers	Education Academics	Total
Shortlist	20	5	5	5	5	40
Response to initial email	14	4	3	2	5	28
Added participants	6	0	1	3	0	10
Total final response	25	4	4	8	5	46

There is some discrepancy between the shortlist of participants and the resulting selection as seen in (Table 3-3). This was due to the lack of response from some participants prompting the addition of more participants. In some cases both the newly added participants responded and then those who were previously unresponsive replied to the follow-up email and ended up submitting their completed questionnaires. This resulted in a slightly larger sample. In the categories of model schools and private schools not enough additional participants could be contacted as they were known to the researcher resulting in a smaller sample than planned. Because the sample is not intended to be representative of the population (Creswell, 2012; Morse, 1994; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007; Sandelowski, 1995) the difference in responses would not influence the findings so it was decided to include all responses as received.

3.3.4 Data Collection

Data collection was undertaken directly by the researcher using the following steps.

- 1) Gained approval for research by regional authorities
 - a. Letter to the General Directorate of Education, Sulaimaniyah requesting approval for the research.
- 2) Short list of participants developed (following the procedure as detailed above)
- 3) Distributed letter of introduction, information sheets (Appendix 3), and questionnaires (Appendix 1, Appendix 2) by email directly to the participants
- 4) Received returned questionnaires by email

3.4 Analysis

Although the data collection methods in this study may be not unlike other research designs, the process of data analysis is what sets phenomenological research methods apart. The process does not result in observations and accounts, but experiences. Hammel (2008) describes the analysis as drawing life out of what may otherwise be understood as normal experiences. Central to the phenomenological research design is the assumption that that there is a shared 'essence' to be discovered (Hammel, 2008; Marshall & Rossman, 2014; Van Manen, 1990).

Analysis follows two distinct steps (Marshall & Rossman, 2014):

- 1) Phenomenological reduction
- 2) Structural synthesis

3.4.1 Phenomenological reduction

Phenomenological reduction is where themes are identified and involves analysing each individual case and then analysing cases collectively (see Figure 3-1). The analysis begins with clustering data around themes (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The result is a descriptive analysis of the themes discovered.

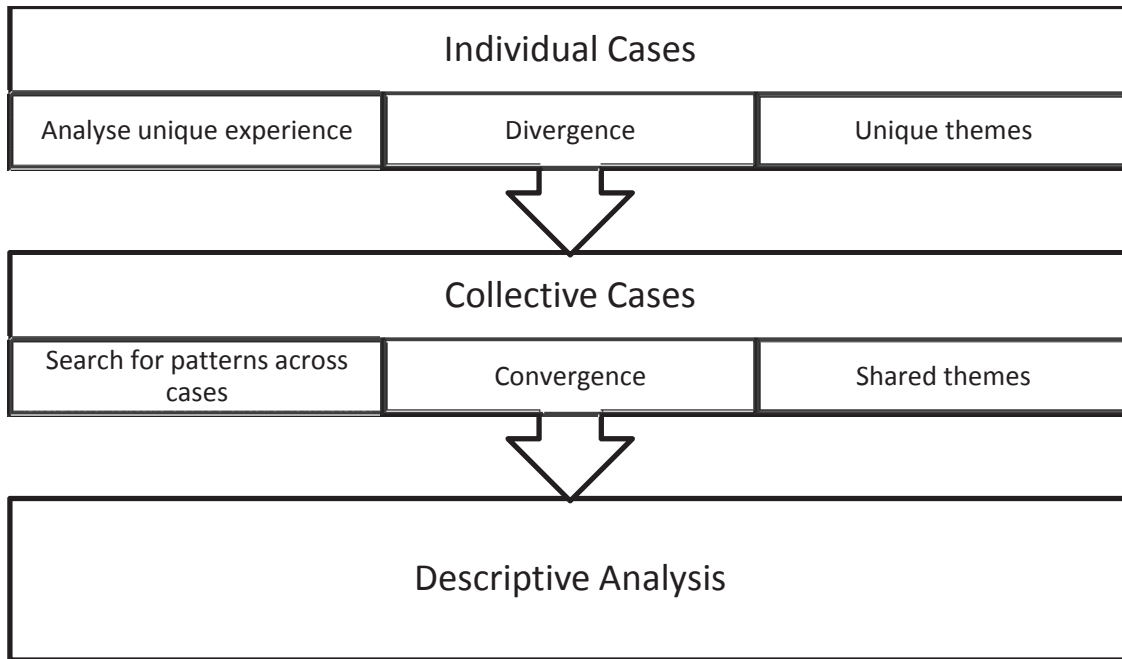


Figure 3-1: Phenomenological reduction

The analysis technique used for phenomenological reduction in this research study was systematic reflective analysis (Groenewald, 2004; Moustakas, 1994; Reid et al., 2005). This involved a number of steps followed to identify both shared and individual themes and resulted in a descriptive analysis (findings chapter). First the data was divided into four clusters as per the framework introduced in the literature review (section 2.4). Questionnaire responses were developed in accordance with this framework to aid in this clustering as shown in the following table.

Table 3-4: Clustering of the Data according To the Framework

Framework	Cluster of related questions
Human resources	Questions 1-4
Decision-making powers	Questions 5-7
Curriculum	Questions 8 & 9
Finance	Questions 10-13

The step-by-step process of analysis as outlined below was then applied to each of the clusters.

Table 3-5: Process of Analysis

Step 1: Bracketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review literature - Identifying personal position
Step 2: Compile ratings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overall distribution of ratings - Identify median and mode
Step 3: Code open-ended responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individually code each response according to its meaning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of authority - Authority for which elements - Degree of authority - Impact of authority
Step 4: Identify shared themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify significant topics - Number of times a meaning is mentioned - Consider content of meaning - Eliminate redundant units - Produce a table of themes - Extracts of common responses
Step 5: Identify unique themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce a table of unique themes - Extracts of responses
Step 6: Examine the source	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read each questionnaire in entirety - Acknowledge context and individual's experience - Isolate strong feelings expressed
Step 7: Validity check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Triangulate meaning - Rating - Entire questionnaire - Original open-ended response

Bracketing

In this step, the researcher reviews literature related to the particular focus and identifies their own related personal opinion and experiences. The researcher then intentionally 'brackets' out their own position and seeks to hold no opinion either for or against when attempting to interpret the inside perspectives of the participants (Byrne, 2001; Giorgi, 1997; Groenewald, 2004; Polkinghorne, 1989).

Compile ratings

Ratings from all participants for the cluster of questions are compiled so that the distribution of ratings can be observed. Further meaning is given to this part of the data by identifying the median (central data point) and the mode (most frequently occurring rating).

Code open-ended responses

Each response to the open-ended segment of the questions is read and deconstructed to identify units of meaning (Giorgi, 1997). To aid in the deconstruction of each response, four headings are used to classify the meanings. The headings are derived from what is suggested in literature to make every decentralisation/centralisation model unique: the level at which authority is located, authority for what aspects, the degree of authority and accountability assigned, and the impact of authority (Campbell, 2000; Grauwe et al., 2005; Bimber, 1993; OECD, 2011) and are used as a method to organise the table. Each unit of meaning is noted along with the frequency it is mentioned.

Identify shared themes

The coded responses are then critically reviewed to find patterns. Firstly units of meaning that occur frequently are noted, then the content of the meaning is returned to for ensuring its significance or otherwise (Groenewald, 2004). Selecting themes also involves consideration of the richness of the content and the relevance to the research questions. Finally, a table is produced that lists the themes on which there is convergence. Extracts are selected that are an example of a common response (Smith, 2011).

Identify unique themes

The less common or unique responses are also noted. This includes perspectives related to the shared themes that display unusual experiences, creative ideas, or the minority voice of the sample. Again they are displayed in a table alongside example extracts.

Examine the source

In this step, the researcher returns to each questionnaire and instead of only reviewing a cluster of questions, reads all of the responses in order to gain a picture of the individual participant's experience and perspective. Strong feelings can be isolated and noted.

Validity check

Finally, in order to check the validity of the themes identified, the last step is a form of triangulation. The open-ended responses that contribute to the theme are each re-read in comparison with the associated rating that the same respondent gave and in light of analysis of the respondents overall experience and perspective (step 6). Through this it is decided whether the theme is consistent with what the participant meant.

3.4.2 Structural synthesis

Structural synthesis is when the themes that were identified in the first part of analysis are explored to identify possible meanings resulting in an interpretive analysis. Smith (2011) explains that this analysis seeks to find the balance of the convergence and divergence within the sample. This is a description of the essence. It must also be clarified that the analysis is not definitive, but just one of many possible meanings that could be drawn out. As such, the importance of the descriptive analysis in the findings not only lends understanding to the interpretive analysis, but allows room for readers to reach alternative conclusions or interpretations of meaning to that arrived at by this analysis (Hammel, 2008).

A phenomenological description is never *one* interpretation, and no single interpretation of experience will ever exhaust the possibility of yet another complimentary, or even potentially *richer or deeper* description. (Van Manen, 1990, p. 31 original emphasis)

The discussion section of this research report is made up of the structural synthesis. It involves an interpretation of each theme to identify the essence. Each theme is discussed first in isolation, then in comparison with the literature. Convergence and divergence is noted and possible meanings (essence) identified. The implications of these meanings are then considered along with any questions they raise. The following figure illustrates the different stages the data goes through to culminate in an 'essence' (Figure 3-2).

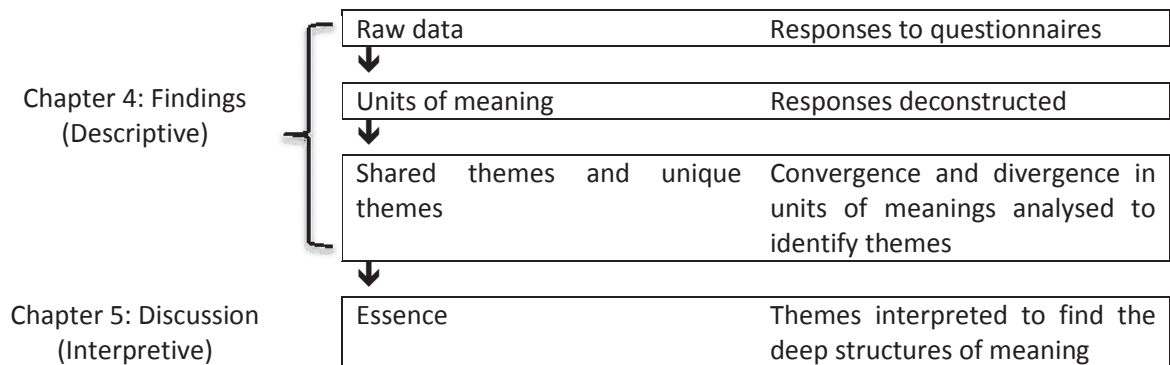


Figure 3-2: Process for data to become 'essence'

3.5 Limitations

A significant limitation of this study was that the researcher made a decision to conduct the data collection remotely. Although the researcher is Kurdish, the unstable security situation in the larger Iraq made travel to Kurdistan risky and personal and family situations resulted in the decision to remain in New Zealand for the time being. As such, accessing personal experiences of participants and gaining insider perspectives as called for by phenomenological research was significantly more challenging.

Another limitation common to all researchers in experiential research is that the findings are limited by the participants chosen (Mouton & Marais, 1988). With this type of research not intended for generalisation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009) the temptation to assume that the participants are representative of the wider population must be avoided. To mitigate this, the sample selected included different types of schools and participants with different types of involvement in school with the intention to add wider perspective. As Mouton and Marais (1988) say, the concepts “accurately represent the world of the sample” (p. 71), but not beyond.

The data collection process focuses on the experience and the participants’ articulation of it. This approach may miss significant information about the background to an individual’s experience or other associated factors. Although the researcher’s professional experience of the education system in the KRI may offer greater insight into the background of participant experiences, this raises another factor common to those using the phenomenological approach; research bias, which has the potential to selectively encourage one outcome over another. It was necessary to recognise researcher experiences and ‘bracket’ them when undertaking the process of analysis (Byrne, 2001; Giorgi, 1997; Groenewald, 2004; Polkinghorne, 1989). As Groenewald (2004) explains, this bracketing involves a process of identifying one’s own experiences and setting them aside in order to understand someone else’s. He explains that this is a deliberate process resulting in “not allowing the researcher’s meanings and interpretations or theoretical concepts to enter the unique world of the informant/participant” (p. 18).

3.6 Ethical considerations

A number of strategies were used to ensure that this study was conducted ethically and in careful consideration of the rights of the participants. The principles in the Massey University Code of Ethics were followed (Massey University Human Ethics Committee, 2010) and ethical approval was granted specifying the study as a low risk research project (see Ethical approval Appendix 4).

All participants were given an information sheet outlining the purposes of the study and their rights (Appendix 3). This included the freedom of choice in whether or not to participate and their right to withdraw from the study at any time. It also assured them that no names or details of participants or their institutions would be used in the report. A further measure taken was to select the sample to intentionally exclude any schools or participants personally or professionally known to the researcher. In doing so, potential for the influence of power positions or bias were removed. Participation in this research process offered respondents the opportunity to add their voice to possible future decision processes for the administration structure of education in the region.

Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter presents a descriptive record of the results of the analysis. Responses to questionnaires were received from a total of 46 participants forming the data set. The initial sample targeted was to be 40, but during the process of recruiting participants, lack of response prompted a higher number of participants to be contacted. It was decided to include all 46 (46/50) returned questionnaires to add to the richness of the sample.

Data was gathered from five different types of key informants; school principals from public, private and 'model' schools, education officers, and education academics. Consideration is given to the divergence and convergence of responses according to type of informant, however this only takes place to increase understanding of the meaning not to suggest any representation of the wider population. The inclusion of different categories of participants is for the purpose of gaining a wider range of opinion from different perspectives, different backgrounds and different experiences. This is in order to broaden the range of responses and gain richer answers to the research questions. When direct quotes are used in this chapter, the following coding system is used to indicate which of these categories the quote was obtained from.

A=Education Academic
E=Education Officer
M=Model School
T=Private School
P=Public School

In addition to this, 'Q' is used to indicate which number question from the questionnaire the quote was in response to. For example, the code 'P11Q3' indicates that the quote was from the 11th participant from a public school in response to question number 3.

The order in which these findings are presented is in alignment with the framework identified in the literature review (see section 2.4) and represents the main elements of educational management often considered for decentralisation; human resources, decision-making powers, curriculum, and finance. As distinct from themes, these are considered broad areas of interest as suggested by Smith and Osborn (2015) and Groenewald (2004) to loosely guide the data collection and organise the findings. Each of these four sections is further divided into two parts to respond directly to the two research questions and present the themes that emerged. The first research question is concerned with opinions of

effectiveness and is responded to with quantitative data in terms of ratings. All participants completed all ratings with only a few responses eliminated due to illegibility. The qualitative data from open-ended questions provide response to the second research question regarding suggestions of improvements for effectiveness. Not all participants responded to all of the 14 open-ended questions.

Table 4-1: Open Ended Question Response Rate

Question	Number of responses	Percentage of 46 total
1	26	57
2	22	48
3	22	48
4	18	39
5	15	33
6	15	33
7	18	39
8	15	33
9	17	37
10	13	28
11	18	39
12	14	30
13	12	26
14	13	28

Lack of response could be for a number of reasons; it could be because the participant had rated the aspect of administration 'effective' and therefore in no need of improvement; it could be because the participant did not have any suggestions for improvement at this point; and it could also be because the participant declines to share their ideas or did not care to do so. However, even in the case of question 13 with only 12 responses, this still exceeds the recommended sample size of 10 for phenomenological research (Creswell, 2012; Morse, 1994).

4.1 Human resources

The questionnaire used with the participants included four questions related to human resources. Question one dealt with appointment of teachers and staff, question two with planning for professional development, question three the provision of professional development and question four was related to supporting teachers.

Q1: How would you rate the current approach to selection and employment of teachers and staff in your school?

Q2: How would you rate the current approach to identifying the needs and priorities for professional development of teachers and staff in your school?

Q3: How would you rate the current approach to meeting the needs for professional development of teachers and staff in your school?

Q4: How would you rate the current approach to supporting teachers in the learning and teaching processes in your school?

4.1.1 Research question one: How effective are the current school administrative processes considered to be?

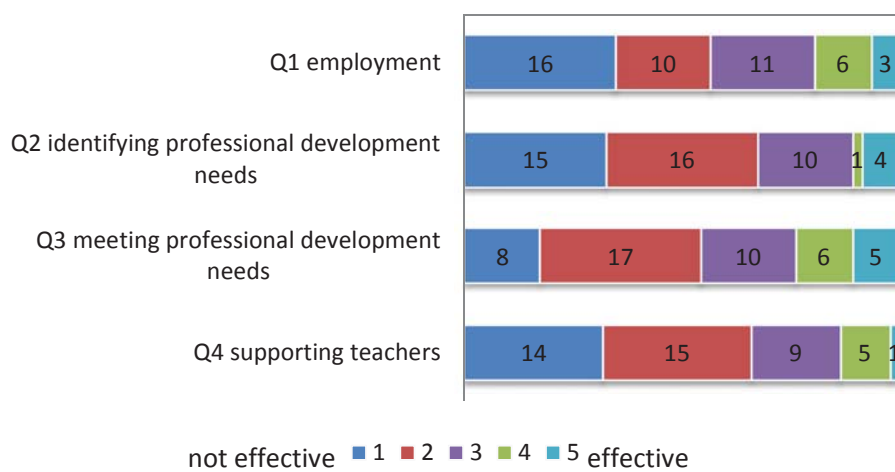


Figure 4-1: Ratings for questions 1-4

During data collection, the participants gave their opinion of the effectiveness of approaches to managing human resources. They responded to a five-point scale where one represented ‘not effective’ and five ‘effective’. Two participants chose not to respond to question four; otherwise the resulting data represents the opinion of all 46 participants. In Figure 4-1 it can be seen that the larger number of participants were dissatisfied with the effectiveness of the current approach for managing human resources in schools.

Table 4-2: Questions 1-4 Median and Mode

	Median	Mode
Q1 employment	2	1
Q2 identifying professional development needs	2	2
Q3 meeting professional development needs	2	2
Q4 supporting teachers	2	2

The central data point for all four questions (median) was 2, which on a five point scale indicated that more participants believed the approaches to the different aspects of managing human resources to be less than effective. In response to the approaches to employment (question 1), the most frequently occurring ranking (mode) was one with 16 participants choosing this ranking which represented 'not effective'. Identification of professional development needs scored the greatest level of dissatisfaction (41 aggregating levels of effectiveness 1-3); yet ironically fewer concerns were evident in the meeting of professional development needs (35). A full data table of rankings given can be seen in Appendix 5.

4.1.2 Research question two: What improvements are considered important for increasing the effectiveness of school administration?

Each of the four questions gave the respondents the opportunity to offer suggestions for improvement. As an early step of analysis, the responses were coded according to what they mentioned in line with the different dimensions of decentralisation/centralisation models (level of authority, authority for which elements, degree/method of authority and the impact of authority). A frequency table was developed listing the expressions respondents used. For example, two responses mentioned teachers in relation to the level of authority suggested, eleven responses listed school needs in relation to the impact of the administrative approach. A variety of topics were raised (see Table 4-3).

Table 4-3: Frequency of Units of Meaning Expressed (Human Resources)

<p>Level of authority School - School Administration (3) - Principal (2) - Teachers (2) - School Committee (1) Supervision units (3) MoE (2) Govt (1) Civil organisations (1) DoE (1)</p>	<p>Degree of authority and accountability assigned Specialists (10) Administration skills (5) Support (4) Expertise (3) Practical training (3) International input (2) Modernise (2) Resources (1) Finances (1) Community involvement (1) Systems (1) Planning (1) Political pressure (1) Competition (employment) (1) Information centres (1)</p>
<p>Authority for which elements Courses (15) Contracts (2)</p>	<p>Impact of authority School needs (11) Specialities (6)</p>

Employment (1)	Coordination (6) Patronage (5) Routines (2) Education quality (2) New graduate teachers (2) Equality of support (2)
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Numbers indicate how many times the meaning was mentioned in the cluster of data. According to the process of phenomenological reduction, the analysis process clusters data around themes (shared themes). Therefore, meanings that were mentioned frequently (see Table 4-3) were revisited and a deeper analysis conducted to identify if they represented a theme (convergence of perspectives). Analysing the responses of participants to identify themes also involved triangulation of the data obtained from open-ended responses with ratings and overall questionnaire responses. The following figure (Figure 4-2) is an example of this triangulation as applied to one participant's response to question one.

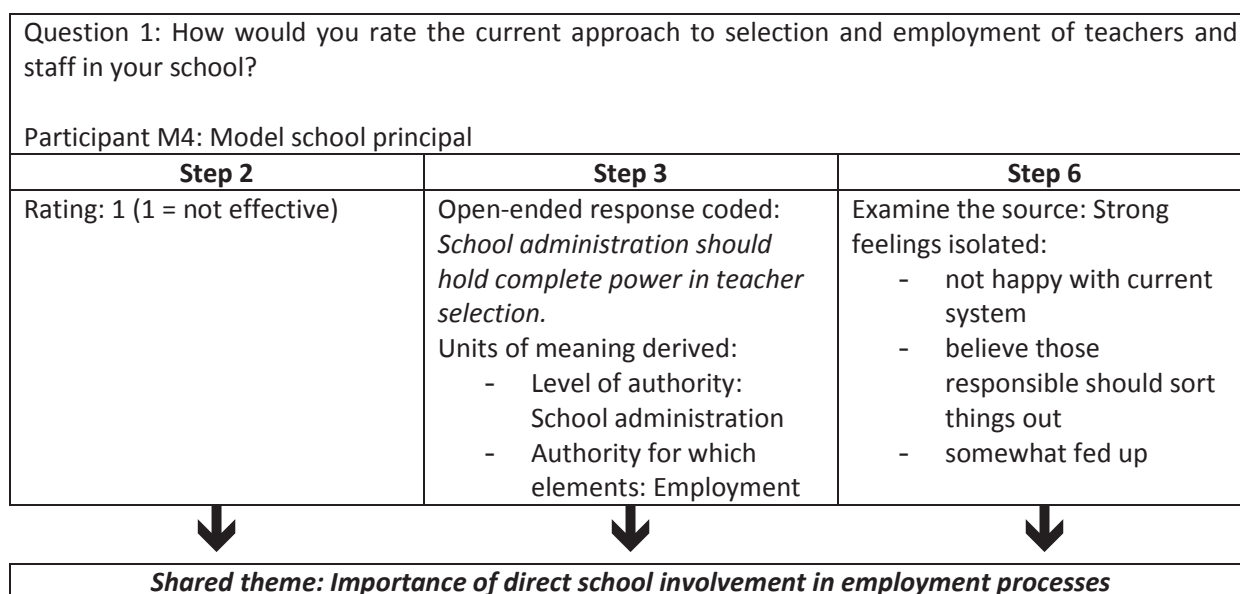


Figure 4-2: Example of the analysis process applied to one response showing how it contributes to a shared theme (Human resources)

These resulting themes are displayed in the following table (Table 4-4) supported by extracts quoted from the responses. Some of these extracts were chosen to represent the common response and some to show the variety of responses contributing to a theme. Divergent responses were also noted which showed innovation, diversity or creativity (unique themes).

Table 4-4: Themes (Human Resources)

<i>Shared themes</i>	<i>Examples of comments</i>
Importance of direct school involvement in employment processes	<p>P11Q1 The school administration should have a say in the employment of teachers. (Public School)</p> <p>M4Q1 School administration should hold complete power in teacher selection. (Model School)</p> <p>P12Q1 [Employment] processes should take place through committee in the school. (Public School)</p> <p>P12Q1 [Employment] should be through the education department.(Public School)</p> <p>E8Q1 [Employment] should be a competitive process based on experience, training, and degree. (Education officer)</p> <p>P14Q1 [Employment] should involve the principal testing applicants. (Public School)</p> <p>A3Q1 The process [of employment] is just a routine and doesn't achieve the goal. For example, in the time of interviewing teachers for employment, the purpose is not for choosing who is appropriate, but rather for giving priority to those with 'wasta' [political/social power]. (Academic)</p> <p>T2Q1 Distance ourselves from 'wasta' in employment and cut the root of political power. (Private School)</p>
Importance of the type and quality of professional development opportunities	<p>P25Q3 Those courses... shouldn't be only lectures, they should include other government institutions [meaning visits to practical sites]. (Public school)</p> <p>P26Q3 There must be special information centres for trainers to get information from. (Public school)</p> <p>P5Q2 There should be no courses held during formal school times because it has an effect on the teaching process and impacts the teacher by delaying their teaching plans. (Public school)</p>
<i>Unique themes</i>	
Importance of initial teacher preparation	<p>E4Q2 I think that teachers won't improve through courses. Rather the universities and institutes need improvement so they can prepare teachers according to international standards. (Education official)</p>
Importance of follow up on the effectiveness of professional development initiatives	<p>P26Q3 [there should be] follow up in the schools on the level of those teachers who participated in the courses. (Public school)</p>

Theme: Importance of direct school involvement in employment processes

Firstly, eight participants believed there was a need for direct involvement by schools in appointing staff. Some suggested that this should be the role of school administration or principals and others felt that a committee would be more appropriate. Still others suggested devolving the responsibility at least down from the MoE level to local education directorates. This direct involvement was considered to be important for ensuring that the selection process was based on merit.

E8Q1 [Employment] should be a competitive process based on experience, training, and degree. (Education officer)

Furthermore, it was believed to be important for reducing political interference in the processes.

T2Q1 [We must] distance ourselves from 'wasta' [patronage] in employment and cut the root of political power.

Theme: Importance of the type and quality of professional development opportunities

The second theme was the opinion that the type and quality of training courses needed improvement. There was a large call for more expert involvement in the support and development of teachers. Ten of the respondents suggested that external experts were needed. Three participants suggested that the practical component of training courses should be increased. An innovative suggestion was that of the establishment of information centres for those providing training courses. One participant thought that trips to other countries would add more value to training processes. Only one participant mentioned that they felt that the entire approach of in-service courses was ineffective suggesting that the problem was better dealt with at earlier stages of training.

E4Q2 I think that teachers won't improve through courses. Rather the universities and institutes need improvement so they can prepare teachers according to international standards. (Education official)

Many of the public school respondents felt that the courses offered as part of the professional development process were not in alignment with school needs. One participant mentioned the need for coordination with schools about who should participate in courses and six participants discussed the need for practical coordination particularly regarding the timing for courses. Only one participant raised the issue of monitoring the outcomes of courses.

P26Q3 [there should be] follow up in the schools on the level of those teachers who participated in the courses. (Public school)

Private schools and education officers made fewer comments overall on these four questions. Education officer comments were primarily concerned with the bigger picture of politics and international standing. Private schools expressed frustration with the control still maintained by government despite their independent status and model schools also pointed out the incompleteness of their autonomy in regards to human resource management.

T4Q2 For provision of any course it is possible to get permission from the education department. However, the education department will need approval from the MoE before they can give their approval. (Private school)

4.2 Decision-making powers

Three questions in the questionnaire dealt with decision-making powers in relation to three different elements in managing education.

Q5: How would you rate the current processes of making administrative decisions in your school?

Q6: How would you rate the current processes of making school improvements in your school?

Q7: How would you rate the current processes of making decisions regarding allocation of time in your school?

4.2.1 Research question one: How effective are the current school administrative processes considered to be?

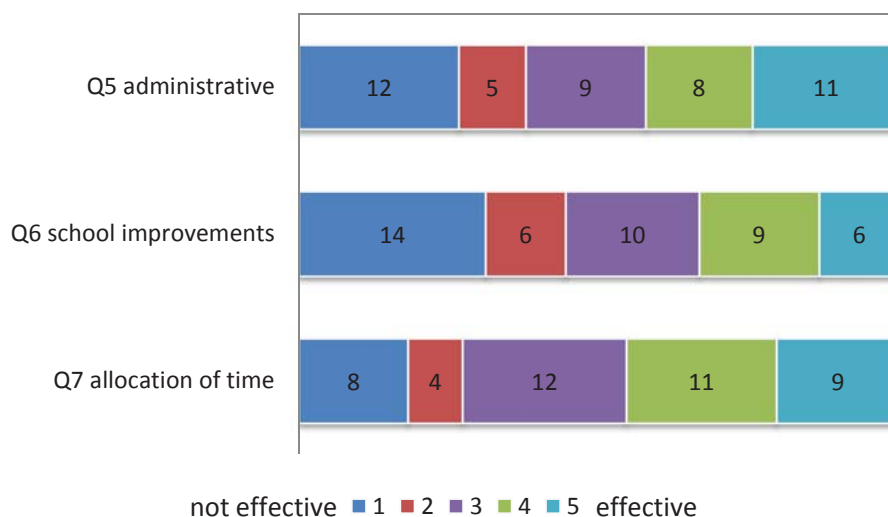


Figure 4-3: Ratings for questions 5-7

It can be seen through Table 4-5 and Figure 4-3 that there was a somewhat even distribution of responses although for questions five and six rating number one (not effective) was the mode, and also the most frequently occurring ranking. One education officer declined to answer question five and two public school participants did not answer question seven. A full data table can be seen in Appendix 5.

Table 4-5: Questions 5-7 median and mode

	Median	Mode
Q5 administrative	3	1
Q6 school improvements	3	1
Q7 allocation of time	3	3

4.2.2 Research question two: What improvements are considered important for increasing the effectiveness of school administration?

Open-ended responses represented suggestions for improvement given by the participants. As part of the analysis, each response was coded according to what was mentioned in terms of the different dimensions of an education administration structure. Table 4-6 lists the number of times various meanings were raised in the responses.

Table 4-6: Frequency of Units of Meaning Expressed (Decision-Making)

Level of authority Principals (2) DoE (2) MoE (2) Experts (1) School Admin (1) Central govt (1)	Degree of authority and accountability assigned Administration expertise (3) Accountability (1) International standards (1)
Authority for which element Budget (5) School facilities (1)	Impact of authority Allocation of time (4) Quality teaching and learning (3) Equality (3) Educational impact (2) Routines (1) School crowding (1)

Frequently mentioned expressions were further analysed and triangulated as illustrated in the example in Figure 4-4 resulted in the identification of some common themes (Table 4-7). Some unique suggestions also emerged (unique themes).

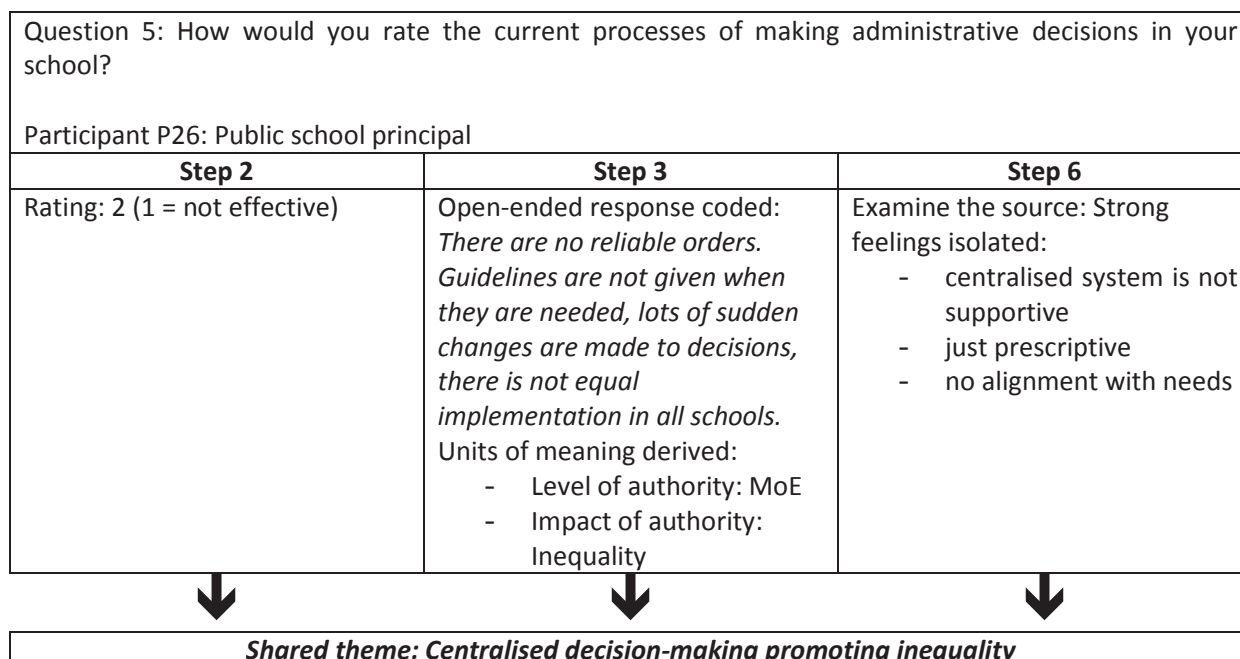


Figure 4-4: Example of the analysis process applied to one response showing how it contributes to a shared theme (Decision-making)

Table 4-7: Themes (Decision-making)

<i>Shared themes</i>	<i>Examples of comments</i>
Centralised decision-making arduous	P8Q7 Most of the time principals are bound to follow through on decisions made by MoE or DoE (Directorate of Education), this is not something very good. (Public school) A3Q6 So slow! (Education Academic) P9Q5 Orders are not good because they are all central orders – top down – with enforced implementation. Furthermore, MoE orders are inconsistent and different each year. (Public school)
Centralised decision-making promoting inequality	P23Q6 Four years ago we had a renovation plan approved, until now, no one has come to us. Some schools are supported immediately, some schools are neglected. (Public schools) P26Q5 There are no reliable orders. Guidelines are not given when they are needed, lots of sudden changes are made to decisions, there is not equal implementation in all schools. (Public schools) P9Q5 Central orders cannot be applied equally to all schools. (Public school)
Centralised decision-making disconnected from student need	E1Q5 It's necessary for administration decisions to be for the sake of teaching and learning processes and to give priority to students' educational

			progress. (Education official) M2 Q5 Personal benefits are given priority. (Model school) T1Q5 Administrative orders should be for the benefit of students. (Private school)
<i>Unique themes</i>			
	Possibility of decentralised decision-making		T4Q5 Principals should be given complete authority in regards to decisions made in the school without needing to account to any authorities outside of schools. (Private school)
Decentralised effectiveness	decision-making	obstructing	M1Q5 Principals and assistants generally make decision on the basis of their personal advantage rather than for the benefit of others (teachers, students, staff, education department) or on the basis of their personal interests. (Model school)

Theme: Centralised decision-making arduous

Firstly, the central problem believed to be obstructing effectiveness related to the majority of the decision-making that was taking place at a central level. The processes for getting decisions made or followed through on were arduous and involved formalities considered mostly unnecessary or excessive.

Theme: Centralised decision-making promoting inequality

Participants had also experienced inequality in the enforcement of central decisions.

P26Q5 there is not equal implementation in all schools. (Public school)

P23Q6 some schools are neglected (Public school)

Theme: Centralised decision-making disconnected from student need

Feedback indicated that in the experience of those responding, the current approach of centralised decision-making was not in the best interests of good teaching and learning. Instead, decisions were often believed to be driven by personal benefit rather than for the benefit of the students and community. The most common complaint was that decisions were made and enforced centrally.

P9Q5 Orders are not good because they are all central orders – top down – with enforced implementation. (Public school)

There was not much direct mention of which level it was preferred that decision-making be situated, although it was implied that it should be lower than central.

P8Q7 Most of the time principals are bound to follow through on decisions made by MoE or DoE (Directorate of Education), this is not something very good. (Public school)

Only a few comments mentioned school principal level decision-making. It was interesting to note a comment regarding some decision-making that is already in the hands of principals, citing similar problems as found with centralised decision-making.

M1Q5 Principals and assistants generally make decision on the basis of their personal advantage rather than for the benefit of others (teachers, students, staff, education department) or on the basis of their personal interests. (Model school)

Decentralisation of decision-making was only proposed by participants from either private or model schools, with the exception of one public school principal. Public school participants instead suggested that while decision-making was the domain of the MoE or sometimes the DoE, those responsible need better communication with those at the local level. Also, budget shortages affecting decision-making were raised only by public school respondents.

4.3 Curriculum

Questions eight and nine in the questionnaire focused on choosing and planning curriculum. These two questions were designed to gather opinions on the effectiveness of the approach towards curriculum content (what is taught) and curriculum process (how it is taught) as identified in the literature review (Karkkainen, 2012; Moutsios, 2000).

Q8: How would you rate the current approach to choosing curriculum materials for your school?

Q9: How would you rate the current approach to planning lessons in your school?

4.3.1 Research question one: How effective are the current school administrative processes considered to be?

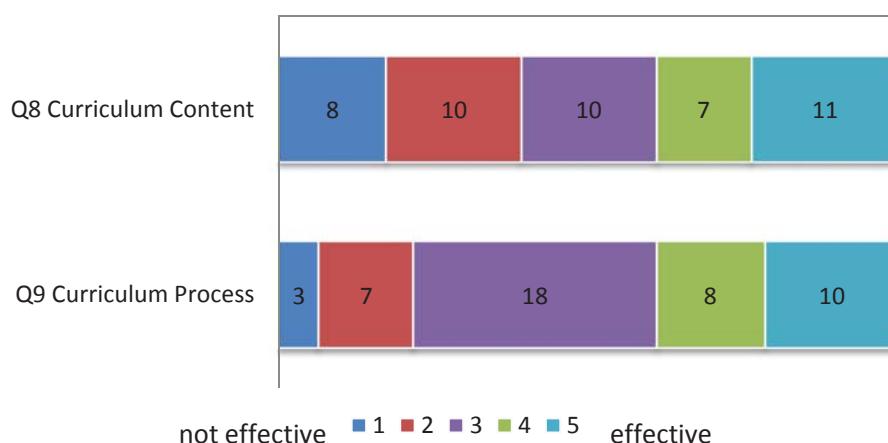


Figure 4-5: Ratings for questions 8 and 9

In this figure (Figure 4-5) it can be seen that ratings were given to Questions eight and nine from all 46 participants. Of these, 11 rated the current approach to choosing curriculum materials in their school as effective and eight rated it 'not effective'. In terms of curriculum process, 18 participants selected a middle rating (3) indicating no opinion either way. Table 4-8 shows that the responses were equally divided over how effective curriculum processes were as the central data points (median) were three (Table 4-8).

Table 4-8: Questions 8 and 9 median and mode

	Median	Mode
Q8 Curriculum Content	3	5
Q9 Curriculum Process	3	3

4.3.2 Research question two: What improvements are considered important for increasing the effectiveness of school administration?

While ratings indicated the overall opinion of the participants, the suggestions they offered gave further insight into their opinion of the effectiveness of the school processes and how they could be improved.

In the open ended question portion of questions eight and nine, responses were primarily noted by those who gave lower ratings, and as such, could be understood to be less satisfied with the current approaches in education. The following table (Table 4-9) lists the frequency with which expressions were raised in the responses.

Table 4-9: Frequency of Units of Meaning Expressed (Curriculum)

Level of authority Teacher (3) School (2) Student (2) Community (1) Experts (1) MoE (1)	Degree of authority and accountability assigned Modernise (5) Planning (3) Sharing (1) Equality (2)
Authority for which element Technology (7) Labs (4) Time (3) Textbooks (3) Subjects (1)	Impact of authority Student outcomes (4) Education goals (2) Teacher ability (1)

After triangulation (see example below Figure 4-6) with ratings and overall questionnaire responses, the themes as seen in Table 4-10 emerged from the meanings.

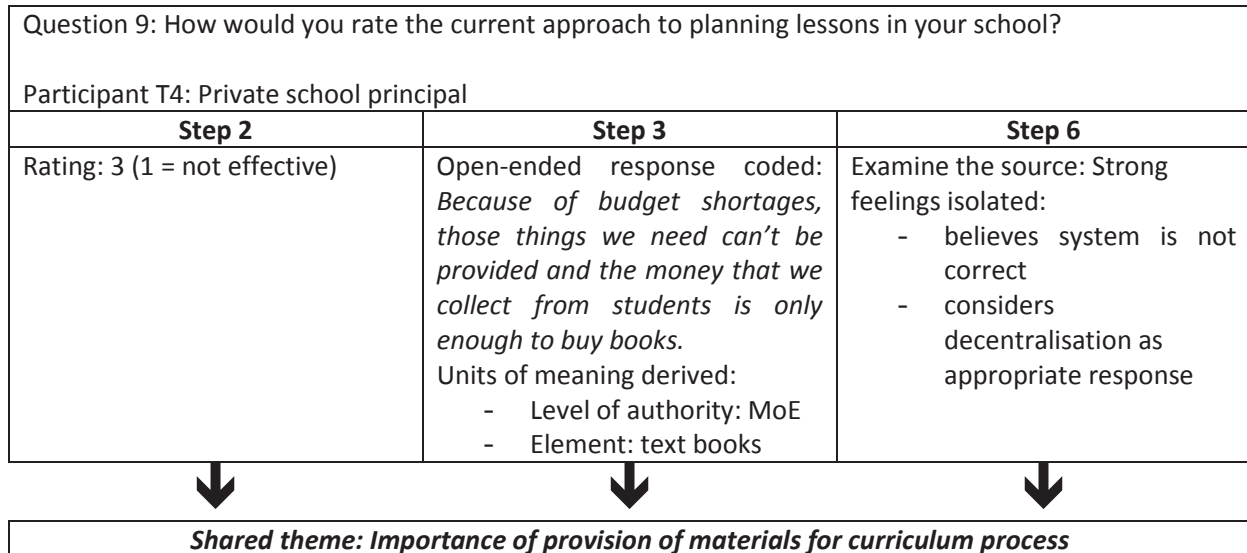


Figure 4-6: Example of the analysis process applied to one response showing how it contributes to a shared theme (Curriculum)

Table 4-10: Themes (Curriculum)

<i>Shared themes</i>	<i>Examples of comments</i>
Importance of lower level involvement in curriculum planning	P2Q9 It's necessary that planning processes be informed by those teachers who are excelling in teaching so that others can plan in the same way. (Public School) A5Q8 Students must participate in this process (Education Academic) A2Q8 It is not in accordance with the school needs (Education Academic)
Importance of provision of materials for curriculum process	P5Q8 There is discrimination in terms of providing teaching materials. (Public School) T4Q9 Because of budget shortages, those things we need can't be provided and the money that we collect from students is only enough to buy books. (Private school) P22Q8 There are so many teaching and learning resources that we need, even simple things like maps right through to computer equipment.
Importance of adequate time to cover curriculum content	E2Q8 Extend school time until 3pm. (Education officer) P5Q9 There are no plans for the holidays, which

	impacts the implementation of the core plans of the teachers and principal because in this region there are random holidays all the time. (Public School) A1Q9 Increase teaching time (Education Academic)
<i>Unique themes</i>	
Importance of specialists	T1Q8 Provision of curriculum materials should be according to an advance plan set by a committee of experts in that field. (Private school)
Community contributions	E2Q8 Some funds could be obtained from students' families to contribute to financing student needs in a coordinated way. (Education officer)
Planning unnecessary	P8Q9 It's only a matter of routine. If planning were not required teachers would be more free in teaching their subjects. (Public School)

Theme: Importance of lower level involvement in curriculum planning

Three of the participants mentioned the importance of the role of teachers in designing and planning curriculum. Others recognised that curriculum must align with school needs, but did not go so far as to suggest that authority could be at school level.

A2Q2 It is not in accordance with the school needs (Education Academic)

One participant did suggest that students should be involved in lesson planning processes. There were two participants who specifically recognised the importance of central control in terms of curriculum. One mentioned a committee of experts and the other the role of the MoE in providing specialists.

T1Q8 Provision of curriculum materials should be according to an advance plan set by a committee of experts in that field. (Private school)

Theme: Importance of provision of materials for curriculum process

Teaching materials and technology in particular received frequent mention in the suggestions. Many comments highlighted the need for more materials, for modernisation, for equal distribution, and for further training of teachers in the curriculum.

T4Q9 Because of budget shortages, those things we need can't be provided and the money that we collect from students is only enough to buy books. (Private school)

M3Q9 Some of the older teachers consider themselves experts but they are not doing their job as well as they could if they had more training. (Model school)

Most were of the opinion that provision of curriculum materials was a role of central administration, although one participant suggested contributions from families.

E2Q8 Some funds could be obtained from students' families to contribute to financing student needs in a coordinated way. (Education officer)

Theme: Importance of adequate time to cover curriculum content

An issue raised frequently related to curriculum was the inadequacy of daily teaching time and the short academic year. The suggestions were to increase the time available for teaching by extending the length of the school day and by reducing the excessive and unexpected centrally announced holidays throughout the year.

P5Q9 There are no plans for the holidays, which impacts the implementation of the core plans of the teachers and principal because in this region there are random holidays all the time. (Public School)

Improving the effectiveness of the processes related to curriculum was considered important for the sake of achieving educational goals and for the benefit of students. Two education officers pointed out that improving approaches for planning lessons would reduce the need for families to employ private tutors. The centralised requirement of planning was considered by one participant to be only a routine and not genuine.

P8Q9 It's only a matter of routine. If planning were not required teachers would be more free in teaching their subjects. (Public School)

Participants from private schools who have a lot of autonomy in terms of curriculum content interestingly gave the two comments calling for increased central involvement in curriculum development. Education officers and academics were the only ones expressing concern about student achievement under the current system and on this topic, participants from all three types of school did not comment.

4.4 Finance

Four questions in the questionnaire addressed the issues of financial processes in schools. They covered bonuses and incentives, maintenance and school improvement, supplies and equipment. The fourth question addressed the process of budgeting.

Q10: How would you rate the current process of paying and providing financial bonuses and incentives in your school?

Q11: How would you rate the current process of making financial decisions regarding maintenance and

improvement of facilities for your school?

Q12: How would you rate the current process of making financial decisions regarding supplies and equipment for your school?

Q13: How would you rate the current process of identifying and meeting financial needs for your school?

4.4.1 Research question one: How effective are the current school administrative processes considered to be?

Each question resulted in a rating from one to five with one being 'not effective' and five 'effective'. The following figure (Figure 4-1) compiles the ratings from all 46 participants in response to questions 10, 11, 12 and 13.

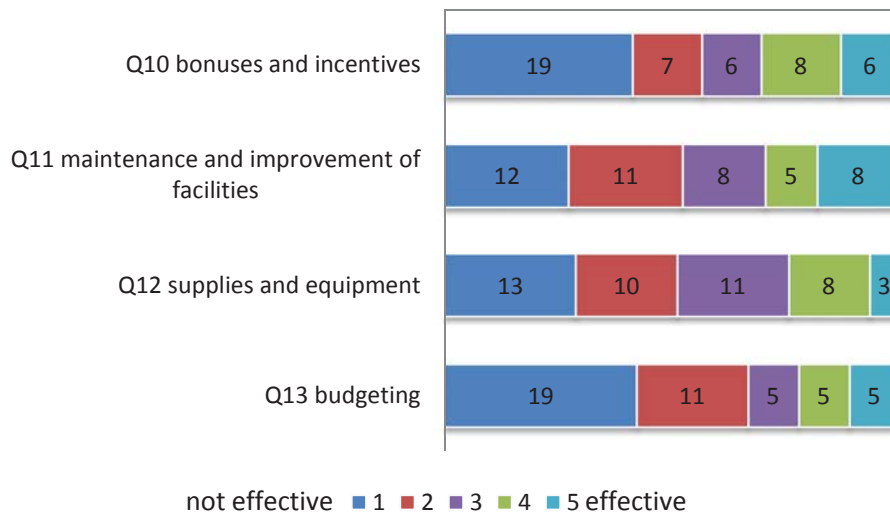


Figure 4-7: Ratings for question 10-13

It can be seen that the ratings for all four questions were weighted towards 'not effective' and that distribution is fairly similar across the four questions. Indeed, the median and mode were the same for all questions (Table 4-11).

Table 4-11: Questions 10-13 Median and Mode

	Median	Mode
Q10 bonuses and incentives	2	1
Q11 maintenance and improvement of facilities	2	1
Q12 supplies and equipment	2	1
Q13 budgeting	2	1

Two participants chose not to give a rating for question 11 (public school and education official), one for question 12 (education official) and one for question 13 (education official). See Appendix 5 for the full data table.

4.4.2 Research question two: What improvements are considered important for increasing the effectiveness of school administration?

Participants were given the option to offer a related suggestion for improvement. After analysing each response individually (see Table 4-12), the data was able to be clustered to see the frequency of the expressions used and subsequently to use this to reveal shared themes.

Table 4-12: Frequency of Units of Meaning Expressed (Financial)

<p>Level of authority School committee (12) School staff (7) Admin staff (3) Principal (2) Experts (1) Teachers (1)</p>	<p>Degree of authority and accountability assigned Increase budget (13) Timing (4) Quality (2) Parent contributions (2) Honesty (2) School departments (2) Needs based (1) Leader (1) Monitoring (1) Government funding (1) Monitoring committee (1) Training (1)</p>
<p>Authority for which element Bonuses and incentives (8) Budget (7) Accounts (1)</p>	<p>Impact of authority Efficient use of time (6) Reduce routines (5) Needs based (4) Quality (2) Reduce waste (1) Enjoyable environment (1)</p>

In the responses to the four questions related to financial decision-making there were some particularly strong themes noted (Table 4-13). Triangulation with ratings and an examination of the overall questionnaire responses for each response contributing the theme was conducted (for an example of this see Figure 4-8).

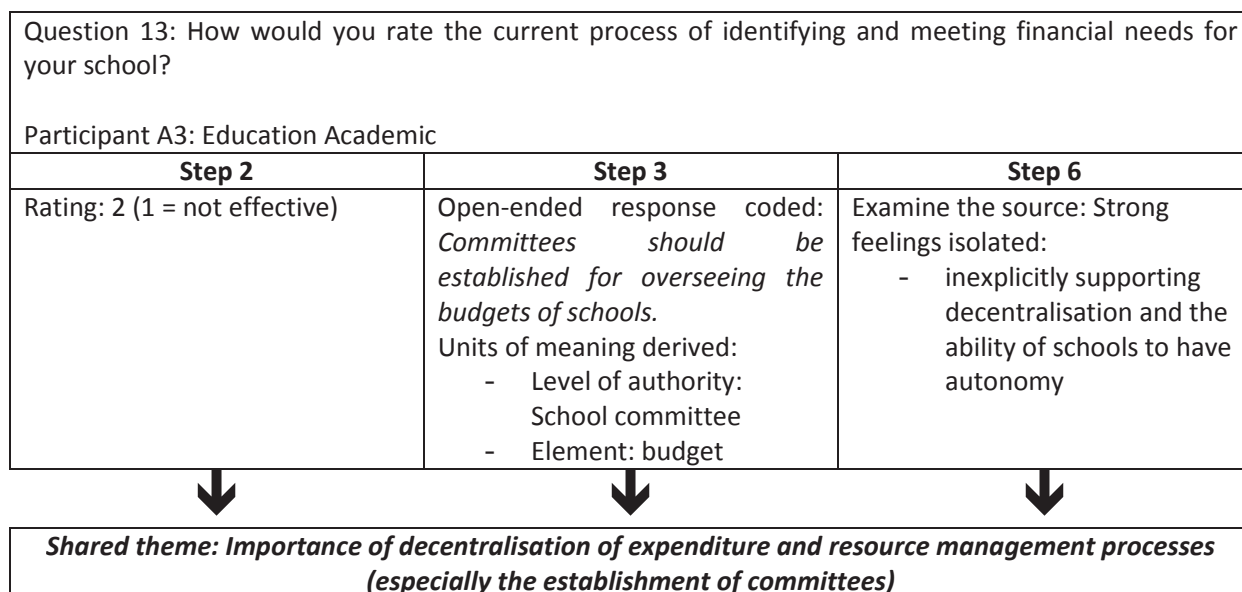


Figure 4-8: Example of the analysis process applied to one response showing how it contributes to a shared theme (Finance)

Table 4-13: Themes (Financial)

<i>Shared themes</i>	Examples of comments
Absence of a budget	P2Q13 I have no suggestions because there is no budget. (Public School) P14Q12 We have to buy what we need ourselves. (Public School) E1Q12 Suggest a budget for each school from the Ministry of Finance (Education Officer)
Effective financial processes	P23Q11 Its good, using the budget of the school café (canteen). (Public School) P26Q13 Directorate of Education share of school café income should be reduced and schools could achieve even more (Public School)
Importance of decentralisation of expenditure and resource management processes (especially the establishment of committees)	A3Q13 Committees should be established for overseeing the budgets of schools. (Education Academic) T1Q11 Special committees should be made up of teachers and admin staff for undertaking these tasks in the quickest possible time. (Private School) P1Q12 There should be freedom for school spending but under the authority of honest people and under the supervision of a committee, not just individuals. (Public School) P5Q12 Principals should have the authority to purchase those things needed in the school via a committee.(Public School) P19Q12 Budgets from the Ed Dept should be

	<p>handed over to school committees.(Public School)</p> <p>E8Q12 School should have their own accountant and budget.(Education Officer)</p>
<p>Importance of decentralisation of expenditure and resource management processes (especially maintenance and repairs)</p>	<p>A3Q11 Identifying a person to be responsible for maintenance and repairs to take responsibility in the case of ineffectiveness. (Education Academic)</p> <p>E3Q11 It's necessary that schools have a room (department) for following up the issues of repairs, renovation and maintenance... so that students can appreciate and enjoy the environment of their school while they study.</p> <p>E1Q11 Concerned parties should establish a special committee for renovation and maintenance of school buildings in a way that places importance on including specialists so that implementation ensures that money is used effectively and not wasted. (Education Officer)</p> <p>P4Q11 A committee should be established including teachers and students so that they can do repairs and maintenance – as much as they can for themselves – and a basic course should run for those interested in being a part of it. (Public School)</p>
<p>Reduce routines for expenditure processes</p>	<p>P22Q11 If something breaks, the routines [to replace it] are so much that you feel no choice but to buy it from the market with your own money. (Public School)</p> <p>P9Q12 There are lots of committees making it difficult to get anything done (Public school)</p> <p>T1Q12 Reduce administrative routines for finance decisions to save time (Private school)</p>
<p><i>Unique themes</i></p>	
<p>Family involvement</p>	<p>E2Q11 If the government was serving students well through public education, it would be acceptable to require financial contributions from parents for meeting student and school needs. (Education Officer)</p>
<p>Lack of budget means lack of process</p>	<p>P5Q13 Because there is no budget for the time being, there are no strong processes for spending. (Public School)</p>

Theme: Absence of a budget

Although revenue was not directly discussed through the questionnaire, the issue arose in response to question 13. What the shared theme noted was that there was a budget shortage. More than 13 responses directly mentioned that there is not enough budget to provide adequate education and some of the comments revealed the extent of this reality.

P14Q12 We have to buy what we need ourselves. (Public School)

One participant suggested increasing the revenue through parent contributions, but noted that the current low quality of education made this an inappropriate move.

Theme: Effective financial processes

In contrast, there were five participants who rated the process of identifying and meeting financial needs as effective. However, 30 of 45 ratings for question 13 were either one (not effective) or two.

Theme: Importance of decentralisation of expenditure and resource management processes (especially the establishment of committees)

There was a consistent call for decentralisation in terms of expenditure and resource management and the establishment of committees. Committees were suggested to be school-based and to be representative of teachers and school staff. Further comments were made offering practical suggestions to increase the effectiveness of these committees.

It's necessary that schools have a room (department) for following up the issues of repairs, renovation and maintenance...(Education officer)

Theme: Importance of decentralisation of expenditure and resource management processes (especially maintenance and repairs)

Some recognised the importance of special expertise in administration in order to manage finances and even a school accountant.

...ensures that money is used effectively and not wasted (Education Officer)

Three participants offered similar suggestions in terms of delegating responsibility for maintenance and repairs. One recognised the need for special skills in order to do this effectively and another pointed out that decentralisation of this aspect offers an opportunity for the skills of students to be developed.

Theme: Reduce routines for expenditure processes

Another shared theme was that the routines involved in accessing finances were excessive and time consuming. There was a common belief that both time and unnecessary processes could be reduced by decentralising spending procedures. One comment suggested that because there was an ongoing shortage of budget, there was infrequent need to manage finances for schools. The lack of well-designed processes may be because there is little use for them.

Finally, a comment from a public school participant captures some further frustration regarding the current centralised structure.

P5Q13 No one cares, even if a school is destroyed. But the administration of a school will still be held responsible. (Public School)

The themes generally represented responses from a variety of categories of participants indicated they captured shared themes. For example, while public schools raised the suggestion that financial routines were in need of stream lining, a private school participant raised the same topic. Also, the need for budgetary increases was shared by public schools, models schools (who operate under a similar budget) and education officers (who are also involved in dealing with schools' day to day needs).

4.5 Summary

To report the findings, four headings have been used in alignment with the framework as identified in the literature review (see section 2.4). Quantitative data is reported in response to the first research question and then contributes to a more complete analysis of the qualitative findings as reported in response to the second research question. The qualitative data findings are listed as 'themes' and represent the recurring meanings as expressed by the participants. This format is repeated for each of the four headings. No attempt is made to interpret these meanings as this is reserved for the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter presents an interpretation of the deeper meaning of the data gathered and is structured in response to the two research questions. Answers to the first research question reflect an interpretation of the data gathered from ratings given by participants. Answers to the second research question are presented as essences. An essence represents the final stage of data analysis (see Methodology section Figure 3-2). In the descriptive stage (findings), themes were identified in the data. In the interpretive stage (this discussion chapter), the themes are synthesised, reviewed and interpreted to result in essences, or deep structures of meaning. To align with the theory of phenomenological research, this discussion while grounded in the findings, is *an* interpretation, but does not prevent other interpretations being made.

5.1 Research question one: How effective are the current school administrative processes considered to be?

The strong dissatisfaction with the current approach to human resource management was evident in the statistics (with the mean for ratings on all four questions sitting on two). The open-ended responses suggesting change or improvement were also primarily phrased as critical of the current approach. One participant offered a comment rather than suggesting improvements and said:

P4Q2 If there had been an option to choose zero I would have chosen zero because it is very very bad. (Public school)

Literature also confirmed that the centralised approach to teacher appointment was creating difficulties at the local level in the KRI with teacher shortages or some teaching in a different speciality to that which they were trained (Osler & Yahya, 2013; Vernez et al., 2014). Further issues arising from the current administrative arrangement were a lack of support or needs driven training for staff and teachers (Osler & Yahya, 2013). Vongalis-Macrow (2006) expresses concern that school teachers in Iraq are often pawns in political games able to be fired and hired on political grounds, yet with little recognition of the significant role they play in bring normalcy and stability after conflict.

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) there is some token administrative decision-making decentralised to the level of school principals and school administration. For many this is considered effective. Political decision-making power although located at a federal level, is entirely centralised. The centralised administrative and political decision-making processes are noted in literature to be very bureaucratic

(Ministry of Planning, 2013; Vernez et al., 2014). This was supported by the data in this research and the resulting delays and inequalities are believed to reduce the effectiveness of the administrative processes and indeed education itself. Literature from Iraq agrees that the centralised management approach in Iraq has contributed to the current low quality of education (Al-Janabi & Anderson, 2011). Frustration with bureaucracy is commonly cited as a key driver towards decentralisation (Bimber, 1993; Keddie, 2015a; Levin, 2001; Smyth, 2011)

Although the opinions of the participants regarding curriculum were quite varied, some dissatisfaction with the access to adequate teaching materials was very clear. It was also apparent that there had been experiences of inequality in terms of distribution of resources. Indeed this is confirmed by literature (USAID, 2012; Vernez et al., 2014). It was clear that there was an assumption that central authorities were responsible for these shortages and inequalities and as such, also responsible for resolving them. The focus of criticisms was primarily in terms of the tools for curriculum delivery and there was very little mention of the curriculum content. A possible reason for this could be that the participants have experienced the curriculum content to be essentially effective but further research could investigate this more in depth.

There appears to be dissatisfaction in relation to the administration and management of finances in schools in the KRI. Firstly, the shortage of funds is considered a central issue. In some cases there is an absence of a budget, in other cases even when budget is available it is redistributed without consultation with the school. While in some schools the financial processes are considered effective, the weighting of feeling towards dissatisfaction suggests an inequity of effectiveness which warrants further investigation. Three main areas of frustration are the mis-match of budget with school needs, the routines encumbering the process to access funds, and the time that is wasted in the process. On the whole, the processes for financial decision-making seem to be neither consistently effective nor efficient for schools.

The data indicated that the cumbersome routines made the processes for spending and managing resources ineffective. The frustration evident was related to the responsibility placed on schools not accompanied by any form of freedom or autonomy. As the literature suggested, financial processes are crucial to educational success (Anderson et al., 2001; Hannaway & Carnoy, 1993), and an interpretation of the data could be that the lack of adequate financial processes is hindering many schools in their educational success.

5.2 Research question two: What improvements are considered important for increasing the effectiveness of school administration?

5.2.1 Essence: Administration needs to be connected to end-user needs

A disconnect between the way human resources are managed and the related needs of the schools was clearly understood to be a source of ongoing frustration to those responding to this research questionnaire. In terms of hiring, decentralisation was strongly called for in this study. Decentralisation is widely recognised in literature as a way to decrease the distance between those with the need and those meeting it (Chapman, 1990; Levin, 2001; Patrinos & Fasih, 2009). Hansen and Roza (2005) explain it well by saying that “teaching and learning occur at the school level, and school-level professionals are in the best position to organize teaching, adapt to the present needs of children, and set priorities on the use of child and adult time” (p. 3). However, as noted in the literature, decentralisation in the recruitment and employment process is not simple (Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Gaynor, 1998; Gunnarsson et al., 2004; Litvack et al., 1999; USAID, 2005). There are numerous models and should the KRI consider a move towards decentralisation for this element, there would be much to consider. Firstly, employment is much more than hiring and also includes issues of qualifications, salary, recruitment, appointment and transfers (Gaynor, 1998). Then the KRI context brings in unique issues to consider including the existing Teacher’s Union, shortages in teachers with particular specialities, and the need for teachers in remote and rural areas (Ministry of Planning, 2013; Osler & Yahya, 2013; Vernez et al., 2014). On the whole, decentralisation for employment related aspects of education is complex and carries a great risk of creating or exacerbating inequalities (Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Gaynor, 1998; Gunnarsson et al., 2004; Litvack et al., 1999).

In terms of support and development for teachers and school staff, some of the participants’ responses suggested that they while they considered this to be a central or regional government responsibility, increased coordination and consultation with schools is appropriate. As is evident in literature, the professional development process in Iraq is very centralised even to the point of topic determination and selection of participants (USAID, 2012). While this centralised approach was accepted by the participants as the way professional development was being provided, there was a call for, if not decentralisation, some connection with those managing the teachers to increase the benefit of these courses. Although some organisations have used alternative models of professional development in isolated projects, it appears that there is little awareness of the range of possible forms of professional development and options of participatory processes (Ministry of Planning, 2013; UNESCO, 2010).

Perhaps the call for more expert involvement suggests that schools recognise that central involvement is necessary for providing access to knowledge and experience. However with the suggestions focused around 'more of the same', this does raise the question of whether alternative approaches to professional development would be favourable if they could be observed or conceptualised by education professionals.

The need to align the curriculum processes (how curriculum is taught) with the needs of the schools was present in the data. The essence identified was a call for meaningfulness in the process rather than a routine with little connection to outcomes for students. Students needing private tutors after participating in the school curriculum processes were deemed evidence of failure of the education system in this aspect. In literature also, decisions to decentralise aspects of curriculum control are generally made in recognition of the need to respond to diversity and the real needs of schools (Angus, 1993). In the experience of the participants, even the parts of curriculum process which teachers currently 'control' such as lesson planning, the administrative routines reduce their effectiveness. Involvement of teachers and students in planning teaching processes was considered a favourable solution. There remained acknowledgement of the importance of experts in determining curriculum content and taking a lead role in terms of curriculum. Literature also recognises the advantage of expert involvement in curriculum development (Astiz et al., 2002; Karkkainen, 2012). Therefore, in terms of the division of authority in regards to curriculum, the opinion of the participants generally aligned with what many countries are doing (Astiz et al., 2002; Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Moutsios, 2000) which is increasing centralised control of curriculum content and moving towards decentralisation in terms of curriculum process. This is indeed beginning to be somewhat of a global trend in relation to distribution of responsibility for curriculum (Astiz et al., 2002).

Financing of education was unquestioningly understood to be the responsibility of central government. At the same time, what budget is made available to schools appears to be, in the experience of the participants, arbitrary and with little connection to the needs of the school and community. Although one participant raised the possibility of inviting parental contributions, most considered the devolution of the tasks of budgeting and spending to school committees as the best solution. While schools were confident in their ability to manage finances, there was mention of the need to ensure appropriate skills through selective employment or training. This aligns with the Litvack et al. (1998) suggestion of selective fiscal decentralisation contingent on schools demonstrating the capacity or meeting set criteria and the recommendation of Robinson et al. (2003) that central involvement may be need to develop the

needed capacity. The only complexity that participants mentioned was as Bardhan (2002) raised; that caution must be taken to ensure honesty and to avoid personal biases interfering with accountability. Literature however, suggests that the complexities in developing effective financial decentralisation policies are many (Bardhan, 2002; Bullock & Thomas, 2002; Hanson, 1998). The issue of biases is mentioned in literature particularly in relation to the potential for local elites to become too involved and stimulate corrupt practices (Bardhan, 2002).

5.2.2 Essence: Decentralisation must be accompanied with accountability

Throughout the data there was a strong call for a lessening of the paperwork, unnecessary routines, reporting, and processes involved in making the day to day decisions necessary for the smooth running of schools. This seems to refer to administrative decision-making powers. While the opinions of the participants were that there must be some decentralisation in this area, there was a degree of hesitance in calling for a wholesale deconcentration where full autonomy is given (Moriani, Al-Hammadi, & Al-Zawm, 2013; Sarrouh, 2003). In New Zealand educational decentralisation, the experience has been an increase in administrative tasks (Fiske, 1996; Wylie, 1999, 2013). It was suggested in the data that decentralisation may not solve the ineffectiveness problems or the gap between decisions and school needs unless strong accountability and checks and balances are in place. Where there was some decision-making decentralised, the inefficiencies of the central system were often replicated at lower levels. In other cases the need for central accountability meant that the decentralisation was only token and still needed central approval. In still other cases with full autonomy of some decisions, sometimes power is misused and personal biases, interests or patronage made the decisions remain disconnected to the local level need. Brinkerhoff and Taddesse (2005) noted a similar pattern of local insufficiencies hindering effectiveness in local level governance in Iraq. Although the arguments for decentralisation are often based on bringing the decision-making power closer to those who act on it, Hannaway and Carnoy (1993) contend that in reality this does not always work out to be more effective educationally, and in this case the data in this study sometimes offered support to his argument. Decentralisation to the level of schools if the schools are not yet functioning well may be premature as pointed out by Brown (1993) and Hanushek et al. (2013). Some suggested that committees may be the more appropriate level for decision-making power; others suggested better selection or training of school administration before any deconcentration. Still others suggested that delegation may be more appropriate whereby the authority given to schools can just as easily be removed if they are not performing well, or as one participant suggested, inefficient players removed. Some literature proposed similar models of selective decentralisation or additional support to institutes with lesser capacity

(Dinham et al., 2011; Moriani et al., 2013; Robinson et al., 2003) which may be worthy of consideration for the KRI.

5.2.3 *Essence: Little expectation that change or improvement could happen*

A feeling of frustration was evident in the very wording of the suggestions related to human resources which expressed despondency and little hope of ever being listened to. This phenomenon is also noted in literature where Codd (1989) warned that when top-down structures dominate education, staff believe that they are merely workers in the education system and, as such, will identify any problems as belonging to the system. However, Smyth (2011) is particularly critical of claims that decentralisation empowers teachers when he cites experiences in a number of countries giving no such evidence. A unique perspective on the Iraq situation is offered by Vongalis-Macrow (2006) pointing out that teachers in Iraq are primarily used as "peace-keepers who promote education and stability in a post-conflict situation" rather than harnessing the full capacity of educators for "influencing policy and decision-making on behalf of socially just and culturally complementary education systems" (p. 112). Consistent with the data from this sample, Vongalis-Macrow (2006) suggests that teachers feel incapacitated and their professional ability is not adequately recognised. Finally, the core of many suggestions for improvement was that decentralisation, if only it were possible, would solve most of the perceived problems. This understanding of decentralisation as "magic bullet" (Keddie, 2015a, p. 2) finds the participants falling prey to what many analysts of decentralisation in education point out is a misguided understanding (Chapman, 1990; Levin, 2001; Mayer et al., 2013; Patrinos & Fasih, 2009; USAID, 2005). Decentralisation has been found to be anything but simple and requires complex understanding (Angus, 1993; Hannaway & Carnoy, 1993).

5.2.4 *Essence: The power of patronage must be reduced*

The existence of 'wasta' (connections and patronage) in human resource management, particularly hiring, was a repeated concern. Jackson and Scout (2007) explain that there is a strong relationship between post conflict environments and what they call patronage where decisions are driven by loyalties to individuals. He says that post conflict countries commonly have weaker political structures out of which emerge stronger informal political structures controlled by those with resources or other forms of power. Employment is a very common area to be under the influence of these powers (Smith, 2010). It is of concern to Lewis and Pettersson (2009) that school autonomy over employment risks an even greater bias in the selection process. Biases could be based on family ties, political connections, power positions and other factors that might pressure a principal or school hiring committee to hire for

reasons other than objective criteria and merit. El-Kholy and Tschirgi (2010) also explored risks for increased corruption through decentralisation with particular interest given to Arab countries affected by conflict.

However, the data from this research suggests that this partiality locally known as ‘wasta’ is currently taking place primarily through the centralised employment processes. Interestingly, participants felt that school autonomy may be able to reduce this. There is literature to support this alternative understanding. Salinas (2014) and Jackson and Scout (2007) recognise the possibility that the devolution of authority can contribute to reduction in corruption due to the increased checks and balances of local involvement in the structure. “The shortened distance between policymakers and parents derived from decentralisation is supposed to increase the voice of parents, who can thus more effectively demand better education in return for the taxes they pay” (Salinas, 2014, p. 5). The key here appears to be to harness the strength of local accountability in reducing corruption (Smith, 2010). Jackson and Scout (2007) believe it is theoretically possible, but not yet supported by much evidence. It could be hoped that with the increasing legitimacy of the local level authorities (local education department or school) the legitimacy of the informal structures (‘wasta’) will decrease. Legitimacy is understood to be gained through demonstration of improved service delivery (Tooley & Guthrie, 2007). Therefore, if decentralisation of education in the KRI can prove to reduce ‘wasta’ as claimed, then the actual existence or power of ‘wasta’ as a structure may diminish.

5.2.5 Essence: Bid for equality

Part of the call for decentralisation of decision-making by the participants is based on the bid for equality of access to resources. It seems that the participants would prefer decision-making to be uniform, but because it is not, decentralisation seems a better option so that at least schools can better ensure their own needs are met. It is interesting to note that centralised autonomy, being more uniform, is suggested by Hannaway and Carnoy (1993) to offer the best chance of equality – particularly equality of access to education opportunity. If the inequality in decision-making at a central level is a result of corruption, patronage and other opportunistic misuses of power, there is evidence in literature to support the case that autonomy at a local level can be better controlled by local external accountability (Hanushek et al., 2013). Research in New Zealand (Dinham et al., 2011; Gordon, 2015) and on an international level (Hanushek et al., 2013) did not find increased school autonomy to result in more equality of student outcomes as expected. With equality on all different levels being a noble goal, particularly in a society plagued by what Aarts et al. (2012) call “identity politics” (p. 66) (or divisions

along multiple lines such as political, ethnic, religious, language, tribal, geography), lessons of history from other countries must first be learned to avoid deepening any existing divisions through decentralisation (Osler & Yahya, 2013).

5.3 Summary

Using reflective analysis to reach an interpretation of the findings, this chapter provides answers to the two research questions in the form of discussion and a list of five 'essences'. The literature is also revisited in order to compare and contrast with the findings. The essences found suggest a unique and shared ground-level understanding of the experience of centralised administration of education and some expectations of the current administration to improve their performance. Decentralisation is implicitly, and sometimes explicitly, woven through a lot of the essence of the finding as a reform that is understood to have the potential to improve the situation.

Recognising that the phenomenological approach produces answers that are interpretative, it must be understood that the interpretation given in this chapter is *an* interpretation, not *the* interpretation. The evidence in the findings chapter provides transparency to the meaning making process of the interpretation and this chapter provides discussion to establish plausibility. However, this does not rule out the possibility of alternative interpretations.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

Decentralisation of aspects of educational administration and management is featuring in most education reforms and in many countries around the world. The purpose of this study was to identify perspectives of various stakeholders in the KRI regarding the effectiveness of the current educational administrative approaches and to gather views about any suggested improvements for increasing the effectiveness.

Research question one: How effective are the current school administrative processes considered to be?

Research question two: What improvements are considered important for increasing the effectiveness of school administration?

The literature review revealed a framework that was used to guide consideration of decentralisation and in turn, the questionnaires produced data for analysis. The other chapters of this thesis have introduced a methodology for collecting and understanding the first-hand experience of some of those involved in education in the KRI then included a presentation of the findings revealing the shared and unique themes identified. This was followed by a structured synthesis or interpretation of the possible ‘essences’ or meanings of the findings. The key findings in terms of essences were that decision-making is too far removed from school needs, accountability systems may not be robust enough to accommodate decentralisation, that there is a low level of stakeholder confidence in the possibility of change, that the impact of patronage is believed to be less at a local level, and that the centralised system is creating inequalities in resource distribution. Finally, in this chapter, the thesis is concluded with a mention of the limitations the study faced, a list of implications that result from the study and finally, possible future research is suggested.

6.1 Limitations

The current unrest and economical and political instability in the KRI could have had an impact on the findings in this study and any other future similar consultation regarding decentralisation. The lack of strong leadership, the shortages in budget (general and salaries) and shortages of teachers could all contribute to a call for decentralisation of education as a reaction to the political and economic situation rather than as a model of best practice for improving the quality of education. The researcher’s personal and professional experience of the context allowed for some accommodation of these contextual issues

in the process of data collection and analysis. Furthermore, this limitation can also be viewed as an opportunity whereby the current state of reconstruction and development in the KRI allows us to reconsider the structure of education and rather than just rebuild, build it back better (Al-Dahash & Kulatunga, 2015).

Using phenomenological research, this study sought to understand what it means to experience the current system of education administration in the KRI. However, the researcher was limited in their access to this meaning by the articulation of the participants. What the participant chose to say, what words they used to express it, how much they chose to say, all limited how much of an inside perspective the researcher could gain. Piloted questions along with clear instructions were used to give participants an opportunity to express themselves fully. This was followed by rigorous data analysis including triangulation between ratings, individual responses and overall responses of participants to gain the fullest possible interpretation of the respondents' meaning.

Although it does not serve to lessen the implications of the essences identified in this study, it must be recalled that these findings are not to be misunderstood as representative of the wider population or even another similar sample. They are not intended to be generalised, but rather to provide some early insights that may guide future research . However, this does not limit the contribution of this study but rather clarifies the objective based on the chosen methodology of phenomenological research. It is better understood as the beginning of something, as some insights useful for the restructuring of education in the KRI and as a window opened on the lived experience of those working in a centrally managed education system.

My own experience working in the education system in the KRI could influence the way I interpreted this data. However, according to the phenomenological approach, the researcher is expected to consciously recognise their perspective and experience and 'bracket' them, or put them to one side while interpreting the data.

6.2 Implications

This section offers some of the findings of this study as recommendations which the KRI could consider in their process of decision-making regarding education structure.

6.2.1 End-user involvement in decentralisation policy development

The KRI context as experienced through the eyes of this sample appears to consistently and frequently demonstrate a scenario where a model of decentralisation could be welcomed if presented as a way to better meet the needs of the school and community. An implication here is that decentralisation may receive a warm welcome with little consideration given to any potential negative impacts. Also the current climate of change being driven by a top-down approach or driven by UN and other international partners is not conducive to long-term sustainability or institutionalisation of processes because it gives little consideration to local level experience. There is an opportunity for the KRI to make planning inclusive of end-users and stakeholders right from the start. There is hindsight presented in literature including analysis, opinion, review and research into experience of educational decentralisation in many shapes and forms and in many countries. The incorporation of lessons learned in other contexts and the involvement of stakeholders has potential for the development of policy with more chance of long-term benefits.

A further contribution of this study is to highlight and demonstrate through a sample, the readiness of educational professionals at various levels to participate in developing change plans and to have input into the direction of their future education system. Local understandings, expertise, homegrown solutions, innovative ideas all exist in the KRI and can inform educational development.

6.2.2 Confidence building

A recommendation arising from this study relates to building up the confidence and positivity of education professionals in schools. The findings suggest that there is a lack of hope or expectation for change. Added to this it is evident that there is a lack of experience education professionals have with any education system other than their own and written materials in either Kurdish or Arabic language on topics of educational decentralisation are scarce. Steps could be taken to rebuild the belief within education professionals that they deserve better and that there is the potential for change. This could be further supported by the opportunity for participating in such a change and being recognised as a genuine member of the process.

6.2.3 Balance and accountability

Literature on educational decentralisation is rife with complexities while the findings from this sample demonstrated a somewhat one-dimensional understanding of the issues involved. A recommendation here could be the development of some accessible materials to inform decision-makers and stakeholders of the many issues to consider. Literature consistently emphasises that the development of any decentralisation policy must involve careful thought to seek the optimum balances of power and responsibility and the best mix of centralisation and decentralisation suited to the context. Development of a strong framework reduces the opportunities for corruption and divisiveness. A clear distribution of responsibility and identification of the type and degree of autonomy can make it more possible to hold stakeholders accountable for effective implementation. Implications for and against decentralisation of each element must be worked through considering where maintaining central control is the better option, where decentralisation with accountability is preferable and where full autonomy is warranted. Kurdish language background documents could be prepared laying out all the issues and different sides of debates. Focus groups could then be used to discuss the issues and develop recommendations.

6.2.4 Patronage

This study contributes the less documented perspective that local level management (decentralisation) in the KRI might reduce the power of patronage in employment, decision-making and financial process in education. Patronage exists at all levels in society in the KRI and is a result of weak leadership at the central level creating an opportunity for development of a strong informal political structure known as 'wasta'. This consists of family ties, political connections and power positions driving many decisions and distribution of power and resources. For example, teachers may be employed in particular schools based on their political affiliation or family connection rather than their merit, or suitability for the position. However, at a local community level, there are opposing forces of reputation, family honour, local responsibility and direct lines of accountability to service users which all may be more effective in preventing patronage and corruption from playing a role in the provision of education. One of the participants stated that distancing themselves from the central authority through decentralisation would also result in a distancing from the practice of 'wasta'. For decentralisation to have this effect, the process would need to both successfully improve the effectiveness of schooling (to increase the legitimacy of the school as an authority structure) and establish effective local accountability structures.

6.2.5 Equality

The findings of this study suggest that inequalities of resource distribution and educational opportunity exist under the present centralised management structure. The literature also frequently warns of many potential inequalities resulting from decentralisation of education structures. The implication is that neither centralisation nor decentralisation are a direct route to equality and must not be presented as such. Much of the conflict in the wider Iraq is related to divisions – tribal, ethnic, religious, or sectarian. Inequality is often complicit in triggering conflict so must be carefully avoided. While the strength of decentralisation can be in how it diversifies systems, this may be less desirable in a fragile state such as the KRI still struggling to establish national unity and stability.

6.3 Further research

This research report drew on a range of international literature that has been developed over the years showing that decentralisation has been a trend in most education reforms. It also identified similar literature that had a focus on Iraq, the Middle East and conflict-affected countries. A wealth of literature arising from New Zealand’s extensive experience in educational decentralisation was also noted (for example Codd, 1989, 1993; Court & O’Neill, 2011; Fiske & Ladd, 2001; O’Neill, 2015; Robinson et al., 2003; Sheerin, 2008; Tooley & Guthrie, 2007; Wylie, 2013; Wylie, Cosslett, & Burgon, 2016). While the focus of this study was the international and Middle East literature, the experiences of New Zealand were often mentioned in the literature reviewed. New Zealand was noted to have a long history in decentralisation of education, a degree of decentralisation beyond that which is seen in most other contexts, and an ongoing process of analysis documenting the impacts, debates, lessons learned, and ways forward. The insights and research evidence developed in New Zealand suggests that if educators and politicians in the KRI are to consider decentralisation, a thorough and inclusive investigation of the potential and difficulties of decentralisation would need to be undertaken especially given the uniqueness of the KRI context. This is an opportunity for a further study to identify the debates and experiences in the New Zealand context and how these lessons learned may inform development in the unique political, cultural and social context of the KRI.

An opportunity is offered through this research where politicians and educators in the KRI could mindfully consider the options ahead rather than wait to be pressured by an international trend into educational decentralisation or swept into it under the guise of modernisation. Instead, they could continue what this research begins and gather further input from those at the frontlines of education, to compare and contrast this with the growing wealth of international literature that is available on

decentralisation of education. This would build towards a framework for a policy determining a contextually relevant distribution of power and responsibility.

6.4 Final words

The process of improving the effectiveness of education in the KRI seems long, difficult and overwhelming. This research is just a small beginning. But we should not be disheartened because, as the Kurdish proverb says: “Light a candle and don't swear at the darkness. After every darkness a new sun will rise”.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire - Schools

Participant Questionnaire (School Principals)

This questionnaire is designed for gathering perspectives of school leaders on the current processes of school administration and management as part of a Masters in Educational Administration and Leadership. This research will inform my future work as an educational leader in Iraq. Completion and return of the questionnaire signifies your consent to participate.

Type of school – please tick one:

General public school Model public school Private school

Please rate each question by ticking the number from 1 (not effective) to 5 (effective) and providing written comments.

Human resources

1. How would you rate the current approach to selection and employment of teachers and staff in your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

2. How would you rate the current approach to identifying the needs and priorities for professional development of teachers, school leaders and staff in your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

3. How would you rate the current approach to meeting the needs for professional development of teachers and staff in your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

4. How would you rate the current approach to supporting teachers in the learning and teaching processes in your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

Decision-making powers

5. How would you rate the current processes of making administrative decisions in your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

6. How would you rate the current processes of making school improvements?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

7. How would you rate the current processes of making decisions regarding allocation of time in your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

Knowledge and technology

8. How would you rate the current approach to choosing curriculum materials for your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

9. How would you rate the current approach to planning lessons in your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

Finance

10. How would you rate the current process of paying and providing financial bonuses and incentives in your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

11. How would you rate the current process of making financial decisions regarding maintenance and improvement of facilities for your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

12. How would you rate the current process of making decisions regarding supplies and equipment for your school?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

13. How would you rate the current process of identifying and meeting financial needs for your school (budgeting)?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

14. Please include any other comments you would like to share about school administration

Thank you for contributing your time and views.

راپرسى بۇ بەريوہبەرى خويندنگاگان

ئەم راپرسىيە نامادەكراوہ بۇ كۆكردئەوہى راوبوچونى بەريوہبەرى خويندنگەكان لەسەر پروسەى بەريوہبەردنى خويندنگاگان لە ئىستادا. ئەم راپرسىيە بەشيكە لە تويژينئەوہى بروانامەى ماستەر لە بەريوہبەردنى پەروەردەيى. مەبەستى ئەم تويژينئەوہى بەريتيە لە بەدەستەيناي زانبارى دەربارەى پلان و كارى داھاتووم وەكو رابەر (قادەى) پەروەردەيى لە عىراق و ھەريەى كوردستان. بە پىركردئەوہى ئەم فورمە رەزامەندى خۆت دەرنەبەرىت بۇ بەشدارىكردن و باشتركردن پروسەى پەروەردە.

جۆرى خويندنگە—تكاىە بەكەك لەمانەى خوارەوہ دەستەينشان بەكە:

- خويندنگەى حكومى
- خويندنگەى نەونەيى
- خويندنگەى تايبەت (ئەھلى)

تكاىە ھەلبەزاردن بەكە بە كيشانى بازنەيەك بە دەورى ژمارە 1 (خراپە) تا ژمارە 5 (باشە) وە كومىنت و راى خوت بە نوسين لەسەر ھەر خاليك بنوسە:

1. شىوازى ئىستاي ھەلبەزاردن و دامەزراندنى ماموستا و ستافى كارگىزى بۇ خويندنگە كەت ژۇن ھەلئەسەسنگىنى؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنيارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكردن ئەم شىوازە وە بۇچى؟

2. شىوازى ئىستاي پلان دانان بۇ خولى راھينان بۇ ماموستا و بەريوہبەر و ستافى خويندنگەكەت لە رووى

جۆرى خولەكانەوہ چۆن ھەلئەسەسنگىنى؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنيارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكردن ئەم شىوازە وە بۇچى؟

3. شىۋازى ئىستاي چۆنىەتى ووتتەو و بەرىو بەردنى خولەكانى راھىنان بۇ ماموستا و بەرىو بەر و ستافى

خوئندنگەكەت چۆن ھەلئەسەنگىنى؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشکردنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۆچى؟

4. شىۋازى ئىستاي پشتگىرىکردنى (دعم) ماموستا بۇ فىرکردن و پرۇسەى خوئندن چۆن ھەلئەسەسنگىنى)

لە لايەن ھەر لايەنىك كە پەيوەندىدارە بە خوئندنگەكەتەو وەكو وەزارەت، بەرىو بەرىتى پەرورەو،

سەرپەرشتىارىتى، رىكخراوەكان... ھتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشکردنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۆچى؟

5. شىۋازى ئىستاي بىرادانى بىرارە كارگىرىبەكان چۆن ھەلئەسەسنگىنى لە خوئندنگەكەتا؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشکردنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۆچى؟

6. پرۇسەى ئىستاي پەرەپىدانى خوئندنگەكەت چۆن ھەلئەسەسنگىنى (وەكو بىنای خوئندنگەكەت،

جوانکردنى خوئندنگەكەت، بەشدارىکردنى خوئندنگەكەت لە فىستىقالو... ھتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشکردنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۆچى؟

7. پرۆسەى ئىستامى برىاردان له بارەى رىكخستنى كاتەوہ چۆن هەلئەسەنگىنى له خوئندنگاکەتا (وەکو کاتى

دەستىکردنى دەوام و تەواو بون، ماوەى وانەکان، ماوەى دەوامى خوئندنگاکە بە گشتى... هتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىکت هەيە بۆ باشکردنى ئەم شىوازە وە بۆچى؟

8. شىوازى ئىستامى داىبنکردنى ھۆکارەکانى فىزکردن چۆن هەلئەسەنگىنى له خوئندنگاکەتا له جۆر و

چۆنەتییەوہ (وەکو کتیب، پۆستەر، قرتاسیە، کومپيوتەر... هتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىکت هەيە بۆ باشکردنى ئەم شىوازە وە بۆچى؟

9. شىوازى ئىستامى پلانى وانەوتنەوہ چۆن هەلئەسەنگىنى له خوئندنگاکەتا؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىکت هەيە بۆ باشکردنى ئەم شىوازە وە بۆچى؟

10. شىوازى ئىستامى پىدانى پاداشتى مادى چۆن هەلئەسەنگىنى له خوئندنگاکەتا (وەکو ئايا پاداشت

هەيە، کى دەستىشانى ئەکات... کى دەستىشانى ئەوانە بکات کە شایەنى پاداشت... هتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىکت هەيە بۆ باشکردنى ئەم شىوازە وە بۆچى؟

11. شىۋازى ئىستاي بىر ياردان بۇ بابەتە ژمىريار يىكەن ومكو نوئىكر دىنە ومو چاككر دن و صىانە چۇن ھەلئەسەنگىنى لە خوئندنگا كەتا؟ (بو نمونە ئەگەر دەستشۇرى خوئندكارەكان شكا بىت كى بىر يار ئەدات چەندى ئەوئت بۇ چاككر دىنە ومو چەندكات دەخايەنىت و كى چاكى ئەكات)
خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە
چ پىشنىارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكر دىنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۇچى؟

12. شىۋازى ئىستاي بىر ياردانى ژمىريارى بۇ داينىكر دىنى پىداوىستى و كەلوپەل چۇن ھەلئەسەنگىنى لە خوئندنگا كەتا؟
خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە
چ پىشنىارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكر دىنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۇچى؟

13. شىۋازى ئىستاي دانان و خەرجكر دىنى (بودجە) بۇ خوئندنگە كەت چۇن ھەلئەسەنگىنى؟
خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە
چ پىشنىارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكر دىنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۇچى؟

14. تىكايە ھەر راو بوچون و سەرنجىكى تىرت ھەيە لەبارەى بەرىوەبىردن و لايەنى كارگىرى لە خوئندنگا كەتا لە خوارەومە بىنوسە

سوپاس بۇ كات و راو بۇچونەكانت

Appendix 2: Questionnaire - Officials and Academics

Participant Questionnaire (Education Officers and Academics)

This questionnaire is designed for gathering perspectives of education leaders on the current processes of school administration and management as part of a Masters in Educational Administration and Leadership. This research will inform my future work as an educational leader in Iraq. Completion and return of the questionnaire signifies your consent to participate.

Please tick one:

Education Officer Academic

Please rate each question by ticking the number from 1 (not effective) to 5 (effective) and providing written comments.

Human resources

1. How would you rate the current approach to selection and employment of teachers and staff in public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

2. How would you rate the current approach to identifying the needs and priorities for professional development of teachers, school leaders and staff in public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

3. How would you rate the current approach to meeting the needs for professional development of teachers and staff in public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

4. How would you rate the current approach to supporting teachers in the learning and teaching processes in public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

Decision-making powers

5. How would you rate the current processes of making administrative decisions in public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

6. How would you rate the current processes of making school improvements?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

7. How would you rate the current processes of making decisions regarding allocation of time in public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

Knowledge and technology

8. How would you rate the current approach to choosing curriculum materials for public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

9. How would you rate the current approach to planning lessons in public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

Finance

10. How would you rate the current process of paying and providing financial bonuses and incentives in public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

11. How would you rate the current process of making financial decisions regarding maintenance and improvement of facilities for public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

12. How would you rate the current process of making decisions regarding supplies and equipment for public schools?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

13. How would you rate the current process of identifying and meeting financial needs for public schools (budgeting)?

Not effective ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Effective

What improvements would you suggest? (and why)

14. Please include any other comments you would like to share about school administration

Thank you for contributing your time and views.

راپرسى بۇ پىسپۇرى ئەكادىمى و پەروەردەيى

ئەم راپرسىيە ئامادەكراۋە بۇ كۆكردنەۋەدى راۋبوچۇنى پىسپۇرى ئەكادىمى و پەروەردەيى لەسەر پىرۇسەي بەريۋەبىردنى خويىندىنگە لە ئىستادا. ئەم راپرسىيە بەشىكە لە تويىژىنەۋەدى بروانامەي ماستەر لە بەريۋەبىردنى پەروەردەيى. مەبەستى ئەم تويىژىنەۋەدى بەرىتتەيە لە بەدەستەيىنەي زانىارى دەربارەي پلان و كارى داھاتووم وەكو رابەر (قادە) پەروەردەيى لە عىراق و ھەريمى كوردستان. بە پىركردنەۋەدى ئەم فورمە رەزامەندى خوت دەرنەبىرىت بۇ بەشدارىكردن و باشتركردى پىرۇسەي پەروەردە.

تكاپە يەككە لەمانەي خوارەۋە دەستىنىشان بکە:

پىسپۇرى ئەكادىمى و خويىندى بالا

پىسپۇرى پەروەردەيى

تكاپە ھەلبىژاردن بکە بە كىشانى بازنەيەك بە دەۋرى ژمارە 1 (خراپە) تا ژمارە 5 (باشە) وە كومىنت و راى خوت بە نوسىن لەسەر ھەر خالىك بنوسە:

1. شىۋازى ئىستاي ھەلبىژاردن و دامەزىراندنى مامۇستا و ستافى كارگىزى بۇ خويىندىنگە حكومىيەكان چۇن

ھەلئەسەسنگىنى؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكردى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۇچى؟

2. شىۋازى ئىستاي پلان دانان بۇ خولى راھىنان بۇ ماموستا و بەريۋەبەر و ستافى خويىندىنگە حكومىيەكان لە

رووى جۇرى خولەكانەۋە چۇن ھەلئەسەسنگىنى؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنىارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكردى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۇچى؟

3. شىۋازى ئىستاي چۆنىيەتى ووتتەو و بەريو بەردنى خولەكانى راھىنان بۇ ماموستا و بەرىئوبەر و ستافى

خوئندنگە حكوميپهكان چۆن ھەلئەسەنگىنى؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنيارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكردىنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۆچى؟

4. شىۋازى ئىستاي پشتگىرىكردىنى (دعم) ماموستا بۇ فىركردن و پرۇسەى خوئندن چۆن ھەلئەسەنگىنى (لە

لايەن ھەر لايەنىك كە پەيوەندىدارە بە خوئندنگە حكوميپهكانەو وەكو وەزارەت، بەريوہەريتى پەرورەوہ،

سەرپەرشتياريتى، رىكخراوہكان... ھتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنيارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكردىنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۆچى؟

5. شىۋازى ئىستاي بىرادانى بىرارە كارگىرىپهكان چۆن ھەلئەسەنگىنى لە خوئندنگە حكوميپهكان ؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنيارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكردىنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۆچى؟

6. پرۇسەى ئىستاي باشكردىنى خوئندنگە حكوميپهكان چۆن ھەلئەسەنگىنى (وەكو بىناى خوئندنگاكەت،

جوانكردىنى خوئندنگاكەت، بەشدارىكردىنى خوئندنگاكەت لە فيستىقالو... ھتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پىشنيارىكت ھەيە بۇ باشكردىنى ئەم شىۋازە وە بۆچى؟

7. پرۆسەى ئىستای بریاردان له بارەى ریکخستنى کاتەوه چۆن هەلئەسەنگینى له خویندنگە حکومییەکاندا (وەکو کاتى دەستپیکردنى دەوام و تەواو بون، ماوهى وانەکان، ماوهى دەوامى خویندنگاکە بە گشتى ...هتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پینشیارکت هەیه بۆ باشکردنى ئەم شیوازە وە بۆچی؟

8. شیوازی ئىستای دابینکردنى هۆکارەکانى فیزکردن چۆن هەلئەسەنگینى له خویندنگە حکومییەکاندا له

رووی جۆر و چۆنیەتییهوه (وەکو کتیب، پۆستەر، قرتاسیە، کومپیوتەر...هتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پینشیارکت هەیه بۆ باشکردنى ئەم شیوازە وە بۆچی؟

9. شیوازی ئىستای پلانى وانەوتنەوه چۆن هەلئەسەنگینى له خویندنگە حکومییەکان دا؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پینشیارکت هەیه بۆ باشکردنى ئەم شیوازە وە بۆچی؟

10. شیوازی ئىستای پیدانى پاداشتى مادى چۆن هەلئەسەنگینى له خویندنگە حکومییەکان دا (وەکو

نایا پاداشت هەیه، کى دەستنیشانى ئەکات...کى دەستنیشانى ئەوانە بکات کە شایەنى پاداشتن...هتد)؟

خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە

چ پینشیارکت هەیه بۆ باشکردنى ئەم شیوازە وە بۆچی؟

11. شىۋازى ئىستاي بىر ياردان بۇ بابەتە ژمىريار بىيەكان ومكو نوئىكر دىنە ومو چاككر دن و صيانە چۇن
هەلئەسەنگىنى لە خوئندنگە حكومىيەكان دا؟ (بو نمونە ئەگەر دەستشۇرى خوئندكارەكان شكا بىت كى
برىار ئەدات چەندى ئەوئىت بۇ چاككر دىنە ومو چەندكات دەخايەئىت و كى چاكى ئەكات)
خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە
چ پىشنىارىكت هەيە بۇ باشكر دىنى ئەم شىۋازە وم بۇچى؟

12. شىۋازى ئىستاي بىر ياردانى ژمىريارى بۇ دا بىنكر دىنى پىداوىستى و كەلوپەل چۇن هەلئەسەنگىنى لە
خوئندنگە حكومىيەكان دا؟
خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە
چ پىشنىارىكت هەيە بۇ باشكر دىنى ئەم شىۋازە وم بۇچى؟

13. شىۋازى ئىستاي دانان و خەرچكر دىنى (بودجە) بۇ خوئندنگە حكومىيەكان چۇن هەلئەسەنگىنى؟
خراپە 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 باشە
چ پىشنىارىكت هەيە بۇ باشكر دىنى ئەم شىۋازە وم بۇچى؟

14. تكايە هەر راو بوچون و سەرنجىكى تىرت هەيە لەبارەى بەرىۋە بىردن و لايەنى كارگىرى لە خوئندنگە
حكومىيەكاندا لەخوارە وم بىنوسە

سوپاس بۇ كات و راو بۇچونەكانت

Appendix 3: Information Sheets

School Administration and Management Questionnaire

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher Introduction

My name is Mohammed Ahmed Mohialdeen. As part of my research for completing my Masters in Educational Administration and Leadership I am gathering data through questionnaires in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Project Description and Invitation

This purpose of this project is to find out the perceptions of leaders in education about current processes of administration and management of schools. You are invited to complete a questionnaire giving your views and any suggestions you might have for improvement.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

Your school has been selected randomly from a publically available list of schools in the Suliamaniyah governorate. Schools have only been excluded if the researcher has had previous professional involvement with them. Thirty schools will be asked to participate. Twenty of these will be public schools, five private, and five model schools. The purpose for this sampling is to gather perceptions from schools operating under different structures. The total number of schools is not large and not intended to represent the views of all the other schools. The sampling is to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of current approaches and possibilities for the future. Five education officers and five academics will also be asked to complete a similar questionnaire.

Project Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire which may take up to ½ an hour of your time.

Data Management

The answers you offer will be used to help the researcher gain insight into the effectiveness of the current school administration and management approach and your ideas for the future. Neither your name nor the name of your institution, or any personal information will be used in the final report. Your answers will be scanned into a password protected computer and all identifying details removed. You are welcome to request a summary of the results from the researcher when the project is completed by January 2016.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study before 31st August 2015
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Project Contacts

Please feel free to contact the research or supervisor if you have any questions about the project

Researcher:

Mohammed Ahmed Mohialdeen
mohammed_ahmed.mohialdeen.1@uni.massey.ac.nz
0064 22 1528833

Supervisor:

Karen Anderson
Institute of Education, Massey University
K.F.Anderson@massey.ac.nz
0064 6 356 9099 ext: 84451

Ethics Committee Approval Statement

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

را پرسى نەسەر بەرئۆبەردن و كارگىرى خويندنگاكان

رئىئامايەكان:

من كه ناوم محمد أحمد محى الدين د وە كو يە شىك ئە تەواوكەرى تويژئىنەوى نامى ماستەردەكەم ئە سەر بەرئۆبەردن و رابەرايەتى پەرودەدەيى، داتا كۆدەكەمەو نەرىگەى نەم را پرسىيەو نەسەر ھەرىئى كوردستانى عىراق.

پىناسەو بانگىشت كردن بۇ پرۆژەكە:

مەبەست نەم تويژئىنەويە برىتییە ئە وەرگرتنى راو بۇچونى بەشدارئۆبەردەكان ئە رابەردە پەرودەدەيەكان ئە باردى پرۆسەى حالى حازرى بەرئۆبەردن و كارگىرى خويندنگەكان. بەرئۆبەردەكان بانگىشت كراويت بۇ پرۆژەكەى فورسى نەم را پرسىيە و راو بۇچون و پىشنيارەكانت بخەيتە روو ئە پىناموى پەردەپىندائى پرۆسەكە ئە داھاتودا.

پىناسەى بەشدارئۆبەردەكان و ووردەكارىيەكان:

خويندنگەكەت بە شىوئەيەكى عشانى ئە ناو ئىستى گشتى خويندنگەكانى سەر بە پارىژىگەى سلیمانى ھەئىژئۆبەردا، ھەر خويندنگەيەك ئە لاين تويژئۆبەردە ناسراو بويويت يان پەيوئەندى ھەرمى پىيامنەو ھەبويويت ناوئەكەى لايرود. داوا ئە 30 خويندنگە كراو ئە نەم پرۆژەيەدا بەشدارى بکەن. 20 يان خويندنگەى حكومين، 5 تاييەت (نەھلى) و 5 نەمۆنەيى. مەبەست ئە وەرگرتنى نەم سا مپلانە برىتییە ئە وەرگرتنى راو بۇچونى بەرئۆبەردەكان ئە سىكتەرە جياوئەزەكاندا. كۆى گشتى ژمارەى بەشدارئۆبەردەكان زۆر ئىيە و تعبیر ئە راى ھەموو خويندنگەكان ناكات. سامپەكان بۇ نەويە كە تىگەيشتيك بەدەست بېئىنن ئەسەر كارىگە رى پرۆسەى ئىستى بەرئۆبەردن و توانائى گۇرانتكارى ئە داھاتودا. 5 رابەرى پەرودەدەيى و 5 نەكادەيى بەھەمان شىو بەشدارى ئە را پرسىيەكەدا نەكەن.

بەرئۆبەردەكانى پرۆژەكە:

نەگەر نامادەيىت پىشان دا بۇ بەشدارئۆبەردەكان پىويستە پرسىيارەكانى را پرسىيەكە وەلام بەدەيتەو كە نزيكەى نيو كاتژمير ئە كات نەبات.

رئىكخستنى داتاكان:

وەلام و پىشنيارەكانتەن يارمەتى تويژئەر نەدات كە بەرچاو روونىيەك بەدەست بېئىنن ئەسەر كارىگەرى پرۆسەى بەرئۆبەردن و كارگىرى حالى حازرى خويندنگەكان گۇرانتكارى بۇ داھاتوو. ئە ناوى بەرئۆبەردەكان نەم ھەرمەنگەيەى كارى تىندا دەكەيت وە ئە ھەر زانيارىيەكى كەسى بەكارنايەت ئە رسائەى ماستەردەكەدا. وەلامەكانتەن سکان نەكرىت و پە پاسۆردەو ئە ناو كومپيوئەردا ھەئەدەگىرئىت دواى نەويە ھەموو زانيارىيە كەسىيەكانى ئى لانەبرئىت. دواتر خوشجال نەبىن بە دا بېئىنكردنى وئىنەيەك ئە پوختەى نە نجامەكانى تويژئىنەويەكە دواى تەواوبوونى ئە مانگى كانونى دووسى 2016 دا ئەسەر داواى خۇت.

ماھەكانە بەشدارئۆبەردەكان:

بەھىج شىوئەيەك بەرئۆبەردەكان ناچارئىت بە بەشدارئۆبەردەكان نەم را پرسىيەدا وە نەگەر رەزامەند بويويت بە بەشدارئۆبەردەكان نەم ماھانەى خوارەودت ھەيە:

- ئە توانيەت وەلامى ھەر پرسىيارىك نەدەيتەو كە لات پەسەند ئىيە.

- داواي لابرڊنى بەشداريكرنت بگهيت نه را پرسىيەكەدا پيش 2015\08\31 .
- ھەر پرسىيارىك بگهيت نه لەسەر تويزىنەوہكە ئەھدەركاتىدا ئەماوہى بەشداريكرنت نه پرۇژەكەدا .
- داواي وەرگرتنى زانىيارى بگهيت لەسەر بەكارنەھيئەتە ناوى كەسى نه تويزىنەوہكەدا .
- ئەتوانيت پوختەى نه نجامەكانى پرۇژەكە بىيىت كاتىك تەواو بوو .

پەيوەندى:

تكاىە دووڤل مەبە نه پەيوەندىكرن بە تويزەر و سە رپەرشتيارەكانەوہ بۇ ھەر پرسىيارىك پەيوەند بە پرۇژەكە .

تويزەر:

محمد أحمد محى الدين

mohammed.ahmed.mohialdeen.1@uni.massey.ac.nz

0064221528833

سەر پەرشتيار:

كارىن ئەندرسون

كۆيىژى پەروەردە، زانكۆى ماسىي

k.f.anderson@massey.ac.nz

006463569099 ext: 84451

برىيارى لىژنەى نادابى مەنە

نەم پرۇژەيە ھەنەنگىنراوہ و برىيارى لەسەر دراوہ كە بى مەترسىيە . بۇيە لەسەر نەم بئەمايە ئەلايەن كەسيك ئە لىژنەى نادابى مەنەى

زانكۆوہ نەبىنراوہ . تويزەر كە ئە سەرەوہ ناوى ھاتووہ بەرپرسە ئە رەقتارە رەوشتييەكانى نەم تويزىنەوہيە .

نەگەر ھەر پەيوەندىيەكت ئەبارەى رەقتارى نەم تويزىنەوہيەوہ ھەبوو كە نەتەوئىت بىگەيەنيت بە كەسيك ئەسەر وو تويزەرەوہ، تكاىە

پەيوەندى بگە بە پرۇفيسور جۇن نۇنىل\بەريوہبەرانادابى مەنەى تويزىنەوہ . تەلەفون: 063505249, نيمەيل:

humanethics@massey.ac.nz

School Administration and Management Questionnaire

INFORMATION SHEET

Researcher Introduction

My name is Mohammed Ahmed Mohialdeen. As part of my research for completing my Masters in Educational Administration and Leadership I am gathering data through questionnaires in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Project Description and Invitation

This purpose of this project is to find out the perceptions of leaders in education about current processes of administration and management of schools. You are invited to complete a questionnaire giving your views and any suggestions you might have for improvement.

Participant Identification and Recruitment

Your name has been selected randomly from staff lists obtained from the MoE website and the University of Sulaimani website. Individuals have only been excluded if the researcher has had past involvement with them. Five education officers and five academics will be asked to participate. Thirty schools will also be completing a similar questionnaire. The purpose for this sampling is to gather perceptions from schools operating under different structures and education leaders from different levels. The total number of participants is not large and not intended to represent the views of all education leaders. The sampling is to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of current approaches and possibilities for the future.

Project Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire which may take up to ½ an hour of your time.

Data Management

The answers you offer will be used to help the researcher gain insight into the effectiveness of the current school administration and management approach and your ideas for the future. Neither your name nor the name of your institution, or any personal information will be used in the final report. Your answers will be scanned into a password protected computer and all identifying details removed. You are welcome to request a summary of the results from the researcher when the project is completed by January 2016.

Participant's Rights

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study before 31st August 2015
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Project Contacts

Please feel free to contact the research or supervisor if you have any questions about the project

Researcher:

Mohammed Ahmed Mohialdeen
mohammed_ahmed.mohialdeen.1@uni.massey.ac.nz
0064 22 1528833

Supervisor:

Karen Anderson
Institute of Education, Massey University
K.F.Anderson@massey.ac.nz
0064 6 356 9099 ext: 84451

Ethics Committee Approval Statement

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

راپرسى نەسەر بەرئۆبەردن و كارگىرى خويندنگاكان

رئىئامايەكان:

من كه ناوم محمد أحمد محى الدين د وە كو په شىك له تەواوكەرى تويژينهوى نامى ماستەرەكەم له سەر بەرئۆبەردن و رابەرايەتى پەرورەدەيى،
داتا كۆدەكە مەودە لەرگەي نەم راپرسىيەو نەسەر ھەرئىسى كوردستانى عىراق.

پىناسەو بانگىشت كردن بۇ پرۆژەكە:

مەبەست نەم تويژينهوىەيە برىتییە نە وەرگرتنى راو بۆچونى بەشداربووگان لە رابەرە پەرورەدەيەكان لە بارەى پرۆسەى حالى حازرى بەرئۆبەردن و
كارگىرى خويندنگەكان. بەرئۆبەردن بانگىشت كراوئىت بۆ پرکردنەوى فورسى نەم راپرسىيە و راو بۆچون و پىشنيارەكانت بخەيتە روو لە پىناوى
پەردپىنداى پرۆسەكە لە داھاتوودا.

پىناسەى بەشداربووگان و ووردەكارىيەكان:

ناوى بەرئۆبەردن بە شىبەيەكى عشانى نە ناو ئىستى ستافەكاندا وەرگىراو بە ھۆى سايتى وەزارەتى پەرورەدەو سايتى زانكۆى سلېمانىيەو، ھەرکەسىك
لە لاين تويژەرەو ناسراو بوويئىت ناوگەى لابراو. 5 كەسى پەرورەدەيى و 5 كەسى نەكادىيى بەشدارى نەم راپرسىيەدا نەكات. 30 خويندنگە بە
ھەمان شىبە بەشدارى لە راپرسىيەكەدا نەكەن. مەبەست نە وەرگرتنى نەم سا ميلانە برىتییە نە وەرگرتنى راويۆجوتان نەسەر سىستەمە
جياوازەكانى بەرئۆبەردن خويندنگەكان و زانىنى راو بۆچونى رابەرە پەرورەدەيەكان لە ناستە جياوازەكاندا. كۆى گشتى ژمارەى بەشداربووان زۆر
ئىيە و تعبىر لە راى ھەموو رابەرە پەرورەدەيەكان ناکات. سامپلەكان بۆ نەوئەيە كە ئىكتىگەيشتنىك بەدەست بېيئىن نەسەر كارىگە رى پرۆسەى
ئىستى بەرئۆبەردن و تواناى گۆرانكارى لە داھاتوودا.

بەرئۆبەردن پرۆژەكە:

نەگەر نامادىيەت پىشان دا بۆ بەشدارىكردن پىويستە پرسىارەكانى راپرسىيەكە وەلام بەدەيتەو كە نزيكەى نيو كاتژمىر لە كات نەبات.

رىكخستنى داتاكان:

وەلام و پىشنيارەكانتان يارمەتى تويژەر نەدات كە بەرچاو روونىيەك بەدەست بېيئىت نەسەر كارىگەرى پرۆسەى بەرئۆبەردن و كارگىرى حالى حازرى
خويندنگەكان گۆرانكارى بۆ داھاتوو. نە ناوى بەرئۆبەردن و نە ناوى نەو ھەرمائگەيەى كارى تىندا دەكەيت وە نە ھەر زانىيارىيەكى كەسى بەكارنايەت
لە رسائەى ماستەرەكەدا. وەلامەكانت سگان نەكرىت و بە پاسۆردەو نە ناو كومپيوئەردا ھەندەگىرئىت دواى نەوئەى ھەموو زانىيارىيە كەسىيەكانى ئى
لانەبرئىت. دواتر خوشحال نەبىن بە داپىنكردنى وئىنەيەك نە پوختەى نە نجامەكانى تويژينهوىەكە دواى تەواوبوونى لە مانگى كانونى دووئەى
2016 دا نەسەر داواى خۆت.

مافەكانە بەشداربووان:

بەھىج شىبەيەك بەرئۆبەردن ناچارئىت بە بەشدارىكردن نەم راپرسىيەدا وە نەگەر رەزامەند بوويئىت بە بەشدارىكردن نەو نەم ماھانەى خوارەوت ھەيە:

- نە توانيئىت وەلامى ھەر پرسىارىك نەدەيتەو كە لات پەسەند ئىيە.

- داواي لابرڊنى بەشداريكرىڭت بگەيت ئە را پرسیيەكەدا پېش 2015\08\31 .
- ھەر پرسیارنىڭ بگەيت ئە ئەسەر تويۇنئەوگە ئە ھەر كاتىدا ئە ماوى بەشداريكرىڭت ئە پىرۇژەكەدا .
- داواي ۋەرگىرتى زانىياري بگەيت ئەسەر بەكارنەھىنئانى ناوى كەسى ئە تويۇنئەوگەدا .
- ئە تۋانىت پۈختەي ئە نجامەكانى پىرۇژەكە بېيىت كاتىك تەواۋ بوو .

پەيوەندى:

تكاپە دووڭ مەبە ئە پەيوەندىكرن بە تويۇنئەو سە رپەرشتيارەكانەوہ بۇ ھەر پىسيارنىڭ پەيوەند بە پىرۇژەكە .

تويۇنئەو:

محمد أحمد محى الدين

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سەر پەرشتيار:

كارىن ئەندرسۇن

كۆيىژى پەروەردە، زانكۆي ماسىي

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006463569099 ext: 84451

بىريارى لىژنەي نادابى مەنە

نەم پىرۇژەيە ھەئسەنگىنئراۋە ۋ بىريارى ئەسەر دراۋە كە بى مەترسىيە . بۇيە ئەسەر نەم بىنەمايە ئە لايدن كەسىك ئە لىژنەي نادابى مەنەي


زانكۆۋە نەبىنئراۋە . تويۇنئەو كە ئە سەرۋە ناوى ھاتوۋە بەرپىرسە ئە رەقتارە رەوشتييەكانى نەم تويۇنئەوۋەيە .

نەگەر ھەر پەيوەندىيەكت ئەبارەي رەقتارى نەم تويۇنئەوۋەيەو ھەبوو كە نەتەۋىت بىگەيەنئىت بە كەسىك ئەسەرۋو تويۇنئەوۋەو، تكاپە

پەيوەندى بگە بە پىرۇفيسۇر جۇن نۇنىل\بەريۋەبەرانادابى مەنەي تويۇنئەوۋە . تەلەفون: 063505249, نىمەيل:

humanethics@massev.ac.nz

Appendix 4: Ethical Approval


MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

7 July 2015

Mohammed Mohialdeen
30 Simons Street
Moturoa
NEW PLYMOUTH 4310

Dear Mohammed

Re: Exploring Decentralisation for Improving Education Administration in the Kurdish Region of Iraq

Thank you for your Low Risk Notification which was received on 29 June 2015.

Your project has been recorded on the Low Risk Database which is reported in the Annual Report of the Massey University Human Ethics Committees.

You are reminded that staff researchers and supervisors are fully responsible for ensuring that the information in the low risk notification has met the requirements and guidelines for submission of a low risk notification.

The low risk notification for this project is valid for a maximum of three years.

Please notify me if situations subsequently occur which cause you to reconsider your initial ethical analysis that it is safe to proceed without approval by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.


A reminder to include the following statement on all public documents:

"This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Dr Brian Finch, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 356 9099, extn 86015, e-mail humanethics@massey.ac.nz".

Please note that if a sponsoring organisation, funding authority or a journal in which you wish to publish requires evidence of committee approval (with an approval number), you will have to provide a full application to one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. You should also note that such an approval can only be provided prior to the commencement of the research.

Yours sincerely



Brian T. Finch (Dr)
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and
Director (Research Ethics)

cc: Mrs Karen Anderson
Institute of Education
PN500

Prof John O'Neill, Director
Institute of Education
PN500

Dr Jenny Poskitt
Institute of Education
PN500

Mrs Roscanne MacGillivray
Institute of Education
PN500

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council

Research Ethics Office, Research and Enterprise

Massey University, Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand T 06 3505573; 06 3505575 F 06 350 5622
E humanethics@massey.ac.nz, animalethics@massey.ac.nz, gte@massey.ac.nz www.massey.ac.nz

Appendix 5: Data table

Compiled	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13
1	16	15	8	14	12	14	8	8	3	19	12	13	19
2	10	16	17	15	5	6	4	10	7	7	11	10	11
3	11	10	10	9	9	10	12	10	18	6	8	11	5
4	6	1	6	5	8	9	11	7	8	8	5	8	5
5	3	4	5	1	11	6	9	11	10	6	8	3	5
Education Academics													
1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	2
2	2	4	2	3	1	2	0	2	1	1	1	1	2
3	2	0	2	0	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	2	0
4	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education Officers													
1	3	3	0	3	4	4	4	4	2	5	5	4	5
2	4	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
3	0	3	6	2	1	2	1	2	4	1	0	0	0
4	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
5	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Model Schools													
1	2	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
2	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
3	0	1	0	0	2	1	1	3	1	0	1	1	1

4	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	3	0
5	2	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	1	3	0	0
Private Schools													
1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	2
2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
3	2	1	0	0	1	4	2	1	1	0	2	2	0
4	1	0	2	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	1	0	1
5	1	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0
Public Schools													
1	11	9	6	7	5	9	4	4	1	8	4	7	8
2	4	9	12	8	4	4	3	6	5	4	9	6	6
3	7	5	2	7	3	2	5	3	9	4	4	6	4
4	3	1	3	2	5	6	5	3	4	5	2	3	2
5	0	1	2	0	8	4	6	9	6	4	5	3	5

Appendix 6: Open-ended question response rate

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
A1	1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1				
A2	1	1	1		1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1
A3	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1		1		1	
A4			1		1									1
A5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				1	1
E1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
E2	1					1	1	1	1	1	1			
E3	1						1	1	1					
E4	1	1	1	1			1							1
E5														
E6	1	1												
E7														
E8	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
M1	1	1	1	1	1	1								1
M2		1		1	1			1					1	
M3		1	1		1				1					
M4	1		1	1		1	1			1	1	1		
T1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	
T2	1			1						1				
T3														
T4		1	1		1			1	1					
P1				1			1	1			1	1		
P2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
P3														
P4	1	1									1	1	1	1
P5	1													
P6	1													
P7														
P8		1	1	1			1		1					
P9	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
P10														
P11	1		1	1		1	1			1	1			1
P12	1	1	1	1			1							
P13	1		1											
P14	1	1					1				1	1		
P16														
P17											1			
P18														
P19											1	1		1
P20														
P21														
P22	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
P23	1	1				1			1	1	1	1		
P24														
P25			1						1					
P26	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1