

Research Article

Pedagogical Training in Kurdistan: A Critical Analysis of Present Challenges

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Abstract. This study focuses on the institutional and structural pedagogical barriers exacerbating the inefficiency of teacher training programs in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. With attempts to reform policies and improve pedagogical advances, the system remains stagnant due to perpetual underfunding, outdated syllabi, excessive student numbers in classrooms, poorly supervised teaching practice placements, and inadequate evaluation processes. Further, the study addresses gaps in credentialing systems, pedagogical frameworks not tailored to local cultures, and a pervasive

deficiency of pedagogy experts. This paper seeks to portray the systemic barriers to adequate teacher preparation using a qualitative, interpretive methodology based on empirical observation and policy scrutiny. It advocates for contextually differentiated pedagogical changes that adapt to the local structural context while recognizing the framework. Enhancing prior learning assessments and instructional delivery also has relevance. Emphasizing the need to reform education strategies not based on borrowed frameworks will position the regions and global debates on the education gap issues in the educational context of the proposed findings.

Keywords: Pedagogical Training, Kurdistan Region, Educational Reform, Pedagogical Challenges, Assessment for Learning.

INTRODUCTION

The pedagogical training's quality is universally recognized as a critical factor for the educational effectiveness since it influences the readiness, flexibility, and professional skills of the educators. Systemic changes in the instructional practice and learning outcomes in the education gaps of the Kurdistan Region, which is in dire need of educational reform, require the establishment of effective teacher training programs. However, in spite of stated policies and institutional strategies directed towards improving teacher education, a number of region-wide factors still limit the trust and effectiveness of the region's pedagogical training. This research focuses on an urgent issue: the enduring gaps of operational and organizational professionalism related to the teaching and education training practicum programs in Kurdistan. More specifically, it describes as problems the inadequacy of teacher trainers, organizational and institutional appropriateness, the pedagogical model imported, the inadequate credentialing system, and the appraisal system. These sets of problems, which are intricately bound together, have not received very much attention in the literature, even though they have strong consequences on the education standard and teachers' professional advancement. This study aims to provide an evaluative overview of the most prominent issues concerning pedagogical preparation and training in the Kurdistan Region. It attempts to explore the root causes of these issues and place them within the relevant broader educational, institutional, or cultural context. This analysis is informed by a qualitative, interpretive design drawing on policy documents, literature, and fieldwork within the Kurdish higher education system. This study addresses the unexamined gaps within the teacher training system, layering in with the existing scholarship that draws attention to local challenges, pedagogical issues overshadowed by the uncritical embrace of external models. It advocates for an empirically grounded, context-conscious restructuring of pedagogical training frameworks that would serve as a basis for responsive reform initiatives and focused scholarly-initiated inquiry.

METHODOLOGY

The research applies a qualitative, interpretivist research tradition founded on critical inquiry and contextual analysis. Since the research attempts to explore complex, multidimensional questions in pedagogical education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, qualitative methodology is most appropriate to recognize complexities in institutional practice, policy gaps, and sociocultural dynamics that cannot be observed with quantitative methodology. The interpretivist framework underpins this research's epistemological position, acknowledging the social construction and situated character of educational phenomena. This methodology facilitates the scrutiny of educators' lived realities, policy discourse, institutional organization, and pedagogical activities. Emphasis is placed in the methodology on the importance of knowing these phenomena through the eyes of actors within the system, instead of externally imposed judgement frames. Document analysis is the foundation for data gathering, including close reading of institutional reports, policy documents, academic studies, and global standards for pedagogical education.

Documents have been referenced according to their appropriateness, reliability, and currency in order to have a good grasp of local practice and global standards. Some of the most important sources consist of UNESCO guidelines, national policy reports produced by educational authorities in the Kurdistan Region, and OECD reports. Empirical evidence is also supplemented from secondary sources like journal publications, surveys, and previous studies carried out in Kurdish higher education. For data analysis, the research employs thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns, contradictions, and gaps in different texts. Five intertwining themes are found to emerge upon this analysis: structural barriers, inefficiencies in credentialing, cultural misalignment, teacher qualification insufficiency, and compromised assessment practice. The themes are critically analysed using both descriptive synthesis and normative critique based on applicable theoretical frameworks, including John Dewey's pragmatism, sociocultural theory, and frameworks of comparative education. The research design incorporates a contextualized critique of foreign pedagogical models with a focus on the importance of reform at the local level and not the universal imposition of extranational patterns of practice. The study obtains validity from the convergence of sources, which include policy documents, scholarly research, and an institution's records. Heightened reflexivity is upheld throughout the entire analysis to attend to the researcher's positionality and interpretive lens. All in all, this study moves away from claiming statistical generalizability but attempts to achieve theoretical transferability, furnishing insights that would assist in regional reform initiatives and more overarching discussions on teacher education in post-conflict, semi-autonomous areas in the world dealing with chronic political instability. The methodology employed makes possible a rich, multilayered explanation of the

myriad institutional, cultural, and educational factors affecting the quality of teacher training in Kurdistan.

Present Challenges:

1. Structural Barriers

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq face what may be termed structural challenges that compromise the quality of preservice teacher preparation programs and inhibit the realization of wider transformations to internationally recognized, integrated pedagogical models (e.g., Finland). These challenges – chronic underfunding, outdated curricula, insufficient academic space and resources, overcrowded programs and discrete practical components, etc. – reflect macro institutional factors relating to systemic educational fragmentation and immobility, economic scarcity, institutional stagnation, and disjointed educational policies and practices. While such systemic factors are not unique to Kurdistan, they are exacerbated by the region's distinctive post-conflict, semi-autonomous context and pose ongoing obstacles that make the introduction of progressive, student-centered teaching pedagogies, such as the Finnish model, especially problematic.

One of the most crucial factors impacting the quality of academic and professional output of Kurdistan's HEIs is their chronic underfunding, which deprives the Universities of building and developing their infrastructure, research, and learning, as well as staff development and training. Additionally, most universities and education colleges are deprived of accessing vital electronic learning and academic resources (such as access, subscriptions to online learning electronic materials, labs/simulations and virtual learning tools, etc), which are ubiquitous and a necessity these days in modern teaching and teacher education (Ahmed, 2022). According to a study conducted in 2023 of Kurdistan's HEIs, most universities suffer from a shortage of educational resources, e.g., the vast majority of academics and students only use very limited and outdated copies of printed books or photocopies, which are often not up-to-date or free downloadable materials. Therefore, they do not teach and learn according to the current and latest developments of knowledge and science or global and significant academic trends (Basil and Aziz, 2024).

The economic challenges in this region, with its dependence on changing oil revenue and political focus on security agendas, have inhibited continuity in institutional budgets. Consequently, the economic base salary frequently proves inadequate, fuelling the problem of qualified staff's confidence in seeking alternative opportunities abroad (Ahmed et al., 2024). The financial insecurity has affected faculty members' professional development because of limited access to international academic conferences, which are important sources of exposure to new educational theories. Consequently, researchers have become isolated or institutionalized because of the lack of exposure to new ideas. This financial

insecurity, according to Hamasaid and Saheb's (2020) study, has also meant that student teachers on practicum are sometimes not exposed to other well-equipped classrooms or new technologies, and they consolidate traditional methods of instruction in habitus and practice.

Beyond a lack of funding, however, the curricula have resisted pedagogical reform. Teacher preparation programs in Kurdish universities heavily emphasize theory yet ignore critical and contemporary aspects such as technology, blended learning, and adaptive learning. Teaching rote memorization of educational theory is privileged over skill-based delivery and innovation in teaching. For example, curricula analyses in 2022 show that while classroom management courses exist, these classes rarely include trauma-informed practices or inclusive education (Noriey, 2022). The disparity between what is learned through curricular content and practical classroom experience leaves the system ill-prepared to meet the diverse needs of its students. In addition, the absence of meaningful partnerships between universities and the fields is also part of why teacher training programs are shell programs. A 2023 study examining the impact of educational changes on the workforce since the 2007 educational restructuring criticized the poor alignment of curricula at Kurdish universities with labor market needs, where the knowledge economy is concerned, especially in terms of digital literacy and interdisciplinary instruction (Saeed, 2023). For example, practices such as communicative language teaching (CLT), effective globally, infrequently form part of English language teacher training programs. Instead, grammar instruction and translation exercises remain dominant in HEIs, exposing a more profound reluctance toward pedagogical change (Ghafar et al., 2024).

Kurdish universities are overcrowded, which limits further modern pedagogical adoption. Packed lecture halls and high student ratios greatly reduce the quality of student engagement and block interactive, student-centered instruction — the lifeblood of models such as Finland's. According to a study undertaken at the University of Kurdistan in 2019, student ratios in education departments are even more often greater than 50:1, which means that individual feedback and mentorship are never realized (Saeed & Ahmed, 2019). In such environments, educators are typically compelled to rely on traditional, one-sided lectures rather than encouraging dialogue and collaboration practices that are essential for effective teacher training. The physical infrastructure of many campuses further exacerbates these challenges. Poor ventilation, inadequate classroom space, and under-resourced laboratory facilities contribute to substandard learning conditions. For example, during practicum seminars, students are often crammed into small rooms, restricting their ability to collaborate on lesson planning or engage in peer-to-peer learning (Chaudhry, 2023).

Last but not least, one of the key structural obstacles within Kurdistan's system for the training of teachers is the variable, brief, and poor-quality school practice

experience. Experience in school is necessary for the bridging of classroom practice and theory. Still, numerous programs provide only about four weeks of placement under the international benchmark of 12–15 weeks (UNESCO, 2024). In a 2024 study (Mohammad & Al-Azzawi), it was found that placements are often without proper mentoring and that there is no direct link between placements and the student teacher's area of study. In contrast with Finland or Singapore, few universities in Kurdistan have formal school partnerships, so students themselves must organize placements that are neither quality-assured nor monitored. In addition, due in part to staff workload, faculty members do not have the practice of observing placements or offering feedback regularly. This inadequate framework hinders student teachers from reflecting on their experience, testing out pedagogical theories, and responding to real classroom challenges, such as using digital tools or managing inclusive learning environments. Accordingly, these system weaknesses pose significant challenges in practicing pedagogy effectively during teacher training.

The structural barriers of chronic underfunding, outdated curricula, overcrowded learning spaces, and insufficient practicum settings indicate that Kurdistan's higher education institutions cannot implement and maintain progressive pedagogical models similar to those found in Finland. These include individualized teaching, experiential learning, ongoing staff professionalization, demanding organizational support, funding security, and curricular adaptability that Kurdish HEIs do not yet possess. While ambitions for educational modernization are commendable, effective reform in initial educator preparation should commence by focusing on these structural challenges before models such as Finland's can realistically and effectively be replicated in the Kurdistan Region.

2. Inefficiency in Credentialing and Recognition

One of the central challenges to the pedagogical training framework within Kurdistan's higher education is the institutionalized redundancy faced by educators who already possess advanced degrees in education. These individuals have gone through considerable professional and academic education in terms of pedagogy. Still, they are then made to undergo additional pedagogy courses as a minimum requirement to teach at the university level. The policy is an extension of an overall inefficiency within the country's credentialing system, which cannot differentiate between teachers with foundational skills and those with higher-level pedagogical education (Education International, 2022).

This duplication is more than an administrative error; it is an institutional issue that undermines the credibility and efficacy of teacher education. Far from providing an arena for innovation, expertise, and professional development, the system treats pedagogy as an undifferentiated requirement. It applies a one-size-fits-all approach that does not regard academic background, professional success, or teaching experience. The result is a growing disconnect between professional development

goals and educators' lived realities, especially those trained within colleges of education (Hussein, 2018).

Consider, for example, an educator who earned a PhD in Educational Psychology from a local university. Their doctoral program would have provided coursework at the advanced level in teaching methods, evaluation methods, educational philosophy, and curricular development—fields closely related to post-employment teacher education objectives. And still, even this highly specialized professional is required to finish up with an obligatory state-mandated course of pedagogy that tends to review material he has previously mastered. Not only is this duplication time-consuming and an expense, but it also indicates institutional refusal to acknowledge expertise (HAMK Global Education, 2022)..

The same issue is faced by master's degree recipients from fields like curriculum and instruction or educational administration. These fields are pedagogically grounded by definition, so it is only natural that graduates are equipped to instruct and develop, apply, and assess academic programs. Requiring these individuals to revisit foundational pedagogical content diminishes the value of their degrees and slows their professional momentum. Rather than being fast-tracked into university positions where their expertise is urgently needed, they are subjected to bureaucratic hurdles that offer no tangible benefit to their teaching competence.

Such inefficiencies are not only inconvenient for individuals. They also branch out to influence the broader academic community of Kurdistan. Educational institutions with shortages of qualified lecturers have to wait for potential lecturers to undergo duplicate training, hindering recruitment and institutional responsiveness to educational demands. In addition, the financial cost, as well as emotional strain, placed upon teachers, many of whom must pay for courses they do not need, or postpone research and teaching opportunities, discourages academic advancement (UNIMED, 2021).

From an educational and pedagogy standpoint, professional development's central purpose is enhancing the quality of instruction through targeted, meaningful growth. However, if development is made into an obligatory ritual process, it can be counterproductive. Teachers who are made to review material they are familiar with can tune out the process altogether. The development no longer furthers their education or professional development, negating the educational and pedagogical principles it intends to support (Maringe & Ojo, 2023).

This is made more difficult by the absence of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) within Kurdistan's higher education institutions. An RPL system would enable universities and institutions to evaluate an educator's current qualifications and experience to ascertain the requirements and extent of additional pedagogical education that is required. Such an evaluation is not about relaxing standards, but about using them appropriately, making professional development an extension of

current practice that builds on foundations instead of repeating them. In the absence of an RPL system, the system is static and unaccommodating to the varying educational backgrounds of its teachers (University of Raparin, 2024).

Meeting this challenge demands a radical redesign of the structure and delivery of pedagogical education and training in Kurdistan. The reforms must start with differentiated renunciation that segments teachers according to their academic backgrounds and professional experience and adapts the training accordingly. In the case of veteran teachers, professional development courses must emphasize current challenges like digital pedagogy, inclusive education, and interdisciplinary education instead of going over fundamentals learned at the level of initial studies (Education International, 2023).

Moreover, institutions must embrace more efficient administrative practices that eliminate duplication and facilitate mobility across academia. Investing in building the policies of RPL and electronic credentialing systems would be an important step toward establishing an equitable and efficient professional development system. Such reforms would increase the credibility of pedagogical education and assist in elevating the overall quality of higher education throughout Kurdistan. In short, the current system of pedagogical training in Kurdistan is a significant challenge because it does not consider the qualifications of teachers with higher education degrees. The duplication is counterproductive to professional development, slows academic activity, and is one of the elements of a broader feeling of institutional inefficiency. The system needs to be changed by recognizing, differentiating, and adapting if pedagogy is an actual tool for excellence in education instead of an institutional hurdle.

3. Disconnect with Local Needs

Each society has a different culture, which may include different characteristics and needs. These cultural differences reflect on the education system, so it is advisable to consider the local culture of the community in continuing education plans and courses. Conversely, when an educational system based on a different culture presents needs, the desired educational outcomes are not achieved.

Pedagogical training courses in Kurdistan cannot achieve practical results. As based on John Dewey's idea about useful practical results and a purpose in the philosophy of pragmatism (Sharma et al, J., 2018), especially in the field of education. Based on this philosophy, an idea is created when it delivers useful and practical results. Thus, pedagogical training courses should focus on what can be changed in practice, rather than merely describing it in terms of theory. For example, in pedagogical courses, there is a lot of emphasis on student-centeredness, while the educational culture still does not allow for this student-centeredness due to teacher-centered intentions, classroom environment, student susceptibility, etc. On the other hand, what is remarkable in the theoretical context has no chance for practice. Also,

this philosophical approach supports the idea that education should help students implement new ideas (Garrison, J., & Neiman, A., 2003), but in the Kurdistan Region, unfortunately, even universities and the education system do not provide this opportunity for students. This is the opposite of student-centeredness, whether in the classroom or in the system in general. Thus, this student-centered advocacy continues only in the context of an idea, without the consequences being manifested in practice. Even students continue their studies in Kurdistan universities based on their high school grades, which is very inconsistent with the student-centered approach, because many students are obligated to choose a specialty while he/she has another desire.

Pedagogy emphasizes the small number of students in the classroom, but in fact, one of the problems of education in Kurdistan is the large number of students in the classroom. Even this problem exists in the courses of pedagogy, sometimes about 50 participants take part in the course with different levels of degree and different backgrounds.

Teachers conducting pedagogical training courses should have pedagogical and psychological expertise or be fully trained. In the Kurdistan Region, many teachers of pedagogical courses do not have sufficient educational and psychological expertise and are not even intensively trained in the fields. Another reason why pedagogical courses fail to satisfy local needs is that teachers have ineffective abilities to transmit educational theories and explain as professionals. Additionally, teachers need to strike a balance between theory and practice (Silander, C., & Stigmar, M., 2023), and thus lack of educational background or a lack of professional background cannot fill the gap that even pedagogical training courses have, let alone fulfill the needs of society.

Proficiency in English from international exams or university course completion is a main requirement in the Kurdistan Region in order to be accepted and participate in pedagogical courses. This strategy may unintentionally reduce the importance of the local language and culture in educational institutions. Sociocultural theory emphasized that language is a powerful mediator of cognitive development and exchange of information (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996; Kozulin, 1990). Lev Vygotsky's framework firmly supports that learning can be active once it aligns with the learner's language and social and cultural background, which serve as an initial tool for conceptual understanding (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Nevertheless, the English language materials in these courses are a barrier to full comprehension for some participants, especially when engaged in complex educational theory content, and can be more problematic for those with no experience with existing educational knowledge. Research indicates that learners show higher cognitive engagement and retention when instructional materials are available and learners study in their own language (Dasgupta & Hill, 2017). In this way, the local language increases and preserves the presented knowledge, and even

pedagogical participants can then use and transform the information in an understandable way.

Therefore, to improve learning outcomes, pedagogical training courses in the Kurdistan Region should integrate the local language as the primary medium of instruction, especially for basic and new knowledge. In addition to ensuring that participants fully incorporate and apply pedagogical theories in their teaching practices. Language is a tool of society that can become a pedagogical concern. The language improvement not only enhances understanding but also strengthens the social and cultural implications of education.

4. Inadequate teacher qualifications in pedagogical training

Quality education is the foundation for sustainable development (Tope, 2023), and having qualified teachers is a major component of high-quality education (Ismail, 2019). The quality of education in Kurdistan is significantly impacted by the ongoing issue of inadequate teacher qualifications in pedagogical training. Two key challenges are the lack of specialized instructors for pedagogy courses (Tope, 2023) and the limited training provided to those who teach pedagogy (Negassa & Engdasew, 2017; Ismail, 2019).

One of the most effective hurdles undermining pedagogical training in Kurdistan is the acute lack of instructors specialized in pedagogical teaching. Too often, in pedagogy teaching units, instructors are appointed from within more or less distant disciplines such as natural science, engineering, or even mathematics. These instructors often do not possess any of the basic training in education, teaching, and curriculum and instructional management, which are vital for producing effective educators (UNESCO, 2016). Lack of backgrounds in education means the instructors have little or no knowledge of teaching methodology, classroom management, curriculum development, or educational theory. This sets the stage for an unprepared teaching force, because many essential components, including learner-centered education, inclusive education, assessment, reflection, and the use of technology in teaching and learning, are cursorily introduced or attended to (Darling-Hammond, 2006). For instance, an educator who has not specialized in education would overlook the role of key educational theorists such as Piaget, Vygotsky, or Bloom, who illustrate the impact of cognitive, emotional, and social development on a child's ability to learn (Eggen & Kauchak, 2012).

This gap critically leaves emerging educators unequipped to modify their teaching techniques according to learners' evolving developmental milestones, defeating the very essence of teacher training. Consequently, the teaching of pedagogy becomes excessively theoretical, is taught in a piecemeal manner, or is out of touch with actual teaching practices (Zeichner, 2010). This insufficiency affects the compactness and organization of the courses offered, but also results in decreased active engagement of students in the training and loss of training

credibility. The absence of trained educators in pedagogy perpetuates a situation where new teachers are not adequately prepared to enter the workforce with the skills for basic competencies (OECD, 2019). Such a gap is quite alarming in a context where the quality of education is already grappling with a myriad of systemic issues. Solving this challenge requires a targeted strategy to establish, nurture, or retain pedagogy instructors with both academic credentials and field practice expertise, investing them as subject specialists (Schwille et al., 2007). This directly affects education students, as many attendees describe a prevailing sense of confusion, lack of preparation, and alienation. These trainees, who lack effective teaching models, find it challenging to apply theoretical concepts to actual teaching scenarios, thus curtailing their self-perception and capability as educators.

The serious drawback, the most pressing issue concerning pedagogical teaching in Kurdistan, is the lack of pedagogy instructors because of the inadequate training programs. A number of these instructors do not have any form of professional education training. In most instances, their sole preparation is a generic crash course devoid of any specialized content and lasting less than six months. This duration is by no means sufficient to grasp the myriad complex theories, methodologies, and modern practices that contemporary pedagogy involves (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Such abridged training utterly lacks the critical depth, real-life teaching experience, and reflective praxis adequate for effective pedagogy instruction (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Teaching as a discipline does not lend itself to effortless assimilation; it entails intensive engagement along with theoretical and practical work (Schwille et al., 2007).

As stated earlier, many of these instructors have no educational background, which further diminishes their capability to deliver proper instruction in pedagogy. For this reason, pedagogy courses are notably of poor quality, outdated, and dominated by lectures rather than teaching with current research (Zeichner, 2010). In the absence of sustained and organized professional development, these teachers find it challenging to utilize student-centered teaching strategies, integrate technology, or use inclusive teaching methods within a multilayered diversity framework (OECD, 2019; UNESCO, 2016). This affects pre-service teachers directly, as they are offered insufficient and often unrelated learning opportunities, which inequitably prepare them for actual classrooms. In this regard, the problem rapidly established is the lack of effective, comprehensive, and long-lasting training and support mechanisms for teaching methods teachers, so that they are not only credible in the pedagogical content knowledge, but also able to motivate and equip through reflective, research-based practice the subsequent teachers' educators (Cochran-Smith, 2003).

The systemic challenges that arise in the structure of education within the Kurdistan region are two-fold in nature. One problem is the poor assignment of faculty without proper schooling qualifications, while the other regards the lack of

readiness offered to those in charge of teaching pedagogy. These factors dilute the overall educator training in the region, which in turn affects the quality of learning in Kurdistan. If pedagogy is implemented at the hands of inappropriate professionals lacking professional depth in the field, future educators will inevitably be stripped of vital knowledge alongside essential skills needed for effective performance in the teaching arena. Tackling these issues calls for comprehensive restructuring that brings in adequate primary educators, as well as cataloged, extensive professional teaching assistance frameworks to be fully instituted. Such changes are crucial if Kurdistan aims to establish a robust and efficient educational framework suitable for domestic and international needs.

5. Deficiencies in assessment in the case of quality and quantity

A significant challenge to pedagogical training in the Kurdistan Region lies in inadequate assessment practices, both in terms of quality and quantity. Such inadequacies undermine the effectiveness of training programs by failing to align evaluations concerning participants' levels of expertise, as well as devoting inadequate time to assessments of real value. Rather than enhancing pedagogical development, prevailing practices tend to focus on superficial performance, not deep understanding. Such a lack of alignment between intention and practice illustrates more universal global issues in teacher education systems, in that formal assessment formats undermine professional development's potential impact (OECD, 2013).

The first point of concern relates to assessment quality, i.e., how student evaluation methods measure up to participants' academic and professional levels. In pedagogy programs throughout Kurdistan, assessments are standardized, with little adaptation made for participants with advanced education degrees or significant teaching experience. For instance, applicants with a master's degree or Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Psychology, are assessed using equal standards and activities as student teachers. Such a practice cannot account for prior knowledge acquired by these individuals and turns assessment into a formal requirement, not a professional development strategy (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Assessments should act as reflection checkpoints on growth, but when not adapted to learner profiles, they fall into a non-development role.

The problem of quantity—namely, time allocation—adds to the problem, too. Where student numbers in pedagogy classes are more than 30, the students are split into groups of four to five individuals. It takes 10 to 15 minutes per group to present before them. Such a format not only puts a restriction on each student's time to contribute meaningfully, but also shrinks the opportunity of the evaluator to give effective feedback. As a consequence, the likelihood of measuring individual improvement, critical analysis, and pedagogical practice shrinks (Black & Wiliam, 2009). In high-quality teacher training, time as well as space needs to be provided

for performance assessment, something that cannot be done using such stringent time constraints.

A further illustration of the quantitative dilemma can be identified in pedagogy training's final evaluation phase, where trainees are required to present a 10-minute talk before a panel of over five instructors. The short presentation should show teaching strategy, lesson planning, classroom organization, and involvement skills. The time limitation makes this expectation unrealistic, as it restricts deep explanation and reflection. Rather than allowing reviewers to have a thorough analysis of a trainee's potential to teach, the procedure renders rushed performances more dependent on presentation skills than pedagogical knowledge (Boud & Falchikov, 2006).

These evaluation flaws not only have implications for individual student learning but also undermine the validity of pedagogy training programs overall. If teachers perceive evaluations as insubstantial or inconsequential, participants might see them as bureaucratic hurdles, not worthwhile aspects of professional development. Such an attitude erodes both program motivation climate and its potential to generate innovation in future teachers (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Furthermore, lax evaluation schemes are also a factor behind inconsistency in certification requirement standards, risking certifying ill-prepared teachers, eroding public trust in teachers' capabilities, and ultimately weakening teaching.

Pedagogy training programs in Kurdistan also need to embrace a more adaptable, varied, and reflective evaluation strategy to address these issues. More tailored assessment through formative means such as peer review, teaching portfolios, and self-reflection journals can enable more intense involvement and reveal a richer account of pedagogical proficiency (Gikandi, Morrow, & Davis, 2011). In addition, coping with time constraints through mixed-mode or asynchronous assessment mechanisms, such as video-based lesson submission, would enable teachers to deliver teaching more genuinely and receive more direct evaluation feedback. Ultimately, today's evaluation practices in Kurdistan's pedagogical training programs pose a formidable obstacle to quality teacher education. The inability to align assessment quality and participant knowledge, coupled with a lack of time to conduct an in-depth evaluation, undermines the entire training program. To overcome this challenge, institutions must revamp their structure and philosophy, aligning assessment with best practices that prioritize reflection, authenticity, and differentiation.

CONCLUSION AND PROPOSED SOLUTION

The research has provided a critical, multidimensional overview of the core problems that plague pedagogical teacher education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Despite increasing policy focus and organizational initiatives on educational reform, the teacher-education system is still structurally disjointed, procedurally ineffective,

and pedagogically misaligned with international standards and local needs. Among the most critical problems encountered are chronic underbudgeting of the higher education system, outdated theory-driven curricula, excessive class sizes, inadequate opportunities for practice, and a significant lack of trained pedagogy instructors. These constraints not only weaken the professionalism of emerging educators but also limit the system-transforming potential of the entire educational system. In addition, the research has exposed systemic ineffectiveness in the policies of credentialing and recognizing learning that ignore prior intellectual competencies, leading to unnecessary double-loading of the training process, to the detriment of professional motivation, and hindering the inclusion of competent instructors in the academic faculty. The inflexible, one-size-fits-all policy for developing professionals overlooks the experience and credentials of individuals, mirroring a wider institutional resistance to innovating and being responsive in teacher education. The absence of Recognition of Prior Learning mechanisms also contributes to the extension of these problems, hindering the way to achieving an efficient and equitable higher education system. The gap between externally imposed teaching models and sociocultural dynamics in the Kurdish context is equally as complex. Internationally accepted practices like student-centered teaching (multilingual pedagogies) is a theory where its application is minimal because of entrenched teacher-centric practices, limited resources, and linguistic mismatches. This misalignment indicates the need to refocus educational frameworks and pedagogy towards local cultures, languages, and contexts to preserve global relevance. The study also emphasizes the pedagogical assessments and the systems of evaluation underpinning the training. Assessment approaches are quantitatively restrictive and qualitatively misaligned. To address these multi-layered issues, this research advocates for a whole-system, contextually rooted reform of pedagogical training in Kurdistan. The educational institution infrastructure should have a substantial investment, accompanied by the development of inclusive and adaptable curricula, along with the introduction of mechanisms for Recognition of Prior Learning. The local teacher education program also needs to be revamped to raise the level of on-site training, indigenous language and knowledge incorporation, and suitable specialization in pedagogy basics. Reform also has to address the pressing need for models of assessment that are authentic, formative, and aligned with pedagogical targets.

Overall, enhancing pedagogical training in the Kurdistan Region is not merely a matter of adjusting policies but a transforming demand for education. A failure to address these systemic obstacles is likely to perpetuate a vicious cycle of underprepared teachers, compromised institutions, and unrealized educational potential. With specific, evidence-informed reform, though, it is possible to construct a teacher-training system that not only lives up to international standards but also is attuned to the social, cultural, and educational texture of the region. Only through

such localized but visioning strategies can Kurdistan lay the foundations for a resilient, equitable, and future-proofed system for education. This research contributes to teacher education in the area through the provision of a localized and critical perspective for the structural and cultural misalignments that hamper pedagogical reform in post-conflict, semi-autonomous districts. It foregrounds questions that are infrequently explored in influential literature and supplies actionable insights for constructing context-sensitive, credible, and effective systems of teacher education.

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