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Experiences of Public University Teachers about Policies and Practices of Human Rights Education in Karachi, Sindh

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Abstract

Human Rights Education (HRE) has become an important part of higher education, with a view to raising awareness, values and practices of transformation among learners and teachers. This is a qualitative study, examining teachers' experiences of using HRE in their pedagogical settings in public universities in Karachi, Sindh. It examines teachers' interpretation, performing and experience of HRE in institutional settings in light of Felisa Tibbitts' Values and Awareness Model, Accountability Model, and Transformation Model. The data was gathered using semi-structured interviews with eight teachers from the Education and Teacher Education Departments of public universities. The findings of the study are intended to bring to light the areas where there is a mismatch between policy and practice, pedagogical issues and possibilities for an effective Cross-European integration of HRE. The findings of the current study add to the debate on agency, curriculum policies, and how the human rights (HR) principles can be put into practice in higher education.

Keywords: Human Rights Education, Teachers' Experiences, Higher Education, Educational Policy, Teaching Practices.

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Introduction

HRE has now come to form a crucial part of the modern education system, especially in the field of higher education where new teachers become educated and professional values are molded. Internationally, HRE is increasingly understood as a transformative education process, which has the potential to increase awareness of HR and to strengthen democratic values, social justice, critical thinking and active citizenship (UNESCO, 2015; United Nations, 2011). The United Nations Declaration on HRE and Training defines HRE as “education about, through and for HR” combining cognitive, participatory and action-based approaches to learning (United Nations, 2011).

HRE is key in preparing teachers to be able to integrate HR principles in their professional practice, in particular within teacher education programmes. Teachers need to foster inclusive, equitable and rights-based learning environments and encourage respect for diversity and social responsibility (Osler & Starkey, 2018). Thus, universities are not only sites of knowledge transmission but also places for the emergence of critical consciousness and transformative pedagogies that are based on HR values (Bajaj, 2017).

Nevertheless, the use of HRE in practice is not uniform and in many cases the policy and classroom worlds do not match. In many developing States including Pakistan, HRE has been integrated with national education policies and curriculum frameworks and values like tolerance, equality and social justice have been given emphasis (Government of Pakistan, 2017). Pakistan's obligations under international HR conventions also underscore the need for integration of HRE as part of educational systems. But the research suggests that commitments do not necessarily translate into the educational practices, especially in higher education institutions (Dean, 2013).

Teachers play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between policy and practice for the HRE to have an impact. The experiences of teachers are at the heart of understanding how HRE can be realised in practice because the teachers implement and interpret curricular content within certain institutional and socio-cultural contexts (Bajaj, 2011; Tibbitts, 2017). The level of meaningful incorporation of HR concepts in teaching and learning processes is influenced by their beliefs, pedagogical approaches and professional experiences. Therefore, it is important to also look at teachers' experiences to gain insights into the practical issues and opportunities of HRE implementation.

The literature that exists notes some difficulties of teachers in the operation of HRE. These include limited professional training, lack of institutional support, limited curricula, and assessment systems that focus on rote learning and not critical engagement (Keet et al., 2009; Osler & Starkey, 2018). Further, socio-cultural considerations and institutional limitations can make it difficult to have open discourse on sensitive HR issues, which can limit the transformative power of HRE. Consequently, HRE is often turned into a theoretical process, and is not practiced as a dynamic and participative process.

These need and issues are particularly obvious in the higher education institutions in Pakistan, where the teacher education programmes are expected to prepare teachers to deal with a wide range of diverse and complex classrooms. Research pertaining to the content of the curriculum and the policy framework for HRE is available, however, empirical studies concerning the experience of teachers and classroom practice as it relates to HRE are scarcer. This gap is important because teachers' attitudes and beliefs are key to the local interpretation and practice of HRE.

It is still less explored phenomenon in public universities of influential institutes like Karachi, Sindh where teachers are being trained. These institutes have various types of students and are located in multicultural environments that may influence the way they teach. Although the role of the university teacher in relation to HRE in professional contexts is crucial, there is a lack of studies that analyze their experiences, difficulties and pedagogical approaches in this role.

This study aims to fill this gap by investigating the experiences of public university teachers in the application of HRE in the teaching process. The study uses a qualitative approach, with semi-structured interviews with teachers, to provide a rich, context-specific picture of HRE implementation. To gain insights into teachers' perceptions of HRE, their approach in introducing HRE in the classroom and the challenges and opportunities they faced in doing so.

In addition, the conceptual framework of this study is based on the models of HRE that is Values and Awareness, Accountability and Transformation, developed by Tibbitts (2002, 2017) that allow to analyze the various aspects of HRE practice. Such models can help to gain insight into whether HRE is being practiced in the awareness, professional responsibility or transformative action phase in classrooms at universities.

The study presents the teachers' experiences in this context in order to enrich the general discussion on HRE with the realities of the lived experiences of teachers in the context of a developing country. It also provides policy makers, curriculum designers and teacher trainers with ideas on how to reinforce the incorporation of HRE in higher education. Finally, the study aims to link policy with practice by putting at the center the voices and experiences of teachers who are at the forefront of the implementation of HRE.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increase in efforts to promote HRE at the international and national levels, there is disconnect between policy creation and the effective implementation of such policy in classroom-based education, and in the case of higher educational institutions in this instance. According to the International conventions and frameworks, for example, the United Nations Declaration on HRE and Training, the importance of introducing HR principles at all levels of education is highlighted (United Nations, 2011). Likewise, Pakistan's national education policies and directives emphasize the significance of encouraging values like equality, tolerance and social justice (Government of Pakistan, 2017). Based on this evidence, however, it is found that not all the time are this policy commitment translated to pedagogical practice within universities (Dean, 2013).

One of the main limitations in this respect is the lack of preparedness of teachers to implement HRE. Research suggests that teachers are not generally formally trained to incorporate ideas about HR in the classroom, have few pedagogical tools and are not supported by their school system in this regard (Bajaj, 2011; Keet et al., 2009). Moreover, there are also institutional limitations, limited material options, and curriculum design that support a rigid approach which prioritizes exams rather than an in-depth critical analysis, which is a key element of HRE (Osler & Starkey, 2018). Thus, HRE is often limited to superficial coverage and theoretical endeavours and fails to be enacted as a transformative educational practice.

Furthermore, the implementation of HRE is highly dependent on teachers' interpretation, their belief and professional experiences. The role of teachers is crucial in the translation of discourses and the interpretation of policy and practice and the introduction and contextualization of HR

concepts in classrooms (Tibbitts, 2017). Yet, the current literature on the topic has concentrated on curriculum analysis, policy analysis, or theoretical proposal, leaving the aspects of daily life and experience of teachers rather limited study especially concerning the contributions of teachers in the context of higher education.

It is evident that there is lack of empirical studies of HRE and Teachers in Pakistan, in particular of HRE in public universities of Karachi, which focused on how teachers in university contexts experience and practice HRE professionally. This literature gap prevents a holistic perspective on the contextual problems, institutional relations and pedagogic approaches that have an impact on the implementation of HRE. However, it is challenging to determine the practical opportunities and obstacles to enhance the integration of HR Education without exploring how teachers think and feel about it.

In this regard, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the experience of public university teachers in the application of HRE in learning-teaching activities. The study addresses the difference between policy and practice, aims to focus on individual teacher experiences to gain deeper insights and understandings regarding the interpretation, implementation and negotiation of HRE in higher education classrooms.

Research Objective

To explore public university teachers' experiences regarding the application of Human Rights Education in their professional teaching settings.

Research Question

What are public university teachers' experiences regarding the application of Human Rights Education in their professional teaching settings.

Theoretical Framework

In the process of conducting this study, the authors have adopted Felisa Tibbitts' (2002) HRE Models, which offers a complete framework for viewing the implementation of HRE.

1. Values and Awareness Model

This model places a strong focus on the fostering of fundamental knowledge, awareness and values about HR. It is on cognitive understanding with the focus on attitudinal development of both the learners and the teachers.

2. Accountability Model

The accountability model focuses on responsibility and on teachers as duty bearers for the adherence to HR standards. It is consistent with institutional policies, legal frameworks and ethical teaching practices.

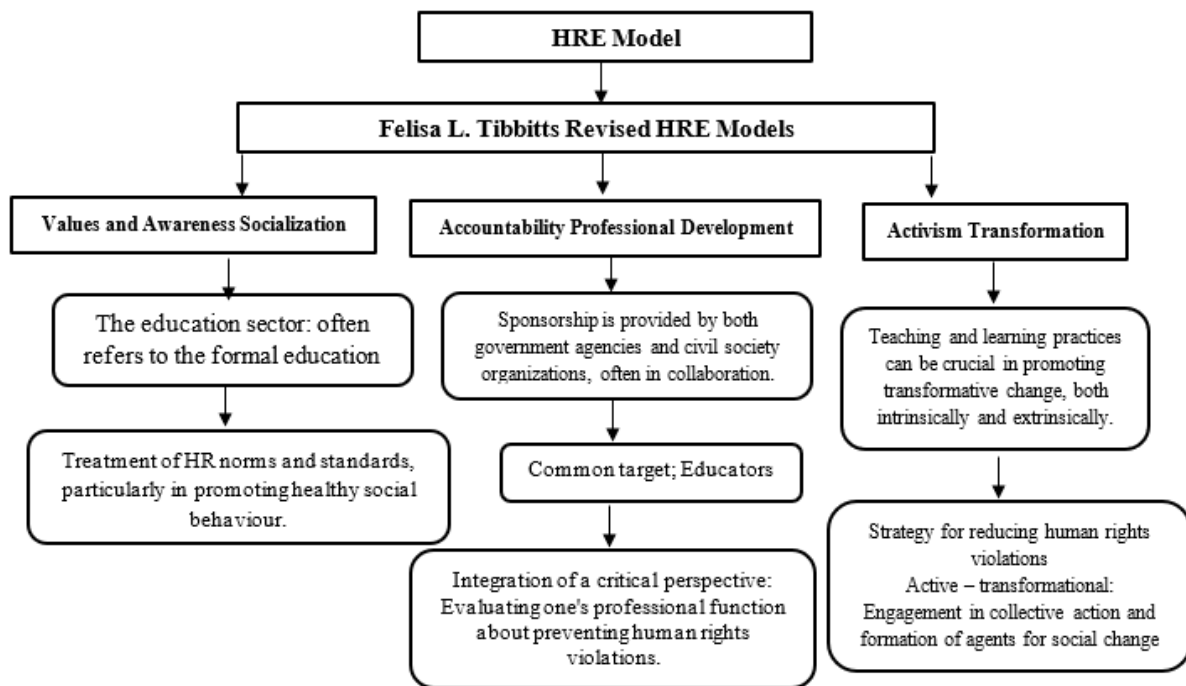
3. Transformation Model

A model that seeks to empower individuals to make critical reflections, participatory learnings and transformative pedagogy to promote and defend HR. It is involved in the social change and advocacy by the means of education.

The three models are all used to support the analysis of teachers' experiences, with them acting as a way of examining the awareness, responsibility and transformation through the lens of teaching practices.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 1.1: *Theoretical Framework*



Research Methodology

This study is designed as a qualitative research study in an attempt to gain in an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences. The lived experiences of the university teachers about the implementation of HRE are understood through phenomenological approach.

Population and Sampling

The study's population consists of teachers working in public universities of Karachi, Sindh especially in education and teacher education departments.

The selection of subjects used was a purposive sampling technique, which selects subjects who have experience in teaching subjects related to HR, social studies, or education. Eight university teachers were chosen for in-depth interviews.

Data Collection Instrument

A semi structured interview protocol of 15 open-ended questions was used to collect data. The instrument has been developed to explore and investigate teachers' awareness, experiences, problems and practices of HRE. Semi-structured interviews enabled detailed information to be gained from the participants, but at the same time ensured consistency of information.

Data Analysis Procedure

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was applied to the data that was collected. Analysis steps included: Familiarization with the data, Initial coding, searching for themes, Reviewing the themes, Defining and naming the themes and finally, Producing the report.

According to the Tibbitts' models of HRE, a pattern of the teachers' experiences in the dimensions of awareness, accountability and transformation was categorized and interpreted in the analysis.

Findings of the Study

Thematic Analysis of Semi Structured Interviews from Public University Teachers

Q1. University as a Critical Stage for HR Awareness

Attending university is an important period where young people become intellectually mature and are able to understand complex issues around HR, was stressed by participants. One of the participants has said: *"the kid knows right from wrong when it comes to University."* Another remarked, *"He's 18 plus... he should know about everything... I think it's time."*

In addition, university was perceived as the last chance for education: *"After University, there is no formal education, that's why we need HRE in detail,"* as stated by a participant.

This theme appears that according to the perception of the participants, university education is crucial for developing awareness of HR and knowledge acquisition is the first and most basic step in the Values and Awareness Model of HRE.

Preparation for Professional and Social Life

Participants always associated HRE with readiness for professional and social roles. One of the participants described this as *"not to-day or tomorrow but for the next 40 years."* Another commented, *"very important... to the future life and career as well."* Likewise, another respondent said "Students are being prepared for jobs, leadership positions...HRE builds critical thinking and awareness of ethics." *Society thought contribution was the other important aspect highlighted: "we have to be contributing to the society and how should we fit in that."*

This Theme emphasizes HRE is seen as fundamental to responsible citizens and professionals reflecting aspects of the Accountability Model, which are the ability of individuals "to stand up" for HR in their respective professions.

Q2. The Role of Education in the Promotion of HR is Transformative

Among the participants, one highlighted the transformative ability of education in forming attitudes towards HR by teachers and students. The participant pointed out teachers' high level of awareness and understanding of HR can have a significant impact on their way of working which in turn can have an impact on the attitudes of students. *"If these HR teachers in the University are familiar and aware about the HRE then the trickle-down effect would be observed in their class room and practice."* One of the respondents stated that *"They themselves would be promoting and safeguarding HR... their students would be taking care of the HR in future."*

This means that apart from being a vehicle of knowledge, education is a vehicle of molding responsible citizens who uphold the HR values within the society. Findings indicate that education

is viewed to be foundational in shaping HR oriented approaches to learning and that teachers could be instrumental in such a shift.

Pedagogical Practices that Foster HR Values

Participants identified concrete educational strategies and actions conducive to HR values in class. Focus was given to developing inclusive, participative and respectful learning environments. *“Collaborative learning... I personally believe in collaborative learning; students are free to raise questions. They can challenge my ideas.”*

The voice reminds: *“Always I care about their human dignity and HR without any discrimination of gender, creed... I make the classroom climate inclusive.”*

These practices show that there are changes from teacher-centred to more democratic, student-centred practices that are congruent with HRE. The responses show that good HRE is delivered through common classroom practices that encourage equality, respect, and engagement and is not delivered only by formal teaching.

Curriculum Gaps and Need for Formal Integration of HRE

Another issue that was raised by the participants was the absence of a specific subject about HR in the curricula of university courses despite its importance. Informal integration of HRE is involved in many subjects other than HRE, especially in social training subjects. *“There isn't a particular topic of HR, we incorporate it into some topics and teach it...”* *“All these things need to be in our curriculum development so we know our responsibilities, our duties.”*

This demonstrates that there are gaps within the structures of policy making and curriculum implementation in HEIs. This indicate that systematic curriculum reform is necessary so that HRE can be formal and explicit present in the education system of higher education and not just be implicitly integrated into it.

Q3. Delivery of HR-Based Values in Classroom Practices

Participation and Equality in the classroom

One practice discussed by the participants and seen to be dominant is the opportunity for equal participation. Structured participation, through classroom norms and the importance of giving space to it is emphasized: *“every child who is sitting in my class has got the right to participate... I have set a rule of three R's: raise your hand, respond and respect... whoever would respond three times... needs to give chance to others.”* This is an “intentional pedagogical structuring to avoid dominance and ensure inclusivity.” In the same way, another participant added, *“I am seeking to set an equal opportunity to speak out or raise question by any student for promoting equality, participation and respect.”* The practices on display are examples of how the teachers integrate democratic principles in the everyday life of the classroom.

Teachers actively turn principles of HR into the everyday life of participatory classes with equality and the voices of students as core tenets of HRE.

Inclusive and Respectful Learning Environments

Participants often emphasized the need for the establishment of a classroom environment that values and respects differences. One learner said, *“I have become conscious that I do not suppress any learner for whatever reason... even if a learner is shy because of language barriers.”* Another

shared, *"I make sure that all the legitimate rights of the students... there is no gender, creed discrimination... I make the class ambience enclosed. In addition to classroom teaching, emphasis was also placed on "emotional accessibility" – "I am here for you... I give him my attention... that one minute must be very sacred."* HR values are not only taught but manifest themselves in the attitudes of teachers as inclusivity, respect and emotional support are all characteristics of a rights-based approach to learning.

Q4. Knowledge and Skills for HRE

Need for Explicit and Structured Curriculum for HRE

One dimension shared by all the participants was that the current curriculum does not adequately cover the issue HRE and that it needs to be integrated into it as an independent subject. One of the participants emphasized that there are some competencies in courses today but no merit in every course, it should be taught as a separate domain so that we can cover things more explicitly. One of the participants reiterated this concern saying: *"if it comes embedded then it won't be dealt with."* Similarly, a respondent pointed out structural constraints, *"we have limited slot, we have limited curriculum... it became a really challenge for us to teach about HR."*

The findings show that although there is a policy will, there is not a will in the curriculum: HRE seems to be uncoordinated and poorly understood, and is still delivered by many teachers here and there.

Conceptual Understanding of Rights, Responsibilities and Legal Matters

It was emphasized by the participants that it is crucial to provide basic information on HR and duties in the real-life situations. One of the participants said that, *"they should know what their right... is when your job should be... you should have your wages by this time."* Another added, *"what are your rights and if there is a violation... where do you have to go... it is very important."* Issues of religious freedom and inclusion were also pointed out: *"this is your right to religion... no one can stop you."* HRE at University level is considered as fundamental to develop legal and social awareness for learners to recognize, claim and protect their rights both in personal and professional domain.

Q5. Pedagogies for Teaching HRE

The Pedagogies of Participation and Discussion.

Codes: discussion, inclusion of participation, dialogue, learning from each other.

Commonly mentioned approaches to the teaching of HRE were those of discussion and participation. In inclusive dialogue, one of the participants responded, *"a discussion... when you are giving a chance for everybody to speak... that really helps,"* noting the need for dialogue among all. There would be some intentional involvement through the presentation of practical ways to engage, as in everyone has 3 or 4 involvement opportunities, and they will be giving and talking, as described by another participant. Likewise, one of the respondents commented that *'collaborative learning, problem-solving and group discussion...gives freedom to the students to feel free to ask any question.'*

HRE is successfully implemented through participatory pedagogies where students are encouraged to become actively engaged, share their opinions and have equal opportunities to speak and listen.

Critical and Transformative Pedagogical Approaches

Participants indicated the need for critical and transformative approaches in order to develop deeper understanding of HR. One of the participants named, that *“HRE can be best imparted through the critical and transformative pedagogies making them experience and critique it.”* Another also added, *“I make them think about the content and to connect that with their context and...with their practices, with their policies.”* Such methods help students to develop a critical analysis of issues or social problems, relate theory with real-world experiences, and think critically about issues in contemporary society. Critical and transformative pedagogies are the key principles in promoting reflective thinking and facilitating students to question and internalize the HR principles.

Q6. Addressing HRE in National Education Policies (2009 & 2017)

Implicit Integration of HR Values

The participants noted that HR principles are not incorporated explicitly in the 2009 policy. One of the respondents commented that *“The policy is in 2009 and one of the targets is to promote reform of curricula and teacher training so that teachers can foster civic awareness, peace values, and respect for HR.”* Another respondent pointed out that although HRE is not explicitly mentioned, *“it speaks of tolerance, democracy, social justice and equality.”*

The overall lines of argument indicate that HRE is integrated as part of a larger bundle of civic and moral education in the 2009 policy without clearly being formulated as a unique focus area.

Lack of Explicit Policy Direction on HRE

One common theme among participants was that they lacked the direction on HRE. One participant said *“they are not very much explicit about the HRE... there is no explicit mentioning.”* Another added, *“They talk about inclusivity – no discrimination – but as a whole, they are not touching HRE.”*

While HR related concepts are available in the policy discourse, they are not explicitly named and have no structured guidelines, which in turn make it difficult to effectively apply it in teacher education.

Q7. Effectiveness of NEP 2009 & 2017 in Integrating HRE into Curriculum

National Education Policy 2009

Foundational Support for Values-Based Education

Participants recognized the fact that the 2009 policy can serve as a starting point on which to build HR values. The one of the participants said that *“NEP 2009 emphasizes the urging of democracy, tolerance, social justice, gender equality, and tolerance of diversity.”* Another respondent noted that it *“promotes teacher professional development and growth around social issues, diversity and students' rights to successfully address these.”* The policy provides strong conceptual guidance for HRE by general value-oriented education.

Lack of Explicit Guidelines and Implementation Mechanisms

Participants noted the various challenges in the real implementation of the project, even though it has some strong foundations. One of the participants recalled that *“the 2009 policy offers a general*

guiding document, does not have clear implementation plans and does not explicitly include HRE guidelines.” Another added, “Its support... is moderate (limited strategic guidance, but, unfortunately, implementers are missing in institutions”.

The 2009 policy lacks explicit directions and implementation strategies that affect how effective the policy is to translate HRE into classroom practice.

Structural and Curricular Constraints

Structural obstacles to integration were mentioned by the participants. One of the replies stated: “we don't have enough space between two topics (time slot), to have a discussion about the ideas, peace education or HRE.” Another pointed to the fact that “policies are limited to the elementary and secondary sectors; there is no comprehensive policy in the higher education sector.” Curriculum constraints and narrowness to scope are barriers for meaningful integration of HRE, particularly in the university level of teacher education.

National Education Policy 2017

Enhanced Focus on Inclusivity and Social Cohesion

Some participants felt that the policy in 2017 shows relatively better alignment with the principles of HRE. A participant reported that: “NEP 2017 more effectively supports HRE through emphasis on inclusivity and peace education.” Another one added that it “connects to curriculum's goal of Social Justice and development of ethics. The draft for the 2017, in line with the progressive shift, highlighted the values that education should bring about, which include inclusivity and social cohesion; there is no direct emphasis on HRE integration.

Q8. Gaps in NEP 2009 & 2017 Regarding HRE

National Education Policy 2009

Absence of Explicit HRE Framework and Terminology

One issue that repeatedly emerged during the discussion was that HRE is not clearly defined in the policy. Out of its one respondent pointed out that “...it does not really focus on HRE, Peace Education and the inclusiveness enough... these are not given much attention.” Another respondent responded on the importance of clarity and the inclusion of “explicit mentioning of HRE and how to integrate HRE with aims, goals and targets. Lack of any explicit terminology or structures makes it difficult for the policy to lead to effective HRE integration.

Outdated and Non-Expanded Policy Framework

Policy is noted as being the same over years. One respondent said that the teacher education policy framework was designed in 2012, but they did not work on expanding the frame. Another put in “we did not mention new ideas in the area of education.” Absence of policy update and expansion limit the use of modern concepts like HRE, multiculturalism and inclusiveness.

Q9. Improving National Education Policies for Effective HRE Implementation

Lack of Policy Continuity and Systematic Review

There was a strong consensus of the participants on the lack of consistency in the policy making processes. However, one of the participants remarked that “after 2009... Many policy drafts were prepared... but the ideas were left and we did not pursue,” pointing to a lack of follow-through.

Another respondent said, “We don't see any continuity in the policy... no certain time frame where we overhaul our educational policies.” Periodic revision was further reiterated as “even after four or five years we have to follow through our policies... to bring new concept.” Without policy continuity and regular review cycle's policy effectiveness is undermined and does not capture the development of global notions, e.g. HRE.

Need for Inclusive and Decentralized Policymaking

The need for inclusive policy making was emphasized. One participant suggested that “policy making should be all inclusive... all the stakeholders should be taken into account and it should be decentralized.” The respondent also stressed the need to implement policy changes, which will correspond to ground realities stating that “rather than massively centralized giving disregard to the ground realities.” An inclusive, decentralized policy making process enhances relevance and ownership of HRE, thereby paving the way for better implementation at a range of education levels.

Q10. Application of HRE in Teaching Practice

Positive Classroom Engagement through HRE

Participants expressed that using HRE helps to create a positive and inclusive classroom environment. One of the participants talked about the positive experiences they have: “Experiences are positive because, if you take care of the students and you take care of the HR, then they are positively engaged in the classroom.” They shouldn't feel excluded or discriminated and we are able to retain their motivation, the respondent added. HRE supports an inclusive and respectful classroom, and helps to improve student engagement and motivation.

Challenges in Developing Critical Thinking

It was found that one of the main problems was that students' critical thinking skills were low. One of the participants described how it is that the learners are “coming from the K-12 school system where we only disseminate the knowledge, not create the knowledge. Hence, students are being “caroled” with the definition of HR, and cannot “go beyond the content”. Another respondent put emphasis on ““it becomes a challenge to make them as a critical thinker... responding to the why question rather than what are HR.” Pre-dispositions towards rote learning among students have proved to be an impediment to critical and reflexive learning and understanding of HRE at university.

Q11. Challenges in Rights-Based Education

Dominance of Rote Learning and Surface-Level Understanding

It was consistently identified that the previous education experiences of the learners pose a barrier to rights education. One of the participants noted that “they are coming from the K-12 school system... where we only disseminate the knowledge rather than creating the knowledge,” resulting in students being “obsessed with the definition of HR... and not ready to think beyond the content.” A culture of rote learning restricts the provision of conceptual and analytical understanding of HR for the students.

Lack of Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills

The other significant problem found was that it was hard to make students think critically. One involved person commented that “It's a challenge to get them to be a critical thinker or reflective practitioner instead of what are HR.” The focus continues to be on descriptive knowledge of rather than analytical examination of societal problems. Students have difficulty with critical reflection, an important component of understanding and implementing education in a better way with the perspective of rights.

Q12. Stakeholders' Role in Promoting HRE

Policy Development, Regulation, and Monitoring by Government

Participants highlighted the pivotal role of government and a sound policy-making regime. One of them explained that “government should take action” and “make policy to make HRE possible”, and other expressed that “first make policies” and “then their education and then the monitoring” and “this is the job of the government.” Another aspect of this accountability was their suggestion to “have committees... within the government and see if the policies are being followed or not”. The role of government is fundamental to the realization of HRE through policies, provision of resources and good monitoring systems.

Curriculum Integration and Institutionalization at University Level

Universities were being named as powerful actors for policy to practice. One respondent commented that “becomes part of policy of university...universities need to have HRE in the curriculum.” Another said that HRE should not be narrowed and told that ‘we did not add any chapter or book; this component needs to be introduced from primary to higher education levels.’ In addition, the proposal on “HRE should NOT be segmented” was put forward. Enabling institutions to play a role in institutionalizing HRE, universities have a critical responsibility in the curriculum development, multidisciplinary integration and academic policy frameworks.

Discussion

This study shed light on how HRE was experienced in public university teachers' professional practices in the context of policy-practice gaps, pedagogical challenges, and stakeholder roles. The results indicate that it shows considerable congruence with the literature; and has its own complexities related with context of Higher Education in Pakistan. The difference between policies and implementation of HRE is one of the more significant findings of this study. While the policies vision equality, inclusion and merit, HRE was always reported as not being directly referenced in national or institutional policies and curricula. This mirrors what scholars have termed as the “implementation deficit” when it comes to HRE, namely the failure to “turn policy into practice” (Bajaj, 2011; Tibbitts, 2017). In the same way, no and limited curricular content and assessment frameworks of HRE are in line with Keet's (2015) posed argument that HEIs tend to symbolically embrace HR, though without a framework of transformative education.

One important issue that has arisen from the findings is the prevalence of rote learning and how this affected learners' engagement with HRE. Participants indicated that a great number of students face challenges on entering universities because they are familiar with memorization and repeating content, and this prevents them from being able to critically approach HR concepts. This discovery is in perfect harmony with the idea of Freire (1970) that criticized the “banking model of

education” establishing the students as passive recipients instead of active producers in the process of teaching and learning. Within the context of HRE, these pedagogical restrictions become problematic in the process of raising students' critical consciousness, which is a prerequisite for attaining awareness of and acting for their rights in the face of structural inequalities (Osler & Starkey, 2010).

Inherent in this is the difficulty of achieving critical and reflective thinking of learners. It was concluded that pupils have a challenge to go beyond the descriptive level defined as “what are the HR?” to level of analysis “why are the HR violated”. Especially this will underpin Tibbitts' (2002) proposition that HRE should be based on transformative learning-based methods, which promote critical reflection, ethical reasoning and social responsibility. If HRE does not have these skills, it risks becoming just a theoretical discipline, and not a means of social change (Bajaj, 2017)..

One other significant dimension that was revealed in the current study is the informal and fragmented nature of the implementation of HRE. Participants indicated that they used indirect strategies, including discussion, activity, seminar and workshop, instead of curricular strategies. Such practices are compatible with a model of HRE that is informal and non-formal, (UNESCO, 2015), but with their inconsistent application they are less effective. It indicates that need to take more systematic and institutionalized steps towards HRE integration in teacher training.

The study also highlights students' limited awareness about their rights and responsibilities as a basic challenge to rights-based education. The result leads to the conclusion that HRE must not only be based on knowledge dissemination but also awareness- and empowerment raising as is affirmed by Osler and Starkey (2010). Students are less likely to make ethical decisions and take civic action if they don't know their rights and the accompanying responsibilities. This corresponds to the sociocultural theory of learning of which Vygotsky (1978) has stressed about the importance of social interaction. Absence of dialogic pedagogy goes against the participatory and democratic attitude, central for HRE.

The findings call attention from a structural point of view to the importance of government, universities and stakeholders in fostering HRE. This adheres to global policies, for example the World Programme for HRE (United Nations, 2012) which expects the government to take the role as a policy facilitator, provider and monitor. But there were policy implementation and monitoring issues – there is a need for better governance and accountability, noted participants. This resonates with Keet's (2015) view that higher education institutions should shift from compliance towards transformative framework of HRE (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In general, the conclusions drawn from this study indicate that the situation of promoting HRE is still in the developing phase, is fragmented, and heavily relies on individual teacher's actions. The problem solutions must be investigated from various aspects, such as curriculum change, teacher training, policy enforcement and collaboration between the stakeholders. Although very significant, the transformation from content based to critical, reflective and participative pedagogies is fundamental for realizing the transformative potential of HRE.

Conclusion

The experiences of HRE public university teachers in the city of Karachi, Sindh has been looked at in the current study. The results indicate that although there is generalized awareness concerning the necessity of HR in education, in higher education, there is no evidence of consistent

institutional development, i.e. HRE has still not been implemented, but it referred to certain practices of individual teachers. Overall, it can be inferred that a gap is still very big between policies and classrooms. Policy statements made at the national level highlight equality, inclusion and merit, but this is not a systematic process of working out how these are reflected in the curriculum or in the way of teaching in universities. Consequently, HRE is often imparted informally, that is, through conversations, activities and personal advisement instead of formal and well-designed academic programs. This restrains the thoroughness, continuity and reach of HRE for teachers.

Also, the findings did indicate that the difficulty of learning and applying the concept of HR stems from the rote learning that they had done since day school. Learners' focus is mostly memorizing the definition and lack critical and reflective thinking. This restricts their awareness and opportunities to deal with real life, actual HR problems as well as their ability to use the principles in their future lives as teachers. Within this culture, which is driven more by content than by evaluation systems, and by examination more than by any other, the transformative potential of HRE is further undermined.

The research also points to the necessity of concerted action of government, universities and others. Though the government does play a pivotal role in creating the policy, allocating resources, and supervising, better systems must be put in place to implement the policies. But, considering the autonomy enjoyed by universities in academic leadership, it is possible to implement HRE at the discipline level and to make it part of teacher education programmes. But this potential is not utilized to the full. Similarly, although crucial to raise awareness and reinforce HR values, the involvement of parents, communities and society in higher education is limited.

Lastly a more systematic and formal shift from the current patchy and informal to more structured, policy based and pedagogically sound approaches for effective implementation of HRE is recommended. This entails making HRE part of the formal curricula, fostering critical and reflective pedagogy, boosting teacher education and augmenting cooperation between all stakeholders. But if there are no systematic considerations on this point, it is unlikely that HRE can be made a reality, to the benefit of producing informed, responsible and socially aware citizens. The results also contribute to the literature under the banner of HRE; they also indicate policies for change along with educational practice in the specific context of public Universities of Karachi.

Recommendations

Considering the gaps between policy and practice in HRE in Public Universities of Karachi, Sindh, and the following recommendations are offered;

1. Further investigations should not only include experiences, but also the design and testing of the HRE intervention models (e.g., curricular units, teacher training program, pedagogies involving reflection) for a real assessment of the impact of these models in the students' attitudes and critical thinking, considering also impacts on their professional practice.
2. The necessity is felt to conduct long-term research to understand the effect of HRE in students over a period of time and in their transition from the University to teaching profession. This will go a long way to filling the gap between short-term findings based on perception.

3. Currently, researchers should draw on both qualitative and quantitative information e.g., Attitude scales and Critical thinking measures to develop more comprehensive and generalizable, as well as policy-relevant information on the effectiveness of HRE.
4. Comparative studies between public and private universities, between universities of urban and rural areas and between different provinces of Pakistan can assist to pinpoint structural inequalities related to HRE implementation and contextual differences.
5. Research is needed to problematize how and why HRE related policies are not working, pertaining to institutional barriers, governance and absence of accountability mechanisms, at the policy level.
6. The study recommends the use of innovative pedagogy such as critical pedagogy, dialogic teaching and experience learning in future as it highlights not only on rote learning, but also reflective and transformative understanding of HR.
7. Studies of teacher education programs preparing teachers for HRE and their competencies, beliefs and challenges, and the evaluation of targeted professional development programs are needed.
8. Research still needs to focus on teachers; areas for future research should include students' views and their interpretations, internalization, and application of HR concepts in their academic and social lives.
9. The role of cultural norms, religious readings, gender relations, and power relations in society in relation to what HR are and do should be investigated critically in educational contexts. It is recommended that future researchers should gain insight from education, sociology, political and HR studies in order to capture the whole picture of HRE as an educational as well as socio-political phenomenon.

Conflict of Interest

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