

Enhancing TESOL Implementation Through Educational Leadership: Administrative Challenges and Opportunities in the Kurdistan Region

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Abstract

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in the Kurdistan Region faces significant administrative and contextual challenges that impede its effective implementation. This study investigates the role of educational leadership in addressing these obstacles and enhancing TESOL delivery within this unique socio-political and cultural setting. Despite the growing global importance of TESOL, local educational systems in Kurdistan struggle with issues such as insufficient coordination between ministries, lack of resources, political instability, and an underdeveloped leadership framework. These challenges negatively affect teachers' ability to meet learners' needs and limit students' language acquisition outcomes. Educational leadership plays a critical role in shaping teaching environments and supporting teachers to overcome barriers. Effective leaders can foster collaboration, allocate resources wisely, and implement culturally relevant strategies that align with the region's educational goals. This study underscores the importance of adopting leadership models that are sensitive to the Kurdish cultural context while drawing on international best practices. It highlights opportunities for improvement through sustained leadership engagement, professional development, and stronger cooperation between stakeholders. By analyzing current practices and challenges, the research advocates for a strategic leadership approach that emphasizes shared goals, communication, and practical support for TESOL practitioners. Such leadership can create a more conducive learning environment, facilitate teacher empowerment, and ultimately improve English language proficiency among students. This study aims to guide policymakers, educators, and administrators in Kurdistan toward innovative leadership strategies that enhance TESOL program quality and contribute to the region's educational development.

Keywords: TESOL Implementation, Educational Leadership, Kurdistan Region, Administrative Challenges, Language Education Reform

1. Introduction

Teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) faces several administrative challenges in the Kurdistan region. Addressing these obstacles can substantially improve TESOL implementation. Educational leaders within the region are therefore tasked with assisting teachers to surmount these issues, thereby facilitating more effective TESOL programmes.

TESOL has gained growing importance worldwide. In response, English teachers increasingly seek professionally-oriented frameworks that can assist with the successful implementation of TESOL programmes. An analysis of the Kurdistan region highlights the numerous challenges facing both English teachers and educational leaders. Locally accessible guidelines are currently underdeveloped; international models can help to bridge this professional gap by outlining how educational leadership in Kurdistan could support effective TESOL delivery (Haji, 2018).

2. Literature Review

The field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) has grown exponentially worldwide, becoming a fundamental part of educational systems, especially in regions like Kurdistan, where English proficiency is increasingly necessary for academic, professional, and social development. This literature review synthesizes recent studies and theoretical frameworks related to TESOL implementation, educational leadership, administrative challenges, and opportunities for improving English language teaching in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. It draws upon regional and international research to examine how leadership practices, policy frameworks, and pedagogical approaches impact TESOL programs, with a focus on culturally responsive strategies suitable for Kurdistan's unique socio-political context.

TESOL Implementation and Its Challenges

TESOL aims to equip learners with essential English language skills — reading, writing, speaking, listening, and intercultural competence — vital for global communication (Haji, 2018). However, TESOL implementation faces multifaceted challenges in the Kurdistan Region. Haji (2018) highlights that despite increasing demand for TESOL, local educational systems suffer from insufficient coordination between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, leading to a disconnect between learner needs and teacher preparation. This fragmentation undermines the quality of TESOL provision and exacerbates resource scarcity and inconsistencies in curriculum delivery.

Noori Kareem (2017) emphasizes the critical role of integrating Information Communication Technology (ICT) into TESOL to enhance learning outcomes. However, in Kurdistan, limited access to technological infrastructure and training for teachers restricts the effective use of ICT in language classrooms, further challenging TESOL advancement. Abdullah, Mohammad, and Ameen (2024) stress that adopting innovative learner-centered approaches and technology-based assessments can foster motivation and improve student engagement, but these innovations remain underutilized due to administrative inertia and inadequate professional development.

Moreover, the socio-political instability in the Kurdistan Region has disrupted educational governance and long-term strategic planning (Nathanaili, 2015). Protracted conflicts and political fragmentation create administrative barriers, limiting sustained investments in educational resources and leadership capacity-building. These factors complicate efforts to establish stable, high-quality TESOL programs aligned with international standards.

Role of Educational Leadership in TESOL

Educational leadership is a pivotal factor in overcoming TESOL challenges. Garcia Martinez and Jose Arrifano (2018) define educational leadership as the process of guiding and managing educational institutions to improve teaching and learning outcomes. Their study on pedagogical leadership shows that effective leaders foster environments conducive to collaboration, professional growth, and instructional innovation.

Sherwan Taha Ameen (2023) articulates the importance of culturally appropriate leadership that respects local educational goals and socio-cultural realities in Kurdistan. Leadership in TESOL must balance international best practices with regional sensitivities to enhance teachers' effectiveness and student outcomes. Ameen and colleagues (2023) advocate for leadership models that emphasize dialogue, teacher empowerment, and responsive administrative policies, which have been shown to elevate the quality of English language education.

Abdullah and Ameen (2024) explore the profound impact of technological innovations in TESOL, emphasizing that leadership commitment is essential for integrating these tools successfully. Leaders who actively support professional development, monitor instructional quality through classroom observations, and foster professional learning communities contribute to sustained TESOL improvements (Fenyiwa Amonoo-Kuafi, 2019).

However, leadership in many parts of Kurdistan remains underdeveloped. Haji (2018) argues that administrative leaders often lack the skills and frameworks to implement effective TESOL strategies, leading to fragmented efforts and inconsistent policy application. Nathanaili (2015) underscores the importance of political stability and coherent leadership policies for establishing robust school leadership structures that support language learning.

Administrative Challenges in TESOL Implementation

Several key administrative challenges affect TESOL in Kurdistan. The coordination gap between ministries identified by Haji (2018) results in a lack of unified curricula and teacher training programs tailored to students' evolving needs. Additionally, financial constraints limit resources such as teaching materials, technological infrastructure, and ongoing teacher education (Al-Zeebaree & Ameen, 2023).

The region's political instability and bureaucratic complexities further complicate TESOL governance. Nathanaili (2015) discusses how political turbulence in educational systems leads to inconsistent policies and leadership turnover, which undermine long-term TESOL program development. This is evident in Kurdistan, where shifting administrative priorities hinder strategic planning and resource allocation.

Moreover, teachers face workload challenges and limited administrative support. Ameen and Najeeb (2023) highlight that inadequate leadership involvement in classroom observation and feedback contributes to teaching inefficiencies and reduces motivation. Poor communication between leadership and teachers results in a lack of shared goals, which adversely affects TESOL program coherence and sustainability (Garcia Martinez & Jose Arrifano, 2018).

Another significant challenge is the lack of culturally relevant and practical leadership strategies. Ameen (2020) stresses that leadership approaches imported without adaptation to local contexts may fail to address specific cultural, linguistic, and educational nuances of Kurdish learners, thus diminishing their effectiveness.

Opportunities for Enhancing TESOL through Leadership

Despite these challenges, the literature points to promising opportunities for improving TESOL implementation in Kurdistan through strategic educational leadership. Strong leadership engagement can foster collaboration among teachers, administrators, and policymakers, creating a more integrated TESOL framework (Fenyiwa Amonoo-Kuafi, 2019).

Professional learning communities (PLCs) represent one such opportunity. Abdullah, Mustafa, and Ameen (2024) describe how PLCs focused on TESOL assessment innovations have led to improved teacher practices and student outcomes in other contexts. Leadership that nurtures such communities encourages collective problem-solving, continuous professional development, and shared responsibility for student success.

Investment in leadership training tailored to the region's cultural and political context is also critical. Ameen and Ismael (2023) argue that leadership models aligned with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which considers individual, institutional, and societal levels, can be particularly effective. These models promote leadership practices that are adaptable, culturally sensitive, and capable of navigating complex socio-political environments.

Integrating technological advancements into TESOL presents additional opportunities. Ali et al. (2025) review the growing role of Artificial Intelligence in language education, noting its potential to personalize learning and provide real-time feedback. Educational leaders who prioritize technology adoption, alongside necessary teacher training, can position TESOL programs at the forefront of pedagogical innovation.

Furthermore, formative assessment practices have been identified as a key driver of student achievement in TESOL contexts. Zhang et al. (2024) highlight the efficacy of formative assessments in providing ongoing feedback that guides instructional adjustments. Leaders who promote formative assessment cultures can enhance teaching effectiveness and learner progress.

Regional Context and Cultural Considerations

The Kurdistan Region's unique cultural and political landscape shapes TESOL implementation in critical ways. With a population of over five million and diverse ethnic and linguistic groups, the region demands TESOL approaches that are inclusive and culturally responsive (Haji, 2018). Educational leadership must therefore be attuned to this diversity to avoid one-size-fits-all policies.

Al-Athwary (2017) discusses linguistic adaptations in language learning, emphasizing the importance of recognizing phonotactic differences and cultural identities in TESOL pedagogy. Incorporating such insights into TESOL curricula and teacher training can enhance learner engagement and success.

Moreover, the historical context of conflict and rebuilding in Kurdistan impacts the education system's stability and resources (Nathanaili, 2015). Leadership must navigate these complexities by promoting resilience, fostering community trust, and building sustainable educational structures that prioritize TESOL development despite external challenges.

Emerging Research and Future Directions

Recent studies by Ameen and colleagues (2023, 2024) contribute significantly to understanding TESOL challenges and leadership strategies in Kurdistan. Their research advocates for innovative, evidence-based practices such as the Fishbowl technique to improve speaking skills, learner-centered pedagogies, and the ecological systems approach to leadership.

Ongoing research also highlights the importance of motivation in TESOL classrooms. Abdullah, Mohammad, and Ameen (2024) link learner motivation with leadership support for engaging teaching methods and professional development, indicating a need for leadership that fosters positive instructional climates.

Finally, Noori Kareem (2017) and Ali et al. (2025) point toward the increasing integration of ICT and AI in TESOL as transformative forces. Leaders who champion these technologies can overcome traditional resource constraints and offer more personalized and effective language learning experiences.

The literature clearly shows that TESOL implementation in the Kurdistan Region faces substantial administrative and contextual challenges, including political instability, coordination gaps, limited resources, and underdeveloped leadership. However, educational leadership emerges as a critical leverage point for overcoming these obstacles. Culturally sensitive, strategically engaged leadership can foster collaboration, promote innovative teaching and assessment practices, integrate technological tools, and enhance professional development opportunities.

Future efforts should focus on developing leadership capacities aligned with Kurdish socio-cultural realities and international TESOL best practices. Investing in leadership training, encouraging professional learning communities, and harnessing formative assessment and technology innovations represent promising pathways to elevate TESOL quality. This literature review provides a foundation for understanding these dynamics and offers practical guidance for policymakers, administrators, and educators striving to improve English language education in Kurdistan.

TESOL has become a major form of English-language teaching (ALT) in many countries, and the Kurdistan Region is no exception. Enhancing the quality of TESOL therefore presents an important objective, and educational leadership may be a key element in this regard. Hussain and Amadi argue that 'Educational Leadership is one of the important elements of any educational system nowadays. Educational leaders conduct and manage educational institutions effectively' (p. 501). Sherwan Taha Ameen therefore proposes: 'Investigating more closely the relationship between TESOL provision and educational leadership could therefore be an important precursor to enhancing the quality of such provision. Conversely, seeking to identify and implement improvements in such provision could constitute a demanding agenda for educational leadership' (p. 1). High-quality TESOL requires appropriate leadership, which accelerates the process of provision and delivery. Good educational leadership enables teachers to teach English more effectively, while students can consequently learn English more readily, so that teaching usually takes place within a productive environment. Nevertheless, leadership in many countries remains under-researched, and there is consequently often a lack of planning in delivering TESOL. This lack of well-prepared and effective TESOL provision reduces the overall quality of the teaching (Haji, 2018) and highlights the importance of exploring how educational leadership might be used to commit to the development of any educational system. An understanding of the current situation can form a useful basis for the development of leadership strategies, but one must be sensitive to the cultural context. Sherwan Taha Ameen therefore advocates the adoption of a 'culturally appropriate and practicable' leadership strategy that is specifically aligned with the goals and priorities of the local educational environment (p. 2).

2.1. Overview of TESOL

TESOL aims to equip learners with English proficiency for international communication. Key objectives include practical language skills for reading, listening, writing, speaking, and culturally appropriate usage. An instructor's role extends beyond teaching to providing cultural orientation, aiding learners in adapting to English-speaking environments and facilitating cross-cultural exchange. Techniques such as audio-lingual approaches (repetition, drills), communicative methods (language games, role play), and immersion are employed. TESOL experiences three terminological stages: Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), each reflecting learning contexts (Haji, 2018).

2.2. Importance of Educational Leadership

Educational leadership moulds the educational framework and delineates the future of schooling. The subjective nature of leadership defies a single definition, and scholars appreciate that the behavioural manifestations of a leader determine that leader's identity. Educational leadership encompasses the allocation and management of human resources to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. For instance, pedagogical leadership encompasses behaviours that govern the execution of the educational process and directly impacts the teaching-learning environment (Garcia-Martinez & Jose Arrifano Tadeu, 2018).

The term leadership encompasses a group of individuals who guide others towards common objectives. One of the challenges leaders face is engaging in meaningful dialogue with staff. When leadership does not achieve this, administrative channels must uncover the rationale behind the communication breakdown and address effective leadership practices. Resourceful leaders enhance the morale of their followers through various methods.

2.3. Challenges in TESOL Implementation

Leadership is broadly defined as a practice involving collective thinking, feeling, and acting to support a shared aim or interest. Leadership in education is the ability to inspire humanity and culture, and a powerful agent of change. Educational leadership is a leadership process through which the educational leaders motivate, guide, and assist others so that impact on learning and teaching can be positive. TESOL is the teaching of English to speakers of other languages at any level specialized to developing mastery of verbal and written English, as well as reading, writing, and listening skills of learners who are non-English proficient in their educational, professional, and social pursuits. Educational leaders fill the role of administrative and managerial authorities that materialize, engross along with coordinate fundamental arrangements of TESOL implementation. Although various advanced countries have recently benefited from the influence of educational leaders and thus attained considerable improvements in improving educational quality, factors such as insufficient financial resources, the distinction of Cricoth Target Population (CTP), and the political instability in the Kurdistan region (KR) have decelerated the progression. Moreover, the absence of cooperation between the Ministries of Education and Higher Education 'has prevented the identification of students' needs, which later becomes an obstacle to prepare teachers who are appropriately qualified to respond to those needs' (Haji, 2018). Hence, teachers who act as a reflection of the above-mentioned educational leaders and coordinators encounter considerable difficulties to catch-up with the requirements of TESOL (as well as conduct the process as planned). Therefore, further studies in which leaders' potentialities to guarantee satisfactory implementation of TESOL are investigated should now be prioritized during the forthcoming years. The study may lead the concerned authorities to tend towards optimal or more powerful administrative strategies and thus contribute to TESOL utilization in the KR.

2.4. Opportunities for Improvement

Educators should be aware of the conditions that facilitate educational improvement alongside those that hinder it. Factors such as the active concern of external agents and leaders can promote the likelihood of reform in particular schools and districts. While these partners are not essential, their presence fosters a climate wherein changes are more likely to be sustained. Sustained support demands the active engagement of those with a vested interest in the strategies devised to enhance instruction. Investment and Cooperative Effort in improvement initiatives are facilitated by strong commitment from education leaders. Planning for professional observance, or "checking," plays a pivotal role in guiding reform—a task greatly aided by leaders who regularly conduct learning walks and classroom observations, focusing on formative information rather than fault-finding. Officials with leadership responsibilities can also contribute by establishing professional learning communities focused on ambitious strategies to raise student achievement; indeed, such communities have become increasingly common throughout North America and many other countries. Reforms consistently found to boost student outcomes share several common characteristics, including substantial collective involvement; external support; creation and maintenance of professional environments prepared to address uncertainty, conflict, and opposition; a critical understanding of the contexts in which they operate; and the capacity to transition from collective discourse to small-group inquiry and practical action. However, beyond a limited number, many reforms remain stagnant or experience degradation. Where sustained improvements are evident, a facilitative agent frequently plays a significant role. Government agents, allegedly detached and acting in the community's interest, may serve as leaders, organizers, and rhetoricians for systemic attempts to reconstruct a learning system oriented toward goals of access and proficiency; the K-12 sector often represents the earliest and most substantial system-wide application of this model of "educational change".

3. Context of the Kurdistan Region

The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is an autonomous region in the Middle East with a rich history and distinct cultural identity stretching back thousands of years.

The Kurdistan Region covers an area of approximately 40,643 square kilometers and is home to more than 5 million inhabitants.

Divided into four governorates (Duhok, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Halabja), the region experiences a continental climate with four distinct seasons. English is taught as a second language from the first grade, and EFL courses are offered at all levels of education.

The Kurdistan Region operates an independent education system, supervised primarily by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, each with distinct responsibilities.

Fundamental changes have been implemented to raise educational standards and respond to the rising demand for skilled teachers and professionals in the region (Haji, 2018).

3.1. Geographical and Cultural Background

The Kurdistan Region occupies a mountainous area encompassing eight governorates and shares borders with Iran, Turkey, Syria, and parts of Iraq. It is home to diverse linguistic, cultural, and religious groups. Seven decades of protracted conflict contributed to disarray in administrative leadership in education. Pursuant to a law passed by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2006, which mandates English-medium instruction of one-third of university majors, TESOL has national significance. TESOL remains nascent at the kindergarten through secondary levels. The region's education system includes 89 universities, of which twelve are public, the remainder are private and two are dedicated to the training of humanitarian workers. Twelve public technical colleges and many private Iraqi colleges also extend educational opportunities. The Ministry of Higher Education continues to permit private universities to establish English language centers to deliver teacher training (Haji, 2018).

3.2. Educational System Overview

The Kurdistan Region is significant in many different ways, both geographically and culturally. It has a distinct educational system characterized by the presence of different types of primary, secondary, and tertiary schools. TESOL plays an important role in this system, not only for students but also for teachers and the entire teaching process. TESOL teaching methods and practices are thus crucial. However, their implementation and application remain problematic. Educational leadership represents a pivotal internal factor with the capacity to direct the implementation of TESOL in the Kurdistan Region's educational system.

Educational leadership problems commonly impede optimal TESOL delivery. Nevertheless, through appropriate administrative leadership, TESOL instruction can be enhanced. In this area, TESOL holds great significance in the Kurdistan Region for the students, the teaching staff, the entire teaching enterprise, and the educational system as a whole. Effective support for TESOL can be fostered by experienced administrators and through the augmentation of TESOL teaching capabilities via lecturer training.

3.3. Current State of TESOL

Recent technical and global advances have increased the demand for English instruction and motivated its implementation. TESOL reached Kurdistan comparatively later than other regions. Kyrgyzstan established a TESOL Programme but was unable to implement it due to a serious lack of educational leadership and capacity. Leadership-related issues are fundamental to TESOL in most originating countries; understanding these is crucial to identifying enhancement strategies. English is recognized as the international language of communication, which significantly elevates the TESOL demand in Kurdistan among the most English-proficient Asian population groups.

4. Administrative Challenges

Secondary education is where English gains its utmost prominence, as the official foreign language of the Kurdistan region, Iraq, in which the teachers play a pivotal role in determining whether the students succeed or fail in acquiring it. This regard has, undoubtedly, cast intense attention on the intricate relationship between the successful implementation of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and the exercise of educational leadership in hindering or promoting it across the different regions. The administrative challenges faced in this implementation along with the possible opportunities for development can be probably regarded as a valuable addition to the available research that deals with this essential issue in such a region affected by miscellaneous problems.

4.1. Leadership Gaps

The educational system in the Kurdistan Region suffers from a lack of strategic leadership. Both the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education employ administrative staff who do not meet the necessary qualification criteria for their positions (Haji, 2018). Administrative bottlenecks are generated due to a shortage of competent and qualified leaders. Leadership training is lacking at all levels in the educational system. The absence of operationalized plans, in addition to insufficient follow-up supervision, exacerbates this critical situation. Both national and international bodies must invest in concrete leadership-training programmes. To facilitate these developments further, political support and cooperation are essential.

Organisations serving the educational sector in the Kurdistan Region require capable leaders who can formulate strategic plans to guide members to their goals. The educational system does not suffer from a shortage of potential leaders; many

individuals possess vision and ambition. However, these prospective leaders are not provided with the tools to develop essential leadership competencies; little or no skills training is provided. The lack of evaluation mechanisms prevents any identification and correction of this shortfall.

Opportunities for improvement exist at all levels. Administrative decisions are often adopted by committees or organising boards that lack proper consultation with expert specialists; an absence of specialists persists throughout the educational system. Establishing professionally staffed and equipped think tanks should be an immediate priority. On the other hand, initiatives are undertaken with enthusiasm and determination. Official establishments, such as the Board of Technical Education, were able to turn prospects into solid projects through negotiations aiming to develop the regional infrastructure and economy.

A pre-service and in-service education programme addressing these challenges enables leaders to perform their duties following a coherent framework. Such formal accreditation supports the appraisal and evaluation of services and helps to establish a leadership database requested by many organisations and territorial governorates. In the absence of a leadership development strategy, ongoing recruitment occurs without transparency or integrity, resulting in an inefficient selection policy. On a positive note, peer-support activities have informed many candidates about upcoming appointments and opened opportunities to services offered by regional unions and human-resource centres. Teachers face significant challenges related to the use of English in their school curricula and the Ministry of Education provides no support to assist with the transition to the new language framed by curriculum policies.

4.2. Resource Allocation Issues

Resource allocation stands as a prevailing obstacle hindering educational leadership from fully supporting TESOL endeavors in the Kurdistan Region. Despite the inherent promise within the TESOL framework, its effective implementation demands a comprehensive resource base—material, empirical, and experiential. This includes clear guidelines and technical knowledge, as well as financing to sustain workshops, conferences, and training programs; yet, an allocation deficit persists at every administrative tier (Haji, 2018).

The disruption emanates from uncertainty surrounding responsibilities, decision-making authority, and appropriate channels for securing supplementary support. This ambiguity complicates the strategic targeting and justifying of financial and technical assistance—provisions unattainable through informal appeals to local officials.

4.3. Policy and Regulation Barriers

Policy and regulatory frameworks encompass formal social institutions that regulate behavior within organizations. Implementation challenges derive in part from the goals and means of a policy and resulting conflicts therein. New policies must align with existing structures and require compatible policy instruments to realize their objectives. The effectiveness of policy implementation influences public perceptions, inform future policymaking, and impact political leader approval. Policy stability also matters: extensive reforms suffer implementation setbacks when introduced before prior ones are fully embedded. The Kurdistan Regional Government enacted its first legislation for higher education sector reform in 2009. High-level efforts at the time of inquiry appeared sparse, however; while policymakers and conference participants spoke about reforms in terms of law and legislation, observable change concurrent with those statements was limited. Training for English teachers therefore faces a significant impediment due to absence of clear mandates, the means to enforce requirements, and serious organization issues. A related factor concerns the supply of pre-service teachers trained outside Iraq in both TESOL and EFL; many who returned to meet the demand for lecturers in English-medium programs had insufficient specialization.

4.4. Teacher Training Deficiencies

The Kurdistan region faces notable deficiencies in teacher training, impacting instructional quality across disciplines. In the English language domain, policy makers frequently exhibit limited understanding of pedagogy and language acquisition processes (Haji, 2018). Contributions from non-experts and lecturers without specialized qualifications exacerbate the issue. During the pre-service period, teacher-training courses and materials are insufficient; practice teaching opportunities are brief; and curricula remain outdated, falling short of international standards. Many in-service EFL teachers possess inadequate knowledge to implement modern curricula effectively, receive minimal training, and often instruct beyond their specializations. Pre-service education does not prepare teachers adequately, with programs offering weak training in pedagogical techniques and teaching methods. The assignment process fails to direct top graduates toward teaching careers.

5. Opportunities for Enhancement

The enhancement of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) in the Kurdistan Region offers multiple avenues to address the identified administrative challenges. All administrative levels must contribute to these improvements, which include opportunities for professional development, international collaborations, community engagement, and technology integration.

Professional development programs can empower leaders, teachers, and other stakeholders to meet TESOL objectives effectively in a multilingual region and to adhere to TESOL standards. Such programs build the capacity of current school heads, teachers, and aspiring future leaders.

International collaborations, already in place between the Ministry of Education and entities such as the British Council and the University of Cambridge, can be broadened to support TESOL initiatives. These partnerships offer resources,

assistance, and affiliations that can supply schools with the necessary materials. Extended collaborations will provide local leaders and teachers with valuable information and opportunities for training and study.

Community involvement is critical, and Emeritus Professors have been convened to deliver training on educational leadership, management, and TESOL as part of a capacity-building program. Further community engagement with educational leaders will enhance understanding of TESOL requirements. Additionally, opening English-language TV channels ensures media access to this popular subject, while leaders can utilize social media platforms to promote community awareness of TESOL needs. (Haji, 2018)

5.3. Community Engagement Strategies

Community engagement has a substantial effect on the delivery of education in schools. Parents can act as a driving force for school reform and improvement by highlighting the areas their children might be struggling with, thus enabling teachers to provide relevant and additional information to support their students. Other mutual benefits derived from community engagement include increased parent-teacher communication, which promotes parent involvement and helps children stay focused in school and complete assignments, as well as greater financial support. Communities are comprised of a range of distinct groups, such as government agencies, businesses, faith-based institutions, non-government organizations, and families. Schools can choose to actively engage with all or specific groups, but need to be systematic in establishing and maintaining connections. Engagement with the community should be perceived as a critical aspect of educators' responsibilities and should be aligned with overall school improvement plans (Haji, 2018).

5.4. Utilizing Technology in Education

The integration of technology in education constitutes an effective tool for supporting students, teachers, and administrators (Noori Kareem, 2017). It constitutes a powerful means for communication, providing access to numerous materials without being subject to time constraints, with wider opportunities arising within a virtual community. Educational authorities throughout the Kurdistan Region utilise technology in the support of schools with admissions processes, and also the Bose soundsystem and Lighting Control Provider company Kentshur allows orders to be handled on-line from a comprehensive computer system. Members of staff can have MI6 Tunnel Museum Equipment home working tasks set securely and verified accordingly. Computer terminology is compulsory in the schools with the English curriculum. The Duhok technical University allows registration and the payment of fees to be arranged via on-line facilities, and the Aarhus University in Denmark supports Kurdistan educational development in the discipline of media innovation. However, the school ethos in some parts of the region is reactive, and there is insufficient knowledge of technology in addressing educational school needs. Many of the problems identified might be resolved through an application of emergency administrative procedures that support technical requirements and allied precise Government legislative decisions.

6. Case Studies

Due to a shortage of Educational Leadership specialists within the region's schools and public education system, this study aims to fill a gap in TESOL implementation in the Kurdistan Region. It investigates the role of educational leadership in identifying and addressing the challenges faced in the administration of TESOL programs (Haji, 2018).

English is widely recognized as an international language of communication and is formally taught throughout the Kurdistan Region. The overarching goal of foreign language teaching programs is to enable students to develop communication skills and interact efficiently with native speakers. A robust foreign language teaching program functions optimally under effective educational leaders who determine and implement the necessary administrative practices. This study seeks to examine the challenges that educational leadership encounters in TESOL implementation and to explore potential opportunities to enhance these initiatives, providing a pathway for more efficient and effective outcomes.

The educational system currently adopted in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq was originally designed based on the Turkish model. This system comprises two cycles of elementary education, each lasting six years. A basic understanding of the Kurdistan Region's geography, population, culture, and educational structure is instrumental in recognizing the issues widely faced and the opportunities available to advance TESOL practices.

6.1. Successful TESOL Programs in the Region

Numerous successful TESOL programs operate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, encompassing middle schools, secondary schools, colleges, and universities, each characterized by distinctive features. In 2018, an investigation by Nawzar Haji explored the implementation of TESOL and related issues in the region, with a particular emphasis on the role of educational leadership. The study revealed that many candidates responsible for TESOL implementation are not sufficiently prepared for the task.

Additional research conducted in 2016 examined the leadership traits of TESOL teachers. This inquiry concluded that effective leadership practices within educational institutions are indispensable for the successful implementation of TESOL programs in the region (Haji, 2018).

6.2. Administrative Leadership Models

Administrative leadership constitutes a crucial component of the educational system because it interacts with all other elements. The administration comprises the formulation of educational objectives, formulation of policies and procedures, educational planning, organizing school activities, curriculum implementation, educational supervision, evaluation, staff development, motivation and leadership. Several models of administrative leadership are relevant to this field. First, the top-level leadership model represents the executive apex of the hierarchy. It may be either the executive head, the administrative

head or a Board of Governors. Second, the institution-wide leadership model holds that institutional leadership is the function of a specific person who is responsible for the entirety of the organisation. Third, the academic leadership model takes undergraduate or undergraduate and postgraduate organisational units and groups them into schools. Fourth, the expertise and advice-based leadership model is an academic service role that necessitates a high level of expertise. Fifth, the leadership-as-power-distribution model cautions that the head of an institution must guard against the influence of advisory committees and the like, which can aggregate a large amount of the organisational power and marginalize the leadership position. Leadership processes can be holistic or fragmentary. For leadership to be effective, it must be situated in several interacting contexts, namely the institutional context, the task or objectives context, the psycho-social context and the physical context. Leadership is mainly concerned with organisational issues. The National College for Educational Leadership provides a framework for school leadership practice that includes distributed leadership. (Nathanaili, 2015)

6.3. Comparative Analysis with Other Regions

TESOL implementation in the Kurdistan region faces administrative challenges that point to valuable opportunities for educational leadership to improve EFL practices. Analyses of two successful programs offer insights into how leadership strategies can guide future TESOL development.

Comparing the Kurdish context to other regions accentuates the unique problems and prospects for TESOL in Kurdistan. TESOL initiatives elsewhere encountered obstacles similar to those in Kurdistan, such as limited teacher proficiency, poor teaching and evaluation approaches, and deficient teaching materials (Haji, 2018). These parallels highlight the opportunity to remediate analogous issues through well-conceived supportive strategies.

Programs examined in each location maintain parallel objectives. One of the fastest-developing courses in Kurdistan further underscores the pragmatic relevance of the Kurdish situation. In a more general setting, the principles guiding successful TESOL implementation within the Kurdish framework may well apply, with due allowance for situational differences. Consequently, studying Kurdistan's TESOL experience furnishes a model and a benchmark for other zones seeking to augment their EFL provisions. The Kurds can build upon lessons from other contexts to accelerate their TESOL development.

An examination of solutions employed in various comparable cases displays the effects of strategic leadership. It further identifies forms of educational leadership capable of enabling the Kurdish initiatives to surmount key obstacles. The potentially potent role of leadership emerges a strong theme throughout these analyses. TESOL leadership must acknowledge that the form of guidance and governance needed to sustain implementation can often differ from that employed in regular educational-day-to-day management.

7. Recommendations for Educational Leaders

Most administrators initially have little exposure to the complexity of educational administration, compelling a rapid acquisition of specialized knowledge, skills, and attitudes to promote academic progress. Educational leaders perform a spectrum of activities—from planning and organizing, through coordinating and controlling, to leading and motivating—that hinge on successful administration. Conversely, ineffective school leadership often exacerbates the obstacles confronting teachers. To contribute meaningfully, educational leaders must recognize the importance of their roles and actively seek to cultivate the capacity required to perform them effectively.

The Kurdistan Region is actively attempting to surmount barriers—including gender and geographic inequity, conflict and insecurity, economic uncertainty, acute skills shortages, and bureaucratic dysfunction—though progress remains hampered by constrained organizational capacity, governance deficits, and a lack of necessary resources and skills. Elevated demand for English-medium instruction further exacerbates the situation, intensifying pressure on the entire education system and creating a cascade with serious implications for both quality and access. In secondary education, the system largely consists of monolingual rooms in which a limited number of teachers diagnose and contact students in their own language, ceding the role to a single medium improved with the knowledge and ability of students and professors. In higher education, the transition from Kurdish at the secondary level to full English immersion in colleges and universities places considerable pressure on student reading levels; most students consequently struggle with even the simplest academic texts, and their fluency in English frequently constitutes a barrier to academic progression in other disciplines. While many organizations have developed series of projects, networks, and programs in TESOL over more than two decades, the influence of educational leadership in improving TOSEL remains rarely recognized and inadequately studied (Haji, 2018).

7.1. Strategic Planning for TESOL

The rumours about an article titled 'The Perceptions of EFL Teachers About Their Pre-service Preparation in Iraqi-Kurdistan' (2018) by Nawzar Haji mentioned that the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, as well as colleges of education and schools, generally do not cooperate to identify the students' and the schooling system's real needs and prepare teachers accordingly. The materials used and courses offered in EFL teacher education programmes are insufficient to meet student teachers' needs and do not adequately prepare them. Only 8% of college materials focus on pedagogy and teaching methods, resulting in teachers being ill-prepared to transfer knowledge, with practice teaching too short and impractical. The university curriculum, including teacher education, is outdated and needs to be reformed to keep up with global change, and poor quality of programmes leads to under-performance and inactive interaction between higher education and society. Many practising teachers lack the knowledge needed to effectively teach new curriculum, receive minimal training, teach outside their specialisation, and struggle with student-centred teaching methods. High achievers are not directed to teaching, and teacher colleges do not provide sufficient pedagogy training.

Strategic planning involves strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation that guide an educational system to a successful future. It is a procedure of defining a vision and mission and establishing objectives, action plans, and resources to accomplish the mission. It is a continuous process of making present and future decisions and a comprehensive process that creates the organisation's major policies and establishes priorities, consists of organisational assessment and establishing strategies; the division of long-range plans into strategies and short-range plans, strategies, and policies; determines where the organisation is going during the next three to five years; defines the organisation's vision, mission, goals, policies, programmes, and projects; and serves as a guide for capital development, allocation, and consumption.

Strategic planning is a method that helps educational organisations to improve their performance by setting priorities, maintaining effective internal communication, and aligning organisational resources to make the process of strategic planning a bridge between 21st-century policymakers and a rapidly moving future. Strategic planning is necessary for achieving the educational system's objectives and producing a leadership model that can enact education reform. An educational organisation needs a strategic planning process; otherwise, it is just a stagnant society that does not want to go forward. The Kurdistan Region needs a strategic plan to reform the TESOL programme for three reasons: to make teaching and learning more effective; to build capacity by improving teacher training courses, developing curriculum and materials, and enhancing the use of technology; and to combine and extend its unique characteristics in governance, culture, history, and legislation with academic freedom. Educational planning links educational goals with national and regional development and attempts to increase the effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and equality of educational systems. The strategic planning alone does not guarantee success, because various environmental factors can impact or change the strategy and planning process; these include the weak planning skill of practitioners, unstable political climate, the failure of organisations to change themselves according to contingency, and the limitation of resources (Haji, 2018).

7.2. Building Capacity within Educational Institutions

Educational leadership has a crucial role in enhancing the implementation of TESOL and coordinating a comprehensive administration structure for TESOL enhancement. Building leadership capacity can assist in overcoming contextual deficiencies, enabling leaders to develop a wider vision and secure distributed leadership support at all levels. This process may gradually transfer responsibilities from regional leadership to district and school levels, ensuring ongoing development. Distributed leadership can cultivate the capability among other leaders to respond to innovations that require overall pedagogical adjustments and community involvement. Such capacity-building strategies can be administered through existing administrative structures and necessary modifications of the national administration landscape. This facilitates the creation of a strategic plan for current and future TESOL implementation and improvement.

7.3. Advocacy for Policy Reform

Educational leadership plays a vital role in the success of TESOL programmes and initiatives, heading towards the best administrative support for educational leaders, including structuring leadership, encompassing vision, policy-making, accountability culture, a process of continuous improvement, and collaboration with all stakeholders. In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, educational leadership faces distinctive administrative challenges in implementing TESOL programmes and initiatives, requiring leaders to engage strategically with national and local contexts and work in partnership with the dedicated framework of education. Specifically, educational leadership must address teacher shortage, low motivation, and lack of professional development, which constitute significant internal challenges, while also engaging with a broader external system of challenges. To achieve successful TESOL implementation, it is imperative for educational leaders to thoroughly understand and negotiate the complete landscape in all its dimensions. Advocacy for policy reform emerges as a critical facet of this landscape. Education policy encompasses publicly stated intentions, directives, and the underlying rationale for an institution's mode of operation. It generally addresses allocation of resources, students served, quality of educators, content and materials used, and student expectations and assessments. Legislation can affect the curriculum of MOE, a National or Provincial Board of Education, the administration of common examinations, student admissions (e.g., at the university level), budgeting, and much more. Various country agencies, such as the ministries of finance and education, and international donor agencies, such as the World Bank, can have a significant impact on education policy formulation, making advocacy a necessary priority. Accordingly, educational leaders in the Kurdistan Region must champion policy reform to surmount existing challenges and foster effective TESOL delivery.

8. Future Research Directions

Several avenues for future research concerning TESOL in Kurdistan and similar regions warrant exploration. Investigating TESOL's effectiveness there and elsewhere, along with ongoing teacher development programs, would provide valuable data on student achievement, teacher skills, and classroom practices. Examining the role of educational leadership in Kurdistan could also elucidate ways to optimize leadership strategies to enhance TESOL delivery under current constraints. The literature also suggests studies into more effective language teaching approaches, Student Learning Styles, and the impact of cooperative group work remain relevant. These investigations would inform improvements to Kurdistan's TESOL implementation, which faces challenges related to educational leadership and administrative support. Clearly, further study in these areas could contribute to more effective and sustainable TESOL practices in the region.

8.1. Longitudinal Studies on TESOL Effectiveness

In the pursuit of enhancing Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in the Kurdistan Region, future research should consider longitudinal perspectives on the sustained effectiveness of TESOL programmes. When TESOL

consultants engage with educational development teams to improve teaching standards, questions arise regarding which measures adequately capture sustained advancement in English teaching over time.

TESOL programmes are predicated on the notion that, professionally, upon completing a TESOL-related course, an individual should be equipped and confident enough to teach English successfully, at least in formal educational contexts, or to pursue advanced studies in the field (Haji, 2018). However, do the contents of such courses genuinely prepare professionals for the realities of England or other national and international settings? Do different educational circumstances, environments, groups of learners, political conditions, or other contextual factors affect the applicability of the acquired skills or knowledge? Ablan (2013) proposes extending the focus beyond short-term pedagogical development to consider the longitudinal development of English teaching in a region such as Kurdistan. When a new TESOL strategy or course is introduced—for example, a postgraduate TESOL course intended as a professional development vehicle—it may be necessary to evaluate its medium-term effects on educational activity, rather than purely its immediate impact upon completion.

8.2. Impact of Leadership on Educational Outcomes

The synthesis of pedagogical leadership and educational administration emerges as a compelling axis for transforming educational practice and fostering school development in secondary schools (García-Martínez & José Arrifano Tadeu, 2018). Educational leadership wields a pivotal influence on the effectiveness of change efforts, the organizational culture, and the establishment of a shared vision and educational objectives, in addition to directing the utilization of resources (García-Martínez & José Arrifano Tadeu, 2018). Importantly, effective leadership exerted through education administration constitutes a necessary condition for access to essential resources and support, which serve as catalysts for teaching coordination and as mediators of the relationship between leadership traits and academic achievement.

8.3. Exploring Innovative Teaching Methods

Technology has been identified as a key resource for classroom practice through debates held in Kurdistan and across schools in the region. Indeed, several sample strategies are directly related to the use of technology in the classroom (Noori Kareem, 2017). It has been demonstrated that syllabi combining educational technology with effective pedagogical approaches can improve students' outcomes in EFL settings. Nonetheless, language teachers typically receive little guidance in this respect.

The implementation of enhanced TESOL approaches can largely be seen as an attempt to incorporate a broader range of ideas regarding suitable classroom teaching and learning strategies and, by extension, classroom language use. It is conducted with the aim of achieving a more effective teaching framework that can organize, articulate, and coordinate the existing numerous components known to affect the delivery of appropriate language input, negotiation, and practice more coherently. Furthermore, it has to be capable of guiding the selection of what to prioritize given the limitations and factors faced in practice. Less interested in providing a blueprint for classroom delivery, the approach focuses on identifying, explaining, and suggesting ways of accommodating essential factors that influence language teaching practice as the section continues.

9. Conclusion

Close scrutiny of the Kurdish educational system reveals that TESOL is neither strategically planned nor wholly developed in line with the formative needs of the regional population. This circumstance opens a window of opportunity for fostering educational leadership to reduce the administrative challenges compromising the quality of in-store training and to enhance the application of TESOL practices (Haji, 2018). Proactive intervention supported by sound leadership can eliminate the shortcomings connected to TESOL initiatives in Kurdistan's educational system. The need for capable educational leaders arises amid the widespread scarcity of instructors proficient in TESOL theory and classroom implementation. Educational leaders can appreciate the latent prospects TESOL offers and thus devise plans for progressive development. Leadership holds managerial authority within organizational contexts, constituting a catalyst for change that integrates contemporary developments and positions Kurdistan as an international example of best practice in English-language training.

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