

EXAMINING THE ROLE OF TIMOR-LESTE EDUCATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE MIDDLE LEADERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

By

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Abstract

The role of the educational civil service middle leader is crucial in the development and implementation of policy. However, in the practice of public policy development in Timor-Leste, many educational middle leaders have not been included in public policy agenda-setting. Many educational middle leaders confront new policy documents only when these arrive on their desks for implementation. So, this research was conducted to examine the role of Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in policy, the issues facing these educational managers, and strategies that could support their involvement in the policy development process. Two research methods were used in this research. Firstly, the interviews with nine middle leaders were organised in Tetum (the mother tongue of Timor-Leste). The transcription was then, translated from Tetum into English for data analysis. Secondly, eight policy documents, job descriptions of one public organisation, and three organisational structure documents were analysed. Key findings show that senior leaders strongly preserve the status quo; that senior leaders do not initiate consultation with the middle leaders; and language use in the policy documents are key issues for the middle level managers. Because these issues have a long-drawn-out existence there are implications for executive leaders in the Timor-Leste educational civil service. Intervention from the top will be needed to change the way middle leaders are involved in policy development and this, in turn, could affect their performance in achieving the educational objectives for their departments. So, inclusion of the educational middle leaders in policy development, provision of leadership development, and better understanding of Tetum in public policy documents could support the educational middle leaders with more effective policy development and implementation.

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

The Timor-Leste Context

The República Democrática de Timor-Leste (RDTL) is a new nation located in South East Asia. This country is also known as Timor-Leste or East Timor. Geographically, the country of less than 1.5 million occupied the eastern part of the Timor Island. This country shares a land border with the western part of the Timor Island which is a province of Indonesia. The northern part of Timor-Leste is surrounded by small islands such as Alor, Flores, and Ambon which are the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelagos. Timor-Leste also shares a maritime boarder with the Australian Northern territory Darwin. Aerially, the Timor-Leste country can be reached in only a one hour flight from Darwin Australia or a one and half hour flight from Bali Indonesia.

Timor-Leste was administered by the Portuguese for about 450 years and, was then invaded by the Indonesian military just several days after this country unilaterally proclaimed its independence from the Portuguese on the 28th of November 1975. Then, Timor-Leste was re-occupied by the Indonesia government for 24 years between 1975 and 1999. In 1999 the Timor-Leste people voted for their country's independence where the vast majority of the population decided on self-determination via a referendum administered by the United Nations (Millo & Barnett, 2004). Since 1999, Timor-Leste has become a new country and its sovereignty has been acknowledged internationally since the restoration of its independence day on the 20th of May 2002 (Millo & Barnett, 2004). Between 1999 and 2002 Timor-Leste

was administratively run by the United Nations Transitional Administration of East Timor (UNTAET), and the country commenced its governance since its constitution was established in 2002 (Nyland, 2004).

During the Portuguese and Indonesian occupation, Portuguese and Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia) were respectively used as the languages of public administration such as public policy and education. The literature that conducts study on Timor-Leste educational administration (Macpherson, 2011) declares that between 1999 and 2002 the UNTAET introduced English as the language of administration, policy, and education in Timor-Leste. Tetum as the lingua franca of Timorese people (Macpherson, 2011; Cabral & Martin-Jones, 2008; Millo & Barnett, 2004) and Portuguese were recognised as the languages of public administration, educational, policy and infrastructure when these languages were formally determined as the official languages by the Timor-Leste Constitution section 13.1 (Timor-Leste Constitution; 2002, 13.1) in 2002.

As a new country the notion of policy analysis has not got serious attention yet because the Timor-Leste government encounters issues associated with human resources, time, and energy that should be concentrated on the most urgent areas such as clean water, health, illiteracy, basic education, infrastructure, and economy. The regard in the attention given to public policy development and implementation has affected the policy development that guides civil service operations. For instance, the majority of Timor-Leste public educational institutions have not established yet their own policies. The National Education Strategic Plan for 2011 – 2030 (Timor-Leste Ministry of Education, 2011) reports that "so far there has been no medium-term planning framework to transform the vision of the sector policy into action, there is only a limited plan for primary education" (p. 34). To surmount this issue, the Ministry

of Education (2011) states “therefore, we design and implement standardised, generalistic tools that may or may not be effective in resolving key issues” (p. 35). As the consequence of this limitation, the government has centralised the development of some civil service policies such as performance appraisal, leave and absence, and scholarships as an emergency solution for various public institutions.

I have been awarded an international scholarship by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trades and, am currently studying at UNITEC, Auckland New Zealand. This research is a final requirement to obtain a Master of Educational Leadership and Management. My interest in conducting research connected to the Timor-Leste educational policy development and implementation is driven by new knowledge gained via learning new skills associated with public policy. For example, the literature that reports policy and conducts policy studies in the countries like Australia (Lingard & Ozga, 2008; Davis & Love, 1996; Considine, 1996), New Zealand (Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011; Phillips, 2005), Europe and the United States (Varenes, 1996), and the Philippines (Gonzalez, 1996) reveal similar points of view about the importance of policy research. The international literature aforementioned posits public policy at the centre of organisational development. This literature depicts policy development and implementation as the processes of team work to surmount issues such as practices of protecting the status quo that precludes middle leaders from participating in policy development, as well as issues like leadership and managerial competency, human resources management, and language that may hamper policy implementation.

Currently, there is very little literature related to Timor-Leste public policy. The new knowledge gained has enhanced my insights about the importance of policy development and implementation in the Timor-Leste public institutions. The notion of policy study at UNITEC,

Auckland has encouraged me to examine my epistemology about policy issues that have impeded the role of Timor-Leste educational middle leaders in the development and implementation of policy. Finally, research on policy was successfully realised in Timor-Leste between June and July 2015. It is expected that the finding of this research could be utilised as a preliminary contribution to Timor-Leste public policy development and implementation for better improvement of the Timor-Leste public administration in providing services to the Timor-Leste society.

Background

Middle leaders in most civil services are bureaucrats who perform managerial roles associated with organisational performance. The position of educational civil service middle leaders is based on Fayol's model of organisation (Rudman, 2002) and Mintzberg's model (Bolman & Deal, 2008) in which, middle leaders are viewed as bureaucratic machines that deal with subordinates and senior leaders in tandem. In their daily, responsibilities, middle leaders are accountable for monitoring sub-managers and staff, as well as reporting to senior leaders or higher positions. In the context of education, Busher (2006) and Cardno (2012) refer to positions such as department head, curriculum coordinator and teacher's coordinator as middle leaders, because in their daily responsibilities these managers supervise subsections and also report to senior leaders such as school heads or school boards.

In the process of policy development, Considine (1996) and Kilmister (1993) depict middle leaders in a position of authority who are directly accountable for managerial activities such as initiating or informing issues at departmental level for consideration. Moreover, middle leaders should be included in the process of policy writing especially providing their views before a final draft is submitted for approval. This gives an insight to middle leaders who are

key agents in Howlett, Ramesh and Perl's (2009) 'systemic' or informal public policy agenda where issues are initiated and surfaced for discussions. Furthermore, middle leaders also have critical roles when issues are formally considered by a government at an 'institutional' or a formal state agenda and there are discussions, consultations and, in turn the issue enters the government agenda. This is because middle leaders are deemed as experts on local market situation, society, history, and the culture of organisations (Busher, 2006; Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Phillips, 2005). This literature shows that middle leaders not only know about the nuts-and-bolts of issues encountered in the field, but also know how to pinpoint solutions that suit issues facing organisations. Thus, the voices of educational middle leaders should be heard in public policy development and implementation.

In the context of Timor-Leste, educational middle leaders are the department heads who deal directly with staff as there are no sub-managers that report to them. Firstly, article 11.2c of Decree-law no.7/2010 titled 'Legal Regime for Administration and Management of the Basic Education System' posits educational middle leaders as frontline managers who directly control staff and also report to the deputy director and school director (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.7/2010, 11.2c).

Secondly, article 13.h of Decree-law 14/2008 titled 'Regime for Evaluating the Performance of Civil Servants' depicts Timor-Leste educational middle leaders as 'management' and 'middle' within educational institutions. Macpherson (2011) states

the Schools Directorate comprised a regional director, and six chefs (heads) of departments in the same functional areas as the central Directorates, less adult and non-formal education. Each chefe has a head of section, and between three and six staff to link with school directors. (p. 193)

This position is akin to a head of department or division in which, Mintzberg (2009) describes as 'bureaucratic machine' in between senior leaders and unit heads. For instance, article 11.2c of Decree-law no.7/2010 and article 13.h of Decree-law 14/2008 aforementioned shows that the Timor-Leste educational middle leaders could be the heads of section, heads of department, or school director. This mirrors the statement of Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves, and Rönnerman (2014), Gurr and Drysdale (2013), and Cardno (2012) that educational middle leaders could be the heads of school or department heads.

Rationale

There are four reasons underpinning the selection of this study. Firstly, issues pertaining to maintaining the status quo in policy development. The notion of team work (Cardno, 2013; O'Shannassy, 2003) in policy development and implementation has not been evident yet in some Timor-Leste public institutions. On the one hand, many Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders have not been involved in the process of policy development. On the other hand, they are vested with authority to lead policy implementation at different sites. This has resulted in missing information, misinterpretation, or problems pertaining to the use of mandatory rules of hierarchical accountability in some law and decree-laws. The literature that deals with policy studies argues that the involvement of middle managers in policy-agenda setting is critical to advise policy-makers about problems that a policy should address (Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011; Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Kilmister, 1993). Because they are policy implementers they should be part of a development process.

Secondly, bureaucratic red tape and centralised control are seen as equivocal strategies used by some senior leaders as absolute power in decision-making. A report on 'functional and

organisational review' of the civil service at several institutions in Timor-Leste' (O'Farrell, 2012) provided an insight that the inseparable job descriptions between middle leaders and senior leaders is deemed as an issue that underlies centralised control by the senior leaders. This causes the roles between the senior leaders and middle leaders to be confusing, and this has been affecting the roles of educational civil service middle leaders in policy implementation.

Thirdly, skill-gaps have affected educational civil service middle leaders' performance in policy implementation. Prominent issues include a lack of competency in grasping, interpreting policy and implementing mandatory requirements (Hudson & Lowe, 2009) and, a lack of skills related to leadership and managerial functions such as planning, job design, staff recruitment, and monitoring policy implementation.

Another problem is utilisation of language in policy documents. The absence of policy documents written in *Tetum*, the lingua franca of Timorese people (Cabral & Martin-Jones, 2008; Millo & Barnett, 2004) has compounded the problems encountered by department heads in policy implementation. As the majority of the educational middle leaders do not read and write in Portuguese, the policy documents written in Portuguese cannot be understood by most of them. A similar issue has been critiqued by Ryan (1994) in that a policy should be written in a language that is easy to be understood by policy implementers. The absence of Tetum in Timor-Leste policy documents has affected middle leaders' ability in grasping and interpreting policy mandatory into departmental vision and mission. The literature that underpins policy (Varenes, 1996; Gonzalez, 1996; Ryan, 1994) highlights that when a policy is written in the language which is not the lingua franca or mother tongue of policy implementers, there may be issues facing in activities that linked to policy implementation.

As a consequence of these issues there is common and anecdotal awareness that policy development and implementation require attention and improvement in the Timor-Leste civil service especially as the domination of chief executives as decision-makers is minimised and there is more reliance on middle leaders and local expertise. The literature on policy development identifies the needs for stakeholders to be closely involved in the development process to achieve better implementation (Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011; Howlett et al., 2009). In this current situation a gap in the research-base is clearly evident in relation to Timor-Leste practice. This research may benefit the Timor-Leste government as the policy-maker to utilise information from the findings of the research to improve the process of policy development and implementation. Moreover, the Timor-Leste civil servants especially senior leaders and middle leaders will be benefited by instilling new knowledge to view policy development as a process of collective thinking and collaboration in generation information for policy agenda-setting, as well as collaborative thinking in planning for actions to embody policy implementation in the field. So, by participation of middle leaders in a policy agenda-setting not only advises the policy-makers about issues regarding economy, society, culture, and technical skill-gaps that a policy should address, but also provides an insight about interpreting policy and grasping what are (should be) the middle leaders' accountability for policy implementation.

Research aims and questions

Research aims

The aim of this research was to examine the roles of the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in the development and implementation of policy. In this regard, the authority that develop the Timor-Leste public policies and determine the roles of educational civil

service middle leaders should be identified. Furthermore, the involvement of the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in policy development should be examined. Finally, this research seeks to discover how strategies such as reducing red tape, encouraging professional development and the utilisation of Tetum in the Timor-Leste public policy documents, could encourage middle leaders to be more involved in policy development and implementation. Specifically the research aims are:

1. To investigate the roles of the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in policy development.
2. To examine the involvement of the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in the policy implementation.
3. To discover strategies to improve the involvement of the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in the policy development and implementation.

Research questions

This research was guided by three questions:

1. What are the roles of Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in policy development?
2. How are Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders involved in policy implementation?
3. What strategies might help to increase the involvement of Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in the development and implementation of policy?

Thesis Outline

Chapter One

This chapter provides a snapshot of policy development and implementation in the Timor-Leste context, an introduction about the research topic or general information associated with public policy development and implementation, the rationale that underpins the objective of the research and the aims and questions that guide the research. This chapter also provides the snapshot of a thesis outline of chapter one to chapter five.

Chapter Two

In this chapter, the literature is critically reviewed to provide an overview of the roles of the civil service middle leader, educational middle leader, educational civil service middle leaders in organisations, and issues facing middle leaders in organisational operation. It covers policy development and implementation, public policy, educational policy, involvement of middle leaders in policy, issues encountered by middle managers in policy development and implementation. This chapter also presents educational middle leaders' knowledge associated with collaborative decision-making and distributed leadership that contribute to the inclusion of educational middle leaders in policy development and implementation.

Chapter Three

This chapter discusses the methodology and methods used in the research. The interview and documentary analysis methods are presented. The process of identifying interviewees, data collection and recording participant's voice transcriptions are discussed along with the interview method. In this chapter data analysis and validity are discussed, and the research ethical issues are considered.

Chapter Four

In this chapter, the findings from documentary analysis and interviews are presented. The findings of the research have been consolidated and presented under four themes; the Timor-Leste public policy development, involvement of educational civil service middle leaders in public policy development and implementation, policy issues and strategies that support the educational middle leaders involvement in public policy development and implementation.

Chapter Five

This chapter covers a discussion of findings from chapter four, conclusions and recommendations. The snapshot of the findings concludes that there are three predominant factors that have impeded the Timor-Leste public policy development. The three issues are connected to practice of protecting the status quo by some public administration senior leaders, leadership skill-gaps, and the absence of policy translation assistance in Tetum policy documents. To address the issues aforementioned, suggestions for inclusion of middle leaders in policy development and implementation, enhancement of leadership and managerial skills, and provision of policy documents in Tetum are provided. Finally, four recommendations for the government of Timor-Leste, chief executives, middle leaders, and research community are provided for the improvement of future policy development and implementation.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this chapter five topics of literature review are presented. To begin with, theoretical knowledge about civil service middle leaders, educational middle leaders, educational civil service middle leaders, and issues encountered by middle leaders in public institution are examined. Furthermore, the insight of educational policy is discussed under the topic public policy. Moreover, this literature review will also review the way educational managers are involved by their chief executives in policy cycles under the topic policy development. In addition, generic issues such as interests, red tape, skill-gaps, and language that challenge middle leaders' involvement in policy development and implementation are examined in the topic policy challenges for middle leaders. Finally, this literature review will discuss educational civil service middle leaders' knowledge in policy. This topic is centred at the importance of collaboration and distributed leadership in the processes of policy development and implementation.

Civil Service Middle leaders

Civil or public service middle leaders are bureaucrats who are responsible for activities such as reporting to senior leaders and supervising the lower managers in organisations that are associated with the provision of services such as social welfare, health and education that the Government of a nation provides. The literature that deals with public management refers to

positions such as heads of division and positional roles between sub-managers and senior leaders as middle leadership (Mintzberg, 2009; Bolman & Deal, 2008; Gill, 2011; Morgan, Bacon, Bunch, Cameron, & Deis; 1996). For example, Mintzberg (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008) depicts civil service middle leaders as the authority who occupy positions in between chief executives and sub-section managers. As managers of innovation who are accountable for decision-making at middle management level, whilst middle managers have authority to control or manage sub-managers, these managers also report to the higher bureaucratic positions based on instructions or regulations of an organisation.

The notion of middle leaders is then, depicted clearly in the studies realised by Bolman and Deal (2008) on 'Mintzberg's model' and Rudman (2002) on 'Fayol's model of organisation'. Bolman and Deal (2008) and Rudman (2002) respectively put middle managers between chiefs executive and frontline supervisors as the 'bureaucratic machine' that links both the strategic apex or chief executives and the operating core such as workers who provide direct service to an organisation's clients. This is re-emphasised in the work of Mintzberg (2009) who says that the manager is the position in between top leader and section head that deals with planning and operational roles such as monitoring and scheduling. The position of middle leaders or middle managers depicted by Bolman and Deal (2008), Wanna, Foster, and Graham (1996), and Rudman (2002) has reminded us of two important aspects; managerial roles and human relationships. The managerial roles aspect is linked to authority in day-to-day administrative decision-making, monitoring sub-managers or staff, including implementation work delegated to them. The human relationships aspect refers to a two-way communication within the layers of organisational bureaucracy, reporting, and teamwork.

Educational middle leaders

The research undertaken by Gurr and Drysdale (2013), Grootenboer et al. (2014), and Hales (2007) reveals that the role of educational middle leaders covers broad areas of responsibilities like leadership, management and teaching activities. These authors refer to positions such as school heads, department heads, teacher coordinators and senior teachers as educational middle leaders. For example, Gurr and Drysdale (2013) clarify that “in a secondary school a head of a department would be a middle-level leader, yet within a school system, it could be argued that school principals are themselves middle-level leaders” (p. 57) because there is a level of system leadership above them. Since Busher (2006) and Grootenboer et al. (2014) emphasise that, to some extent, whilst educational middle leaders deal with strategy, planning, and networking, they also act as frontline managers to directly control teaching and learning activities. This gives an insight that educational managers perform some management roles in line with the nuts-and-bolts of policy implementation at department levels. This mirrors the literature that conducted policy study (Concidence, 1996) who explicated that “management is the group of authority holders whose official job it is to direct the organisation and make sure that it functions effectively” (p. 197). In Concidence’s (1996) view middle leaders are the pinpoint agents who know how a policy should be implemented, as well as the nitty-gritty of issues facing an organisation and, in turn provide solutions that fits problems.

The reason for selecting educational middle leaders in this study is because educational middle leaders are “listeners as well as talkers; they are collaborators with teachers and students, whose needs present the most important demands in an educational leader’s roles. ... particularly when they are principals – they are finally accountable for the whole

educational program” (Weber, 1987, p. 2). In daily responsibilities, educational managers valorise ideas and bridge communication between chief executives and lower staff. Grootenboer et al. (2014) view the educational middle leadership as “democratic leadership ... teachers leadership” (p. 4) where the processes of decision-making are based on collegial relationships, rather than power exercising by senior leaders per se. So, the uniqueness of educational middle leaders is inclusive and collaborative decision-making. The notion of the educational middle leadership approach such as inclusiveness and collaboration could attract broad ideas from other policy actors; teachers, and counterparts in a policy agenda-setting.

Since middle leaders direct, lead programmes implementation, information gathering for a policy agenda-setting may be obtained from various pragmatic experiences based on day-to-day observation. Weber (1987) acknowledged that the “educational leader is both a conceptualist and a nuts-and-bolts person. Leaders are not just idea-people ... but they are professionals who use both research and practical innovation, cooperating with other professionals – teachers and staff” (p. 55). So, the involvement of educational middle leaders in a policy agenda-setting will provide a variety of issues facing various units including solutions for the issues an organisation encounters.

Educational civil service middle leaders

The uniqueness of educational civil service middle leaders relies on two forms of influence that an educational leader can implement; direct and indirect. First, Bendikson, Robinson and Hattie (2012) and Cardno (2012) state that in a direct educational leadership form, school principal and department heads encourage face-to-face communication with teachers including monitoring, assessment and teachers’ performance in classrooms. Second, there is

an indirect influence where an educational leader administers the operational systems or in other words, he or she establishes a mechanism for policy implementation associated with managerial roles to ensure quality of teaching-learning (Bendikson, et al., 2012). Cardno and Collett (2004) clarify that indirect educational leadership “is exerted by sharing the role and responsibility for it with appropriate others – through delegation or distribution” (p. 19). So the notion of sharing roles in this context is an ‘educational model’ which is aimed at effective teaching-learning albeit people work in different areas, they are still directed by an educational leader. This is tangible when the power is cascaded down to middle leaders to manage unit plans, curricula, communication, decision-making and capacity building based on the goals set by senior leaders. Cardno (2013) indicates that direct and indirect leadership represent the uniqueness of educational leadership. This is due to the bifurcated roles such as leading or managing school administration and coordinating curriculum or teaching and learning that an educational civil service manager performs in tandem.

The notion of indirect leader is akin to the public administration managers who are legally appointed (Lingard & Ozga, 2008) to exercise roles in policy development and implementation. From the study undertaken by Fowler (2009), the layers of leadership within education institutions are defined as administrators. As educational administrators, middle leaders carry out ‘meso-level’ responsibilities (Hales, 2007) governed by public policy within schools. Hales (2007) states that commonly the meso-level organisational tasks include “linking strategy and operations by transmitting and implementing policy and regulations, planning and co-ordinating a number of units, briefing and directing subordinate managers, allocating work and reporting on operational, financial and/or market performance” (p. 33). These roles are akin to the roles of public service middle managers presented in ‘Mintzberg’s

simple hierarchy model' of organisational structure (Bolman & Deal, 2008) in which, according to Hales (2007), whilst middle leaders manage other sub-managers, they also report to higher level positions above them.

Issues encountered by the civil service middle leaders

From the study organised by Mintzberg (2009) issues about 'administration gaps' encountered by the middle leaders within public institutions emerged. Mintzberg (2009) and Wanna et al. (1996) are preoccupied about issues associated with discretion in decision-making at middle management levels. The dilemmas faced by the civil service division heads are connected to day-to-day accountabilities and their senior leaders' control. On the one side, these middle managers exercise their obligations to implement legal instructions to boost departmental performance; on the other side, they deal with centralised control and decision-making by upper bureaucrats who maintain the status quo. Bolman and Deal (2008) vindicate senior leaders' intervention by saying that "the strategic apex – top management – tends to exert centralised pressures. Through commands, rules, or less obtrusive means, top managers continually try to develop a unified mission and strategy" (p. 88). This situation has issues regarding people's understanding about the functions and tasks of middle leaders.

The practice of centralised control by the strategic apex has been criticised by Scott (2001) who states that public service law clarifies bureaucratic responsibilities within an organisation; so senior leaders should not control the day-to-day activities run by middle managers. To surmount this issue, the roles of civil service middle leaders should be clearly defined and separated from those of senior leaders. This implies the clarity of responsibilities like job descriptions between hierarchical levels. To dovetail middle leaders roles within an organisation, the Mintzberg model shows that middle managers' focus is on the day-to-day

operations (Bolman & Deal, 2008) based on legal instructions (Lingard & Ozga, 2008; Scott, 2001). The review of Mintzberg's model done by McConville (2006) also reveals that the roles of public administration middle leaders cover administration, technical work, and implementing activities delegated by their senior leaders. Furthermore, Morgan et al. (1996) point out operational responsibilities of public service middle leaders as follows: "1) interpret and represent their work unit's interest; 2) lend or secure assistance; 3) develop organisational relationships; and 4) leverage others time" (p. 360). Anchoring the flow of commands or instructions from the strategic apex such as chief executives down to middle managers and reports from lower levels to senior leaders, the role of human resources management is pivotally needed to control issues such as excessive bureaucracy, practice of the status quo and leadership skill-gap.

Public policy

Since the literature associated with Timor-Leste public policy is not available, all the literature used in this topic is derived from the international studies about policy cycle.

A policy is a set of regulatory or mandatory rules that is ubiquitous in public organisations to guide an organisational operation. The term 'policy' comes from "Greek *polis* (city-state) and Sanskrit *pur* (city) evolved into the Latin *politia* (state) and, later into the Middle English *policie*, which referred to the conduct of public affairs or the administration of government" (Dunn, 2008, p. 34). Moreover, this author states that the term 'policy' is the same as 'politics' which is also known as 'politik' or 'politika' in the Germany and Slavic languages to depict "the porous boundaries among political science, public administration, and policy analysis, all of which study politics and policy" (Dunn, 2008, p. 34). In policy study, the terms; 'policy analysis'

and 'policy cycles' (Howlett et al., 2009; Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011) are used to refer to the stages of policy development; policy agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy decision-making, policy implementation, and policy evaluation.

The notion of policy has a broad understanding which, according to Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, and Henry (2002) it is not easy to define. For example, some literature that reports policies reveals that policy is a dynamic concept where the guidelines are not only driven by internal forces; history, values or culture, but also influenced by external forces such as politics, neo-liberalism and socio-economy that decision-makers should consider (Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Kilmister, 1993). The internal and external forces are two factors that drive why a new policy is needed or when an existing policy needs amendment. As there are changes or some issues recur again within organisations, policies always occur as products of cyclical processes through consultations and negotiations in which the organisational history, values, economy, and society become key factors in the discussions for decision-making. The study realised by Considine (1996) has revealed that "very few policies happen only once, and almost none occur by the random collision of novices". As issues that civil service organisations encounter are dynamic and always occur from time to time, Bell and Stevenson (2006) and Kilmister (1993) have reminded us not to view policies as unchangeable dogmas that fit certain issues or goals. In this sense, Taylor et al. (2002) provide a definition of policy that covers broad areas. Taylor et al. (2002) define

policy as a label for field activity, policy as a general expression of general purpose or desired state of affairs, policy as specific proposals, policy as decisions of government, policy as formal authorisation, policy as a programme, policy as

output, policy as outcome, policy as a theory of model and policy as a process. (p. 23)

The definition of Taylor et al. (2002) reminds us about ongoing review or evaluation and the propensity to alteration which is more likely to happen if the demands of internal and external factors that underpin a policy have changed. Thus, the process of policy evaluation or review is crucially needed to fit and update mandatory requirements that may suit new changes derived from both internal and external factor that influence a policy.

Narrowing down to the public policy, Howlett et al. (2009) define policy as “anything a government chooses to do or not to do” (p. 4). This definition is akin to what Dunn (2008) and Lingard and Ozga (2008) have stated that a policy development has a strong link with legal authority vested in hierarchical authority within public organisations. According to Lingard and Ozga (2008) and Howlett et al. (2009) the government, through its civil service hierarchical bureaucrats, have privileged authority in policy development as a way of identifying problems that an organisation encounters, as well as finding out solutions that match those issues.

The notion of public policy development and implementation unequivocally demands bureaucratic layers within the civil service to be involved because of two main reasons. One, civil service officials are members of society who are vested with authority to be directly accountable for gathering information, advice policy and agenda-setting, provide feedback on the drafts of policy and, in turn link policy mandatory to organisational strategic planning, manage programme implementation, and monitor activity implementation. For instance, Taylor et al. (2002) state that “public service departments and bureaucrats who work within them are supposedly there to enact the government agendas, at the same time they are

expected to provide independent advice to the government” (p. 29). Two, the civil service officials have knowledge and experiences in terms of the public organisation’s espoused values or histories (Busher, 2006; Considine, 1996), local market conditions (Bell & Stevenson, 2006), and issues the institutions encounter. Because middle leaders are involved in policy development and implementation, they influence government policy by providing feedback or solutions.

So, a public policy is a set of manuals which is deliberately created by a government via a process of vertical and lateral consultations or negotiations in order to clarify what are (or should be) the goals that an organisation is intended to achieve. A policy may suggest solutions for issues that an organisation encounters, it establishes strategies for achieving organisational goals, and it regulates instructions that guide actors who will implement the policy in the field. This is verified by Howlett et al. (2009) who state that policies are intentional decisions that a government made based on information collected from various stakeholders.

Educational policy

As there is very little literature associated with Timor-Leste educational policy, the majority of literature used in this topic is derived from the international literature.

The literature that deals with education refers to teaching and learning as the foci of issues that education policies should address (Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Busher, 2006; Kilmister, 1993; Lingard & Ozga, 2008; Openshaw, 2009; Phillips, 2005). For example, Lingard and Ozga (2008) define “education policy as a field in respect of schooling at least, deals with all texts, apart from curricula, which seek to frame, constitute and change educational practices” (p. 2).

As education policy covers a broad range of aspects like administration, curricula, human resources management and networking, an educational policy should be considered as a product of strategic thinking to address a myriad of issues facing an organisation. Some literature that deals with strategic management depicts strategic thinking as an 'aerial view' or a 'helicopter view' in order to identify various factors underpinning the needs for decision-making and problem-solving (O'Shannassy, 2003; Cardno, 2012). For instance, Cardno (2012) depicts strategic thinking as a mindset that needs an understanding of what are the competitive advantages of an organisation and what will be its uniqueness or differentiation in the market competition.

Strategic thinking in educational policy development and implementation is critical due to two reasons. First, strategic thinking facilitates team thinking or collaborative thinking where; the voices of hierarchical position holders, lower level staff and stakeholders are valued in the process of information gathering, consultations during agenda-setting and feedback on drafts of policy. The notion of strategic thinking mirrors the work of Howlett et al. (2009) about the process of initiation, identification, and expansion of issues from public concern which is known as "systemic or informal public agenda" and, in turn entering "institutional or formal state agenda" (p. 101). This approach facilitates educational middle leaders not only to surface issues facing organisations or advice solutions, but also instils insights about context, text, and consequences that should be acknowledged at the outset of a policy agenda-setting or policy writing. Cardno (2012) and O'Shannassy (2003) suggest that information about an organisation's operation in the past, its actual performance and contested issues to be addressed in the future should be flexibly collected from both internal and external constituents. The emphasised factors here in line with an organisation's history, its strengths

and issues encountered, expectations, involvement of stakeholders and strategies for future operations as crucial aspects that need to be considered at the inception of a policy development.

Second, strategic thinking eases teamwork during operation action. For example, ongoing communication and discussions between chief executives and middle managers may help interpretation of policy into an organisational vision and mission. Howlett et al. (2009) view this process as putting a policy decision into practice or action. This includes integrated planning, power delegation, clear instructions by senior leaders down to frontline managers, and collocating staff to implement policy across levels of hierarchy within an educational organisation. In addition, strategic thinking helps leaders and managers to monitor the way a policy is implemented and, this empowers middle leaders to be creative in responding to unpredictable issues that an organisation encounters, including establishing alternative strategies as anticipating efforts to address various contingencies. Given to this insight, Cardno (2012) directs attention to the ability of educational leaders to analyse and utilise internal expertise to address the influence of external factors such as “market-driven competitiveness, technology change, diversity and equity issues, national driven curriculum change, and emphasis on professional accountability” (p. 175) that become demanding aspects in policy implementation.

However, the notion of policy as an option or decision made by a government (Howlett et al., 2009; Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Lingard & Ozga, 2008), to some extent, has being misinterpreted by some chief executives and policy decision-makers. For instance, Harman, 1984 and Blackmore, 2003 (as cited in Bell & Stevenson, 2006) described policy as a goal-oriented document that rules people’s actions in order to achieve an ultimate goal. Propensity for

protection of the status quo via centralised controls and red tape become prevalent in policy development. Domination of senior leaders' view in policy agenda-setting and policy writing has precluded many educational middle managers from grasping and interpreting the mandatory requirements of policy. Openshaw (2009) and Phillips (2005) exemplify issues found in New Zealand in the previous decades when many educational frontline bureaucrats and school teachers encountered issues related to policy implementation. Phillips (2005) explicated that this situation happened because "in general, apart from individual members, professional research organisations ... have not taken a strong policy advocacy role in New Zealand" (p. 135). Local educational middle leaders had not been included at the inception of policy development; however, they were instructed by law to implement policy.

Critiquing domination of senior leaders' view in policy development, Bell and Stevenson (2006) argue that policies should not be seen merely as the written forms of documents or not merely instructions about the process of activities to obtain certain outcomes; above all, they are the "result of inquiry, debate, consensus and shared experience and, once agreed to, should be written and stored so that they are always accessible to organisational members, consumers and approved outsiders" (p. 45). To a deeper analysis, Kogan (as cited in Bell & Stevenson, 2006) argues that an educational policy should place values, vision and mission as the centre of a policy agenda. Given to this insight, Busher (2006) emphasises that the voices of both internal constituents; actual teachers, students and their parents, and external constituents; past teachers, ex-students and community should be heard during the policy development stages. An education policy should be the product of a two-way communication between senior leaders and the subsequent managers, including lateral consultations with insider and outsider constituents of an organisation.

Including middle leaders in policy development

The process of policy development commences by gathering information via research, consultations, and observations on the contested issues to be addressed. Some literature that deals with policy studies (Busher, 2006; Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Phillips, 2005; Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011) refers to consultations with key players like government officials, educational researchers, public figures, and other stakeholders who have a stake in policy to provide ideas at the inception of policy agenda-setting and policy writing. Considine (1996) views 'political economy' and 'culture' as two factors that underlie a policy context; therefore, these two factors should be acknowledged in setting a policy agenda and drafting the policy text. The terms policy economy refers to resources in which, Busher (2006) and Kilmister (1993) describe as school internal and external constituents, or Howlett et al. (2009) named it as policy actors whose voices should be heard when setting a policy agenda. The culture aspects indicates history, norms or principles (Howlett et al., 2009) and values such as equity, efficiency, choice, and excellence (Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs, & Thurston, 1999) which are interlinked to middle leaders' operational roles in the fields. Therefore, civil service middle managers have crucial roles to contribute to policy development such as providing information or raising issues, giving feedback on the drafts of policy, and advice solutions before decisions are made. For instance, Considine (1996) states "typically the key participants in a policy system are linked through institutions, groups, networks and other continuing relationships. These are based on shared understanding, values, common sources of disagreement, and patterned interactions which can best be described as policy systems" (p. 8).

However, some literature that deals with policy studies reveals that in the real practice some policies are developed merely based on the strategic apex such as chief executive's perceptions (Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Openshaw, 2009; Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011). The notion of policy stream (Howlett et al., 2009) associated with the analysis of driving forces such as politics, marketing and social issues (Busher, 2006), to some extent, demand policy makers to be unilaterally dependent on consultations with experts, rather than gathering inputs from their subordinates. This equilibrium issue is, then, compounded by the status quo of senior level bureaucrats. Domination of senior leaders' view in a policy development evokes an insight that the notion of stakeholders' involvement in the policy development (Considine, 1996; Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011) is just an ad hoc theory. Activities such as policy discussions, disseminations and consultations with middle leaders are realised as fiddle-dee-dee or merely for interest purposes. In that a final decision about information that should be included in a policy agenda is made by chief executives as decision-makers per se. This is an example of centralised control, and this could be deemed as 'setting a political trap' or as an obtrusive mechanism to maintain the status quo as revealed by Phillips (2005), Openshaw (2009), and Howlett et al. (2009).

Openshaw (2009) and Bolman and Deal (2008) remind us that senior leaders protect the status quo and centralised decision-making. The senior leaders who centralise the decision-making will exclude other participants who should be involved in policy development. The literature that deals with policy studies (such as Howlett et al., 2009; Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011) claims that the absence of middle leaders in policy development, or

domination of senior leaders' view in policy agenda-setting could emerge as new issues such as misinterpretations that lead to ineffective implementation.

Critiquing issues associated with the status quo and centralised decision-making, Shaw and Eichbaum (2011), Busher (2006), and Kilmister (1993) refer to equilibrium in consultations with key players like layers of authority within organisation and stakeholders. Emphasising the importance of issues to be addressed in a policy agenda, Dunn (2008), Howlett et al. (2009), and Openshaw (2009) indicate middle leaders as officials who grasp well the nitty-gritty of issues an organisation faces. Howlett et al. (2009) explain that in the process of policy agenda-setting "issues are first initiated, their solutions are specified, support for issue is expanded and, if successful, the issue enters agenda" (p. 102). This approach involves 'problem stream and policy stream' (Howlett et al., 2009), in that consensus about issues to be addressed (including experiential based problems) are communicated and decided via two-way communication. Moreover, there is consolidation about utilisation of expertise (both outsider experts and insiders; action-takers such as middle leaders) in policy development. This could benefit the middle leaders by instilling new knowledge in terms of policy objectives and, at the same time enhance their knowledge to lead, plan and implement objectives of the policy into real work.

So, participation of middle leaders in a policy development not only advises the policy-makers about issues regarding economy, society, culture, and technical skill-gaps, but also provides an insight about what are (should be) the middle managers' accountability in terms of policy mandatory requirements and planning for policy implementation. In order to maintain an ongoing monitor on how a policy is implemented or what should be improved, Considine (1996) refers to the permanent and long-term stakeholders who have a stake in a policy. This

author views “the groups and individuals who have created this context will usually be found in regular patterns of communication and interaction” (Considine, 1996, p. 8). This author directs attention to action taking and observation during a policy implementation in the field.

Policy challenges for middle leaders

The literature reveals that civil service middle leaders encounter administration-gaps in their daily operations (Gill, 2011; Mintzberg, 2009; Scott, 2001; Wanna et al., 1996). Policy issues discussed in this topic are political party or group’ interests, bureaucratic red tape, and the skill-gaps in implementing policy.

Protecting the status quo

One common issue in policy is maintenance of the status quo. A political party or group interests dominate policy development because some political figures or groups play their roles behind the curtain in influencing policy agenda and decision-making. Thus, a sound practice of nepotism tacitly occurs via nomination or collocation of staff for occupying positions connected to policy decision-making in organisations. Howlett et al. (2009) argue that political parties or groups “tend to influence public policy indirectly, primarily through their role in staffing the executive and, to a lesser degree, the legislature” (p. 67). This situation may create strong power for the status quo protection, blocking information and centralised control in policy development. The literature that underpins studies in an organisation surfaces leaders’ defensiveness (Argyris, 2010) which is linked to the protection of the status quo because they are fearful of changes that may not benefit them. Moreover, Hersey, Blanchard, and Johnson (2013) and Bolman and Deal (2008) draw on the attention to the propensity for senior leaders who unilaterally make policy decisions without consulting

middle leaders. These authors suggest that senior leaders could use their insights when subordinates are given the chance to participate in activities to help them to present their view or feedback.

Red tape

Gill (2011) and Scott (2001) point out that excessive bureaucracy is an impediment factor to the civil service middle leaders' roles in policy implementation. The intervention done by chief executives in departmental planning for policy action-taking in some public institutions is a tangible example of centralised control (Bolman & Deal, 2008). This can be grasped that the key impediment which is not incurred by the hierarchical red tape per se; above all, this is about a tacit mechanism of uniformity control by the strategic apex vis-à-vis political interests and maintaining the status quo.

This implies a lack of coordination and collaboration between levels of the hierarchy in performing separated responsibilities. Howlett et al. (2009) argue that "bureaucracy is a repository of skills and expertise, resources that make it a premier organization in society. It employs large numbers of just about every kind of professional, hired for their specialised expertise" (p. 66). This signifies clear terms of reference and separated job descriptions as pivotal instruments to avoid overlapping between what senior leaders and middle leaders should do. Considine (1996) indicates "function, program, and allocation" (p. 183) as a way to clarify job descriptions between the layers of authority in implementing policy. In Considine's (1996) view, grouping or allocating tasks in departments or units is a pinpoint strategy in policy implementation. In that, devolution of power is cascaded down to the middle leaders in separate managerial areas, and this enable the middle leaders to focus on their work.

Skill-gaps in policy implementation

There are three substantial issues that face civil service middle managers in the process of policy implementation; knowledge constraints, human resources management constraints and language constraints.

Leadership and managerial knowledge constraints

A knowledge constraint is a prominent issue encountered by educational civil service leaders and managers in policy implementation. Firstly, this refers to the ability of both senior leaders and middle leaders in grasping and interpreting policy content. Howlett et al. (2009), Hudson and Lowe (2009), and Shaw and Eichbaum (2011) state that many policies are written in metaphorical language or utilise technical terms that may challenge many leaders and managers to grasp and interpret into programmes implementation. So, propensity for guessing policy mandatory is very likely to happen and, in turn, this challenges educational civil service leaders and managers' ability to interpret into their departmental vision and mission. In relation to this issue, Ryan (1994) suggests that policies need to be clearly articulated and to be written in simple and communicative language, so as to facilitate middle leaders understanding about mandatory requirements clearly.

Human resources management constraints

Human resources management has a significant role in the way a policy could be implemented effectively at department level. The issues such as lack of planning, teamwork, communication and collaboration and monitoring activity implementation may hamper an organisation to achieve its goals. The literature that underpins studies in human resources management refers to leadership and managerial skills-gaps in leading teamwork and

problem-solving (Leavitt, 2005), and issues in line with leaders and managers' skills in responding to external demands (Newell & Scarbrough, 2002). All the knowledge issues aforementioned are linked to leadership competency in interpreting new policy mandatory to an organisational vision and mission, strategic planning, collocation of qualified staff, and embedding managerial actions such as programme implementation, monitoring, including detecting issues and advising solutions for improvement. These are viewed as generic problems facing many organisations when dealing with policy implementation.

In addition, Newell and Scarbrough (2002) refer to issues such as personal knowledge, leaders and managers' strategies, diverse priorities of managers, recruitment, staff allocation, and performance appraisal as crucial roles of human resources management connected to policy implementation. In this regard, Hersey et al. (2005) and Newell and Scarbrough (2002) remind us about exerting 'position power' where leaders should engage managers of various expertise in collaborative problem-solving, rather than protecting the status quo, blocking information, exercising excessive bureaucracy, and prioritising groups or political parties' interests.

In conclusion, Hersey et al. (2013), Newell and Scarbrough (2002), Bolman and Deal (2008), (Leavitt, 2005) remind us about the importance of vertical and horizontal communication and collaboration between levels of hierarchy to put skills and experiences together in order to answer issues pertaining to policy implementation. In this regard, Hersey et al. (2013) draw on the attention to the notion of using 'authority' where, a decision-maker should exert his or her leadership power precisely in situation when a leader should make a decision by him or herself and, when he or she should consult subordinates' ideas, facilitate other people to collaborate, and delegate power to the subsequent managers.

Embodying human resources management roles in policy implementation Bolman and Deal (2008) and Cardno (2012) suggest leadership skills enhancement. These authors refer to enhancement of leadership and managerial skills that support policy implementation at all hierarchical levels. Given to this insight, literature directs our attention to the equilibrium development in 'soft and hard' human resource management (Oldroyd, 2005) or 'humanising' and 'systemizing' (Leavitt, 2005) in which, according to these two authors attention should be given to the development of both human skills and getting managerial tasks done. The seminal work of Beer et al. (1984) has presented that the presence of human resources management in an organisation is critical to anchor these two aspects in sustaining policy implementation within an organisation. While Beer et al. (1984), Oldroyd (2005), and Leavitt (2005) noted that leadership and management development are pivotal factors in leading, interpreting policy, planning for action, teamwork, promoting merit-based recruitment and nomination, implementing, monitoring and policy implementation in the fields.

Language constraints

The notion of language constraints is associated with the language(s) used in policy documents. Bilingual or multi-lingual countries usually face issues of language use in policy documents when the majority of the community do not read, write or speak the official language(s) used in policy documents. Varennes (1996) exemplifies that the choice of official languages in public policy documents in several bilingual and multi-lingual countries such as the United States, Europe, and Asia have emerged issues associated with people's understanding of the policy contents. For instance, Varennes (1996) states that

those whose primary language is not the state's official language will therefore face the following dilemma: success in their society, especially if it is tied in to access to higher education, or to government jobs and promotions, may be dependent on their ability in the official language. (p. 292)

A similar issue is identified by Davis and Love (1996) when an Australian aborigine could not provide clear information at the court, because the policy legalises English (which is not the native language of some Australians) as the official language.

Critiquing the issue, Ryan (1994) argues that a policy should be written in the language that the policy implementers use in their daily communication. In order to be accessible and effectively understood, an alternative choice such as the translation assistance of public policy documents should be provided in the lingua franca or mother tongue of the officials who implement the policies. This reflects the research conducted by Gonzalez (1996) that translation assistance of policy documents into non-official language(s) in bilingual or multi-lingual countries is crucial for people to grasp and interpret policy mandatory requirements.

Educational civil service middle leaders knowledge in policy

Theory of collaboration

Andersen (2013) states that “collaboration projects allow knowledge exchange either directly through interaction among participants or indirectly through observation. Embeddedness in collaboration networks provide access to streams of tacit knowledge and allows faster development of individual abilities” (p. 140). Given that insight, Thrupp and Irwin (2010) refer to devolution of power from central government as a way to involve middle leaders in policy

development and implementation. Thrupp and Irwin (2010) clarify that “the devolution of management responsibility from a centralised and monolithic Department of Education to a school or centre level would create efficiencies and act as sufficient a policy lever to secure systemic improvements in teaching and learning” (p. 3). This is a practice of opening policy windows to various policy actors involvement (Howlett et al., 2009). For instance, Hoorens and Bots (2002) state that

the advantage of using the combined view is that it does justice to the multi-actor, multi-objective nature of real-life policy processes without abandoning the concept of actors as purposeful decision-makers who base their behavior on information ... the network of resource dependencies between actors turns a policy arena into a more level ‘playing field’ in which no single actor can be seen as the steering subject. (p. 77)

In the views of Hoorens and Bots (2002) there are two advantages that can be gained from collaboration or networking in policy development and implementation. First, the knowledge, skills and experiences of participants are acknowledged and utilised, in that, the government body is no more acting as a single source of policy development. Second, effective and efficient information can be obtained from a multi-level of policy participants via field observations and empirical data gathering from middle leaders who implement policy in the fields.

To pinpoint an education policy to an institution’s culture, economic and society conditions, Busher (2006) and Kilmister (1993) point out the interlinked roles between the school board and staff members as constituents who have a stake in education policy development. This implies that middle leaders such as department heads, teaching coordinators, and curriculum

leaders are the policy actors whose roles are crucially needed and should be acknowledged in the policy agenda-setting. Bell and Stevenson (2006) present three aspects linked to middle leaders' knowledge and skills in policy development. First, *the context* that considers the important aspects such as policy history, economy, society and politics that should be obtained via vertical and lateral consultations. Second, *the text* which is about the way policy-makers may articulate goals, values and directions that help people's understanding of policy mandatory and, in turn interpret into an action plan for policy implementation. Ryan (1994) suggests that a good policy should clearly state the mandatory needs, values or principles, and expectations to avoid misinterpretations. Involvement of middle leaders in activities like policy discussions and disseminations are crucial to attest a middle leader's grasp about policy content. Third, *the consequences* that are associated with the propensity for interpreting policy mandatory differently or issues of effectiveness encountered by different leaders when implementing a policy into different institutions. These three aspects should appear in a policy framework in order to reflect what happened in the past, how it fits the actual situation, and predict the future. Busher (2006) emphasises that both internal constituents; actual teachers, students and their parents, and external constituents; past teachers, ex-students and community are educational policy stakeholders that will surface feedback about the effectiveness of a policy context, text and consequences. This will be effective to reflect on feedback regarding benefits, drawbacks or risks based on past experiences and, in turn, utilise this information for future improvement.

There are two benefits of collaboration when educational civil service middle leaders are included in policy development. Firstly, educational middle leaders know the nuts-and-bolts of school issues, thus their presence on behalf of community not only surface the systemic

agenda to attract government attention, but also represent policy stream where solutions for an issue are communicated (Howlett et al., 2009) to support sufficient information for policy agenda-setting. Secondly, the educational middle leaders are known as democratic or teacher leadership (Grootenboer et al., 2014). So collaboration and teamwork may be seen as key aspects in engaging many staff members in planning, implementing activities and monitoring (Cardno, 2012; Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Owens, 2004). For instance, Owens (2004) states that “participative decision making requires the interaction of power and influence from two sources: the power and influence of the administrator and the power and influence of others in the organization” (p. 306). This environment could provide flexible communication between leaders and staff members where issues are initiated, specified, expanded before entering a policy agenda (Howlett et al., 2009).

Chapter Three

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter will present four main topics that explain the methodology of this research. The first topic is the epistemological position that underpins the research aims and questions, and discusses an appropriate methodology which is linked to the research questions. The second topic is about two methods; interview and documentary analysis that will be implemented to gather data to address the research questions. These methods will be presented in separate sub-topics supported by literature references. In the third topic I will identify the process of data generation and analysis, and explain how I have achieved validity and triangulation. Finally, in the fourth topic I will discuss ethical issues related to this research and the way these issues were addressed in the research field in Timor-Leste.

Epistemology and methodology

Some research theorists who conduct studies on social research define epistemology as a philosophical theory of knowledge (Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Bryman, 2012). The insights of epistemology and philosophical theory (Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Cohen, et al., 2007; Bryman, 2012) are difficult to separate as they are like two sides of the same coin. However, the definitions of epistemology provided by these theorists could be understood as a process where people try to inquire into their preconceptions, beliefs or assumptions and, in turn utilise instruments in order to test their assumptions to be

acknowledged as legitimate knowledge. Moreover, Cohen et al. (2007) provide a deep analysis on the insight of epistemological position as a process of 'searching for truth' via evidential experiences, reasoning and research activities. It can be understood that legitimate theory or knowledge could result via gathering data and identifying evidence that supports our preconceptions.

Epistemologically, this research is based on an assumption that knowledge can be obtained from people's beliefs, their espoused values and the way they practice those values every day. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) depict epistemology as an ongoing process of questioning what the knowledge is and ways of obtaining it. In order to arrive at legitimate knowledge, Cohen et al., (2007) and Bryman's (2012) interpretive approach was used to gain data associated with the researcher's preconceptions. So, in this research context, qualitative methodology (Davidson & Tolich, 2003; Cohen, et al., 2007; Bryman, 2012) was implemented to interpret data collected from the fields. The studies described by Davidson and Tolich (2003) Denzin and Lincoln (2005), Cohen, et al. (2007), and Bryman (2012) have revealed an insight that qualitative methodology deals with 'words', and this helps a researcher to interpret what people say and write about their beliefs, situations or issues they encounter. Furthermore, qualitative methodology is based on inductive reasoning in which, according to Guba and Lincoln (2005), there is a dialogue between a researcher and different individuals that will focus on Creswell's (2002) "specific context in which people live and work" (p. 8).

The questions that guided my research were:

1. What are the roles of Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in policy development?

2. How are Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders involved in policy implementation?
3. What strategies might help to increase the involvement of Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in the development and implementation of policy?

The epistemology associated with these research questions determined my position that relevant data could be obtained through utilisation of an interpretive approach embedded in qualitative research methodology. For instance, the research questions are centred on generating data associated with individuals' daily responsibilities through face-to-face dialogues. The work of Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) has revealed evidence that knowledge could be obtained through oral communication or written documents. The two questions were intended to stimulate participants to surface what are (or should be) the roles of the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders or department heads based on public policy; as well as raising issues that challenge them in implementing their jobs. Moreover, one of the questions was intended to stimulate participants to provide their views or ideas. This relates to creating a flexible and collaborative environment (Fontana & Frey, 2005) in order to obtain participants' advocacy or knowledge contribution in the process of data gathering (Creswell, 2002).

In order to gather data associated with the three questions, the researcher used two different methods; interview and documentary analysis. First, the reason for choosing the interview method was to obtain information that people shared about their own views and experiences through open questions (Hinds, 2000). Second, documentary analysis was centred on written mandatory requirements that present the history of an organisation, the espoused values, and what are (should be) legitimate knowledge as questioned by the researcher.

Methods

Method One: Interview

The first method of my research was interviewing. I chose this method because the qualitative interview method had helped me to select intended participants who know the nitty-gritty of issues to be investigated. Bryman (2012) emphasises that a qualitative interview “gives insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant and important” (p. 470). The rationale underpinning this method relies on Fontana and Frey’s (2005) concern about neutrality issues during data collection. In this regard, Fontana and Frey (2005) view the presence of a researcher in a face-to-face dialogue as “friendship and cooperation” (p. 697), and this facilitates a researcher to obtain the primary data directly from key sources. Also, this method may create an environment where, according to Bryman (2012) the interviewees feel relaxed and free to present their views.

Participants in a study need to be chosen with care to ensure that they are able to answer questions relevant to the study. As this research was conducted between June and July 2015 in Timor-Leste, there were fifteen candidates who confirmed their availability to participate. However, two participants did not suit one of my research criteria, less than two years experience of middle leaders’ positions. Furthermore, two other participants pulled out from the interview, and two candidates had no time to participate. The notion of the right participants (Bryman, 2012) had guided me to select nine participants carefully from four different public institutions. Five of the nine participants are employed by the Timor-Leste public educational institutions (two participants were selected from a secondary educational institution and three participants were taken from a tertiary institution). The other four are employed under two non-educational institutions (two participants were chosen from a

national directorate of Timor-Leste dealing with public administration and the other two participants were selected from a general directorate which is responsible for public income generating). The reason for choosing these institutions is based on the study by Bryman (2013) who views the sample of participants from different institutions as key sources who have broad experiences. This is due to an assumption that similarities could be found in the leadership and managerial roles they perform at different sites. The sample for the research is presented in table 3.1. Pseudonyms are used to substitute the names of participants and institutions.

Table 3. 1: Code, name, gender, position and institution

Code	Name	Gender	Position	Institution
An	Antonio	M	Head Department	Educational Institution
Je	Jose	M	Head Department	Educational Institution
Jo	João	M	Head Department	Educational Institution
Ne	Nella	F	Head Department	Educational Institution
Re	Rogério	M	Head Department	Educational Institution
Ad	Adolfo	M	Head Department	Government Institution
Li	Lidia	F	Head Department	Government Institution
Lu	Luis	M	Head Department	Government Institution
Ro	Ronaldo	M	Head Department	Government Institution

This sample reflects the Timor-Leste public institutional middle leaders who, in their daily responsibilities, this middle leaders report to a national director; also, there are several unit heads that report to them. The position of these middle leaders is regulated by the Timor-Leste law no.8/2004 titled ‘The Statute of Civil Service’ (Timor-Leste Government, 2004) and the Timor-Leste Decree-law no.20/2011 titled ‘Regime for the careers and the senior and middle management positions in public administration (Timor-Leste Government, 2011).

The research questions were designed based on Hinds' (2000) one-to-one or individual interview (See English version of Appendix A: Interview Schedule). As some middle leaders experienced this interview for the first time, and some did not grasp the terms or questions, I clarified the intention of my research, as well as definitions or explanation of the policy terms during the interviews. Bryman (2013) argues that a researcher should ensure that the interviewees understand the questions he or she asks. Thus, interview question design is enlightened by Bryman's (2012) description of the semi-structured interview:

the researcher has a list of questions of fairly specific topics to be covered, often offered to as an interview guide, but the interviewee has a great deal of leeway in how to reply. Questions may not follow on the schedule. Questions that are not in the interview may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees. (p. 471)

So, while focusing on the questions that I had prepared, I felt comfortable in asking spontaneous questions based on information or issues raised by the interviewees. Fontana and Frey (2005) and Bryman (2013) have revealed that language used in an interview is an unavoidable issue that might be faced by both the researcher and interviewees. This issue was important in my research because it is associated with the mother tongue of the Timor-Leste middle leaders. Although the Timor-Leste Constitution (part I, section 13) alludes to other languages such as English, as a work language, the majority of middle leaders do not speak, read or write in English. As the researcher and the interviewees are native speakers of Tetum; the lingua franca of Timorese people (Cabral & Martin-Jones, 2008; Millo & Barnett, 2004), all the questions were translated into Tetum in order to facilitate people's understanding. The data such as the voices of the interviewees were recorded by using an electronic voice recorder which was easily copied and saved in the computer audio file system

for data transcription. Hinds (2000) suggested utilisation of tape-recording or video recorder in an interview because note taking is not always simple and “this may be difficult to maintain whilst giving full attention to the content of the interview” (p. 48). The voices of participants were; then, transcribed into Tetum and had been translated from Tetum into English for further data analysis.

Method Two: Documentary analyses

The second method of my research was documentary analysis. This method is also known as use of “secondary sources” (Wellington, 2000, p. 108) or “content analysis” (Hinds, 2000, p. 53). Wellington (2000), Hinds (2000), Denzin and Lincoln (2005), and Bryman (2012) refer to documents such as policies, reports, journal articles, and minutes of meetings as secondary sources of data that could be used in a research project. I chose this method because it is believed that documents contain data that can be compared and or contrasted to verbal data gathered via the interviewing method. Documentary analysis method is guided by the research done by Fitzgerald (2012) and Bryman (2013) who state that some documents may contain evidence about epistemological issues that a researcher is intended to obtain from what people usually believe as their espoused values or issues they face in daily work. For instance, Hinds (2000) states that one approach that might enable a researcher to get the information associated with peoples’ behaviour or what people do is by analysing the written documents regarding their work.

There were eight documents selected as the sample for this research. This sample was chosen based on Bryman’s (2012) suggestion that “the more sources of evidence that can be employed, the better” (p. 88). I have chosen this sample because the documents comply with the work of Wellington (2000) and Fitzgerald (2012) who suggest four criteria for document

selection; 'authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning'. The documents were produced by the government of Timor-Leste as policy documents that guide public middle leaders or department heads in their daily operations. The eight policy documents are:

1. The Constitution of the República Democrática de Timor-Leste
2. Law no.8/2004 titled 'Approves the Statute of the Civil Service'
3. Decree-law no.2/2008 titled 'Structure of the Ministry of Education'
4. Decree-law 14/2008 titled 'Regime for Evaluating the Performance of Civil Servants'
5. Decree-law No. 27/2008 titled 'Regime for the Careers and the Senior and Middle Management positions in Public Administration'
6. Decree-law no.12/2009 titled 'Capacitating Regime of Human Resources in the Public Service'
7. Decree-law no.23/2010 titled 'Approves the Statute of Careers for Child Educators and Teachers of Basic and Secondary Education (Statute of Teaching Careers)'
8. Decree-law no.7/2010 titled 'Legal Regime for Administration and Management of Basic Education System'

In addition, written instructions that guide staff's daily operation of institution 'Y' and organisational structure charts of three institutions where this research was conducted were also analysed in this research.

The general principles for choosing these policy documents, written instructions and organisational structures were to gain secondary data in relation to the policy issues to be investigated in this research. It is believed that while the policy documents contain evidence associated with "how organisations and institutions work, and what values and practices guide decision making" (Fitzgerald, 2012, p. 297), some words or phrases in the policy content

and other documents can also be utilised, analysed and interpreted to compare with or, even to support the data obtained from the verbal interviews.

Similar to the interview method, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that “language is an unstable system of referents, thus it is impossible ever to capture the meaning of an action, text, or intention” (p. 27). One reason for selecting the eight policy documents is as a means to address the language issue. The English version of those policies has also been published along with the Portuguese (the original versions) in the Timor-Leste Government’s gazette named *Jornal da República* that publishes all the policies promulgated by the Timor-Leste President of Republic, after the National Parliament’s approval. The eight documents aforementioned are available on the Timor-Leste government website named: <http://www.jornal.gov.tl/lawsTL/RDTL-Law/RDTL-Decree-Laws/RDTL-Decree-Laws.htm> for public access. Wellington (2000), Fitzgerald (2012) and Bryman (2012) point out websites or internet have a crucial role in posting an organisation’s vision and mission, and showing how an organisation operates.

Data analysis

The notion of participants’ confidentiality in providing information has guided me to decide to do the transcribing and translation myself. To analyse the data I utilised Fereday and Muir-Cochrane’s (2006) ‘thematic approach’ that leads to ‘coding’, then categorising the data into categories (Wilkinson, 2000; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, & Lofland, 2006; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006) which, in turn, allows emerging common themes linked to the issues to be investigated. This method helped me to structure the interview schedule and use the

processes of Lofland et al.'s (2006) transcription, where interviewees' voice recordings were transformed into texts. This enabled me to group the selected documents into categories of issues to be investigated. Thus, the coding method is akin to the process of content analysis (Lofland et al., 2006) where a researcher interprets both documentary and interview data to grasp deeply issues that the research investigates.

To begin with, the transcriptions and the selected policy documents were sorted into broad patterns or themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) state that the process of thematic analysis "involves the identification of themes through careful reading and re-reading of the data", and these authors emphasise that "it is a form of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis" (p. 82). Moreover, Lofland et al. (2006) view categories of data as initial coding. The notion of initial coding has guided me in order to link the answers recorded from the interviewees, and the articles or sections of the selected documents to the research questions. For instance, the phrases such as; the authority that deal with policy, involvement of educational civil service middle leaders in the development and implementation of policy, policy issues, and strategies that may support middle leaders to be more involved in future policy development and implementation. This is akin to Bryman's (2004) "open coding – the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising data" (p. 402).

The next strategy for the data analysis was 'focused coding' (Lofland et al., 2006) or correspondence of patterns (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). The work of Wilkinson (2001), Tolich and Davidson (1999), and Lofland et al. (2006) indicates that the process of codification focuses on linking the words, phrases, articles or sections which are relevant to certain

categories or themes. For example, Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) present coding frame in a Microsoft Word table included three columns where they use key words to label or name the codes, defining the themes that become their concern, and short information that describe the process of identifying the themes. This method has guided me to use computer Microsoft Word program to create a simple table where key words were used as the codes derived from category of themes in data analysis. This instrument is useful to establish Lofland et al.'s (2006) "line-by-line coding" (p. 201), and this helps me to identify which sentences, paragraphs, or law articles or sections are pertinent to certain themes drawn from issues or questions (Tolich & Davidson, 1999).

Lofland et al., 2006 and Tolich and Davidson's (1999) focused coding or correspondence of patterns has been very useful in guiding me, so the key findings of these two methods have been consolidated into four main themes or categories. The four categories are; the authority that deal with policy, involvement of educational civil service middle leaders in the development and implementation of policy, policy issues, and strategies that may support middle leaders to be more involved in future policy development and implementation. This reflects what Lofland et al. (2006) has stated that a coding is an action where a researcher sort data gathered into themes or categories that fit the research questions he or she had prepared.

Validity

The literature that deals with social research argues that validity is a key issue that a researcher should consider in data analysis (Hinds, 2000, Cohen et al., 2007, Bryman, 2012). These researchers view the notion of validity as consistency and fidelity of researchers to

measure what they want to measure. For instance, Hinds (2000) clarifies that validity “relates broadly to the extent to which the measure achieves its aim, i.e. the extent to which an instrument measures what it claims to measure, or tests what it is intended to test” (p. 42). The notion of validity has guided me to be a reflective researcher in order to control my biases and consider issues regarding integrity and honesty (Cohen et al., 2007; Bryman, 2012) when interpreting both the interview and documentary data. As there were two methods used in this research, a triangulation analysis was implemented to cross-check findings (Cohen, et. al., 2007, Bryman, 2012) between verbal interviewing and documentary data analyses.

To address issues associated with validity in the interviewing data analysis, I prepared summaries of each interview; then showed this to each interviewee to minimise “invalidity and maximize validity” (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 133). However, my explanation about confidentiality of information such as utilisation of pseudonym to substitute the names of participants and institutions in data analysis had convinced the participants; so they agree and said that they do not need the summary copy of the information they had provided. To ensure verification of the translated version of the data from Tetum to English, I transcribed the voices of participants then, translated all the transcriptions from Tetum into English. This is to comply with some interviewee’s requests in order not to display their voices to other parties who do not have a stake in this information.

The selected policy documents for this research comply with validity in that all the texts cover data related to issues to be investigated in this research. These policy documents comply with Wellington (2000) and Fitzgerald’s (2012) four criteria for document selection; authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning. The authenticity and credibility of the

documents are guaranteed by the government of Timor-Leste. For example, a decree law can only be legally implemented after its publication in the Timor-Leste *Jornal da República*.

Ethical issues

Some social researchers argue that ethical research is a key factor that researchers should consider before commencing field research (Wilkinson, 2001; Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003; Bryman, 2012). These authors remind us about the importance of informed consent. Wilkinson (2001) defines informed consent as “allowing people to make their own decisions about participating in research, and that requires no forcing, coercing, or manipulating them into it” (p. 17). Wilkinson (2001), Jahnke and Taiapa (2003), and Bryman (2012) emphasise that an interview should occur in a situation where there is no harm or no pressure on interviewees. The notion of informed consent also refers to the way a researcher manages neutrality (Fontana & Frey, 2005) among politics or interests in order to avoid offending people taking part in the interviewing process. In addition, Bishop (2005) emphasises ‘initiation, benefits, representation, legitimacy, and accountability’ as key factors that researchers should consider before and during interviewing.

In this research context, I had to deal with two rigorous educational research ethical bodies; Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and the Timor-Leste public administration tradition about gaining necessary permission to conduct data collection in the fields. Firstly, the research proposal was approved and then the Unitec Research Ethics Committee (UREC) approved the research ethics application. The intention of this ethic applications approval was to ensure the initiation, benefits, representation, legitimacy, and accountability (Bishop, 2005) and the methods used in the research meet standards of ethical conduct before the

research implementation. Secondly, the protocol of the Timor-Leste public institutions demands official permission in order to permit the researcher access the sites. Jahnke and Taiapa (2003) has emphasised that a researcher could access the intended institutions if he or she is allowed by the authority who are accountable for those institutions. Answering this issue, the researcher presented the official letter provided by the research supervisor at UNITEC and the information sheet that covers UNITEC logo to convince the chief executives of the institutions. The field research was conducted after the chief executives of the institutions approved my proposal by signing the organisational consent form to grant me access into their institutions.

Since the target participants of this research are the Timor-Leste public service middle leaders, there is a set of protocols that should be followed. These protocols are used to ensure that the principle of informed consent is implemented. First, I presented an information sheet as evidence required by the participants that this was a genuine research and they were invited to volunteer to participate (See English version of Appendix B: Information Sheet). This refers to participants' willingness to be interviewed. For example, Wilkinson (2001) suggests that "if you want research on people, you should ask their permission first" (p. 16). Second, I provided every interviewee with a Consent Form (See English version of Appendix C: Participant Consent) which they signed before the start of the interview.

Third, setting up an interview schedule is another protocol requirement for data gathering. This refers to the time suiting the schedule of the interviewees (Jahnke & Taiapa, 2003). So, individual meetings were organised by face-to-face communication to decide time that suited each interviewee followed up by phone call and face-to-face meetings to reconfirm participants' time and their availability for the interviews. The objective of these meetings

was to convince the participants about issues associated with neutrality in this research (Fontana & Frey, 2005), and to explain the benefits of the research for the institution and the middle leaders so that they consider the importance of their roles and issues that they encounter. This is to protect the researcher from the interviewees' prejudices or biases about being affiliated to a political party or other groups' interests.

Moreover, Bryman (2012) reveals issues regarding the privacy of interviewees and deception in data analyses. In this regard, two approaches were utilised to protect the interviewees' privacy and validity of data analysis. First, the interviewees were informed personally (Hinds, 2000) and the researcher explained the importance of protecting the participants' identities and the information they provided. Second, the interviewees were asked to sign the participant consent forms as evidence that they agreed to provide information without any pressure or coercion. Third, the researcher promised to show the summary of the interview to each interviewee to promote Bryman's (2012) validity, and the interviewees' voice recorded was intended to be displayed to each interviewee to verify validity and avoid data manipulation. However, the majority of participants stated that as their names and the names of the institutions are not mentioned in the data analysis and discussions, they did not need the summary of their interviews.

The following chapter will present the findings of interview data and documentary analysis which had been consolidated into four categories as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Chapter Four

FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section one will reveal findings from documentary analysis. Section two will present the findings of interviews conducted in the field in the República Democrática de Timor-Leste or Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste. In this thesis the term 'Timor-Leste' is used to refer to the República Democrática de Timor-Leste.

Section One: Documentary Analysis

There are two main objectives of the documentary analysis that are linked to the three research questions. The first objective is to show legal mandatory requirements that encourage the involvement in policy development and policy implementation which is connected to research questions one and two; 'What are the roles of Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in policy development?', and How are Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders involved in policy implementation?

The second objective of the documentary analysis is to present mandatory requirements that are connected to possible strategies that might help to increase the inclusion of the educational civil service middle leaders in policy development and implementation. This objective is linked to research question number three; 'What strategies might help to increase the involvement of Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in the development and implementation of policy?'

Documents utilised in the documentary analysis are collected from three sources. The first source covers eight public policy documents published in the Timor-Leste official gazette named 'Jornal da República' which can be accessed on the Timor-Leste government online website on <http://www.jornal.gov.tl/lawsTL/RDTL-Law/RDTL-Decree-Laws-P/RDTL-Decree-Laws.htm>. To assist readers, the eight public policy documents analysed in this research have been listed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4. 1: List of the Timor-Leste public policies

No.	Laws/decrees-laws	Title
1	Constitution	The constitution of Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
2	Law no.8/2004	Approves the Statute of the Civil Service
3	Decree-law no.2/2008	Structure of the Ministry of Education
4	Decree-law no. 14/2008	Regime for Evaluating the Performance of Civil Servants
5	Decree-law no. 27/2008	Regime for the Careers and the Senior and Middle Management positions in Public Administration
6	Decree-law no.12/2009	Capacitating Regime of Human Resources in the Public Service
7	Decree-law no.7/2010	Legal Regime for Administration and Management of the Basic Education System
8	Decree-law no.23/2010	Approves the Statute of Careers for Child Educators and Teachers of Basic and Secondary Education (Statute of Teaching Careers)

The second source is the Terms of Reference of department XXX and YYY of institution 'Y' which is accountable for communicating and disseminating public policies across the Timor-Leste government ministries. The third source is the organisational structure diagrams of three institutions where this research was conducted between June and July 2015.

The authority that develop public policies

There are two groups of authority of Timor-Leste public policy development discovered in this documentary analysis. First, the Timor-Leste state organisations and government institutions that perform public administration. Second, staff who are nominated to hierarchical positions within the Timor-Leste public institutions.

Public institutions

To begin with, the Constitution of the República Democrática de Timor-Leste, section 92 and 95, legitimates the Timor-Leste National Parliament as the ‘State Pillar’ that shall be accountable for the legislation or public policy that governs all Timor-Leste public institutions. For example, section 95.21 of the Constitution states that the National Parliament has competence to make basic laws or decree-laws as “the bases for the education system” and other areas like health, tax, and citizenship. This documentary analysis discovered that the Timor-Leste public policies can be implemented after the National Parliament approval and promulgation of the President of the Republic. This is stated in section 88.1 of the Constitution which gives the President of Republic the right to promulgate or veto the public policies approved by the National Parliament. Government ministries and other public institutions also develop the Timor-Leste public policies.

In Timor-Leste, public school such as pre-schools, basic schools, secondary schools, and tertiary educational institutions also have a stake in public policy development. The notion of public educational institutions’ involvement in policy development highlighted in article 6.1 and 6.4 of Decree-law no.2/2008 have been quoted as follows.

The National University of Timor Lorosa’e (*Universidade Nacional de Timor Lorosa’e*) is a public higher education institution with administrative, scientific and educational autonomy under the

supervision of the Ministry of Education that is governed by a statute to be approved by means of a governmental Decree-Law.

The public pre-school, basic and secondary education institutions are also an integral part of the Ministry of Education. The regulatory framework for their management and administration is set in a specific statute. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.2/2008, 6)

The phrases ‘higher education institution’ in paragraph 6.1 and ‘pre-school, basic and secondary education institutions’ in paragraph 6.4 above indicate the institutions under the Ministry of Education control which have crucial roles in the development and implementation of public policy in Timor-Leste.

In summary, public educational institutions may participate or could be involved in policy development via the Ministry of Education and/or via collaboration with the Timor-Leste Civil Service Commission.

Civil service hierarchical position holders

The educational civil service is defined in article 3 of Law no.8/2004 titled ‘Approves the Statute of Civil Service’ at the following:

A civil servant is a person recruited and appointed to a permanent position in the public administration, and who has specific duties and rights provided for in applicable rules. (Timor-Leste Law no.8/2004, 3)

This article presents that, without exception, the employees employed under the public educational institutions are acknowledged as civil servants. Thus, the middle leaders within educational institutions are akin to the Timor-Leste civil service middle leaders.

The notion of educational middle leader is set out in article 11.2 of Decree-law no.7/2010 titled ‘Legal Regime for Administration and Management of Basic Education System’. Article 11.2 of Decree-law no.7/2010 has been quoted:

Article 11: Gabinete Directivo [Board]

2. The *Gabinete Directivo* is composed of the following members:

- a) Basic School Director;
- b) Deputy Director;
- c) Head of the Technical Support Office. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.7/2010, 11.2)

This law refers to the levels of hierarchy within primary and secondary educational institutions, so middle leaders are given authority take part in policy development and implementation.

A significant finding of this research is that the middle leaders are vested in authority to be accountable for human resources management roles such as job design, recruitment and staff allocation, and reports which are central to policy development and implementation within an organisation. The middle leaders' role in managing policy via human resources management has been quoted from article 18 of Decree-law no.7/2010 titled 'Legal Regime for Administration and Management of the Basic Education System' in the following:

Within the scope of its responsibilities in matters of human resources management, the Office of Technical Support must:

- a) Propose alterations in faculty and non-faculty staffs;
- b) Administer all existing human resources;
- c) Plan and implement working hours for faculty and non-faculty staffs;
- d) Manage licenses, absences, appointments and exchanges;
- e) Execute all guidelines related to processes involving recruiting and assigning faculty and non-faculty staffs;
- f) Provide relevant information in matters of school inspection. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.7/2010, 18)

This article encourages the educational middle leaders' to initiate activities in line with human resources management to embed policy development and implementation at department level.

Key Findings

Findings from this documentary analysis present that in the context of Timor-Leste public policy development, the National Parliament is the authority that has the privilege and power to approve all public policies recommended by the government ministries, secretariat of States, the Civil Service Commission, and other government agencies. In terms of educational policy development, the Timorese educational civil service middle leaders deal with two organisations. First, these middle leaders contribute to public policies under the ministry of education supervision. Second, the educational middle leaders are also involved in public policy development and implementation coordinated by the Timor-Leste Civil Service Commission.

Involvement of educational civil service middle leaders in public policy

This research reveals that firstly, Timor-Leste public policies encourage educational civil service middle leaders' involvement in policy development via initiation and policy gathering, consultation and agenda-setting, policy writing. Secondly, Timor-Leste middle leaders are also vested in authority to be involved in policy implementation at department level though activities such as interpreting policy, planning for action, taking action, and monitoring.

Including middle leaders in policy development

The documentary analysis has revealed three phases; initiation and informing, setting policy agenda and consultation, and policy writing where Timorese educational middle leaders could be involved in the process of policy development.

Initiating and informing policy

The Timor-Leste public policies encourage educational middle leaders' involvement in policy development via initiating or surfacing an issue facing an organisation to chief executives and giving reports. An example of an educational middle leader's role in policy initiation is emphasised in article 18a and f Decree-law no.7/2010 as in the following quotation:

Article 18: Human Resources Management

Within the scope of its responsibilities in matters of human resources management, the Office of Technical Support must:

- a) Propose alterations in faculty and non-faculty staffs;
- f) Provide relevant information in matters of school inspection. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.7/2010, 18a & f)

This policy gives educational middle leaders position power associated with human resources responsibilities that covers preparing policy proposal and provision of information to influence a government agenda. Moreover, educational middle leaders are authorised to provide information for a policy development via a report about issues encountered in the field. An example of bottom-up reporting is regulated in Law no.8/2004, especially in article 41m and article 49p below:

to immediately report to the direct supervisor any and every information that may be detrimental to the State, especially with regard to security, financial issues, and assets.

to report to the immediately superior entity whenever he or she believes that his or her rights have been infringed upon. (Timor-Leste Law no.8/2004, 41m & 49p)

The two paragraphs above permit middle leaders and other staff to communicate issues facing institutions. Reporting any progress or issues encountered is connected to policy advice. In that, a middle leader may notify irregularities such as skill-gaps, budget allocation, or nepotism, and advocate strategies for improvement to senior leaders or decision-makers.

Setting policy agenda and consultation

The Timor-Leste educational middle leaders could be involved in policy agenda-setting via the authority given to the institutions they are associated with. An example of involvement in public policy agenda-setting is defined in Decree-law No. 27/2008. Article 19.2 of this decree-law quoted:

Positions of head of section may be established as long as the volume or complexity of the respective coordination tasks so justifies and whenever there is supervision of, at least, ten workers. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no. 27/2008, 19.2)

This article gives rise to an understanding that there is two-way consultation between middle leaders and senior leaders about issues of overlapping tasks and, in turn propose establishment of a new section head position as a solution that suits the problem facing the department. Furthermore, Timorese educational middle leaders' could be involved in discussions or consultations coordinated by the Ministry of Education about government agenda for educational development. Article 2.1 d and e of the Decree-law no.2/2008 shows how two-way consultation may occur:

It is incumbent upon the Ministry of Education:

- d) to develop secondary education while consolidating and broadening vocational and technical education;
- e) to plan, coordinate and develop post-secondary and higher education in the country and abroad, based on the principle of equity of the system.

These two paragraphs provides an understanding that whilst there is a line of command from senior leaders, there is also line of reporting where middle leaders communicate and advice government of an agenda based on issues encountered in the fields.

The notion of policy agenda-setting is also described in article 3.2 of Decree-law no.7/2010 quoted below:

Without detriment of the competencies and administrative authority of the Regional Education Departments, each Basic Education Integrated Establishments will have a Board and a Basic Education Director who will work hierarchically under the appropriate Director-General, National Director or Inspector General of the Ministry, depending on each case. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.7/2010, 3.2)

This law empowers local levels of educational institution to create a school board. This is a form of educational middle leaders' contribution within the school board to be involved in policy agenda-setting.

Writing policy

The research discovers that Timor-Leste policy encourages educational middle leaders' to participate in the process of policy writing through collaboration with Ministry of Education.

Article 2.1 f of the Decree-law no.2/2008 presents how this could happen:

It is incumbent upon the Ministry of Education:

to design the syllabi for the various levels of education and to regulate the mechanisms for the recognition of educational qualifications. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.2/2008, 2f)

Since the phrase 'to design the syllabi' in this paragraph refers to the roles of educational middle leaders, these managers have critical roles in providing ideas and advice to decision-makers during the process of syllabi design. Furthermore, Decree-law no.2/2008 titled 'Structure of the Ministry of Education' legitimises the Ministry of Education to design or develop policies. For instance, article 2.1a of Decree-law no.2/2008 has been quoted:

1. It is incumbent upon the Ministry of Education:

to propose policies and draft regulations for the areas under its supervision. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.2/2008, 2.1a)

The phrase 'to propose policies and draft regulations for the areas under its supervision' refers to the consequences of policy to middle leaders who will implement the programmes in the fields. Therefore, there is two-way consultation where middle leaders may advise the

Ministry of Education to consider issues to be addressed in its policy agenda. Another example of middle leaders' involvement in policy writing is explained in article 13.2b of Decree-law no.7/2010 has quoted in the following:

The Deputy Director must also perform the following activities:

Participate in the establishment of policies related to faculty training and curricular and pedagogical development together with the Deputy Director and the central and regional services of the Ministry of Education. (Timor-Leste Decree-Law no.7/2010, 13.2b)

This decree-law authorises educational middle leaders to draft and propose department necessities such as strategic planning including financial proposals for activity such as professional development to their senior leaders.

Including middle leaders in policy implementation

This documentary analysis uncovers that Timor-Leste educational middle leaders are vested with authority to implement public policies connected to interpreting policy, planning for action, taking action and monitoring policy at department level.

Interpreting policy

Article 39, of Law no.8/2004 urges an educational middle leader to interpret policy mandatory requirements and, in turn link the mandatory into organisational vision and mission. This includes leadership competency to design job descriptions and staff allocation. Article 39 of Law no.8/2004 has quoted:

All levels and positions shall have job descriptions and an indication of requirements that will govern recruitment and serve as benchmarks to identify performance standards for the assessment of civil servants. (Timor-Leste Law no.8/2004, 39)

This article urges middle leaders to create staff job descriptions and recruit staff to perform roles associated with personnel management such as job design and staff recruitment.

Furthermore, as civil servants middle leaders are required to interpret policy mandatory by creating operational guides that help staff to perform their functions according to job descriptions as demanded by organisational regulation or policy. This is emphasised in article 41r of Law no.8/2004 that one of the civil servant duties is “to provide employees with guidelines on how to perform functions”. Interpreting policy into an organisational objective may help a middle leader to select or allocate appropriate staff to the post they have identified. This is because middle leaders are the experts about the department they lead. For this reason, middle leaders have discretionary powers to select qualified staff for the positions they have identified. Moreover, article 13i of Decree-law no.14/2008 permits a middle leader to exercise his or her position in nominating staff as in the following quotation:

“Coordination and articulation” – evaluates the manner in which the holder of a middle or senior level management post collaborates in articulating among the units of the organs they belong to with a view to promoting a unitary and integrated action for attending to policies and objectives defined for that organ. (Timor-Leste Decree-law 14/2008, 13i)

This paragraph gives rise to an insight that by grasping a policy mandatory, a middle leader should utilise his or her human resources skills to identify what issues to be addressed, skills required in an organisational job description, so as he or she may recruit or nominate people who have skills connected to the position.

In addition, Decree-law no.14/2008 urges senior leaders and middle leaders to not only interpret policy mandatory requirements, but also create strategies that might be useful to address issues facing an organisation. Article 13.h of Decree-law no.14/2008 states:

“Leadership and team management” – evaluates the manner in which the holder of a middle or senior level management post establishes the strategies deemed necessary for attaining the objectives and results of the sub-unit he or she is in charge of, as well as the manner in which he or she guides, motivates and communicates with the respective civil servants or agents. (Timor-Leste Decree-law 14/2008, 13h)

This policy encourages middle leaders to create operational plans associated with legal mandatory of an organisational policy at department as well as units under a department control.

Planning for action

The result of the finding denotes that an educational manager may lead planning for programmes implementation at department level. Decree-law no.7/2010 regulates the role of middle leaders associated with planning and coordinating activities for policy implementation. Authority of middle leaders in planning is regulated in articles 10.2b, 13.2d and 16a, g and h of Decree-law no.7/2010 as in the following quotations:

Article 10

Develop proposals for financial plans and human resource management plans necessary for optimum operations.

Article 13.2d

Coordinate the development of extracurricular activities.

Article 16

Within the scope of its duties related to financial and planning management, the Office of Technical Support is responsible for the following:

- a) Submit to the Basic School Director the proposal for Annual Activities and Budget Plan;
- g) Draft annual reports on budget execution and activities and submit them to regional education services;
- h) Submit to the Basic School Director the annual, three-year or five-year Strategic Plans including all structural objectives of the E.I.E.B. in all its competencies, as well as the financial needs to accomplish them. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.72010, 10.2b; 16a, g & h)

This decree-law provides opportunity for middle leaders to present department priorities which should be considered in an organisational strategic planning. This includes financial planning or budget allocated for short-term operational activities such as extracurricular and

trainings, as well as long-term strategic planning that covers the whole of the organisation. In that, educational middle leaders know the nitty-gritty of an organisation's needs of an organisation based on local market situation and possible solutions for issues that the organisation encounters in the field.

Decree-law no.14/2008 devolves power to middle leaders in order to set up timing for performance appraisal. For example, articles 8.3 of Decree-law 14/2008 have quoted in the following:

Service managers shall be responsible for the timely setting up and dissemination of the evaluation process, thereby guaranteeing compliance with the respective principles. (Timor-Leste Decree-law 14/2008, 8.3)

This policy urges Timorese educational managers to deal with planning, designing programmes implementation, and timetabling for programme assessment.

Taking action

This research identified that Timorese educational middle leaders are demanded by law to implement policy in the field. This is exemplified respectively in article 25.2 and 25.3 of Decree-law no. 27/2008 as quoted in the following:

The competencies required from directors-general or their equivalent may be delegated to senior or middle management staff of the respective service.

The exercise of functions under the regime of substitution shall cover the powers delegated and sub-delegated to the substitute, save where the instruction to delegate or sub-delegate competencies, or the entity determining the substitution, expressly provides otherwise. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.27/2008, 25.2 – 3)

This policy, because it refers to power devolution from the chief executives to their subordinates, middle leaders are empowered to make decisions in relation to action taken at various department levels.

In addition, a tangible example of middle leaders roles connected to taking policy into practical action is depicted in article 18 of Decree-law no.7/2008. Article 18b, c, and of Decree-law no.7/2008 quoted:

Article 18: Human Resources Management

Within the scope of its responsibilities in matters of human resources management, the Office of Technical Support must:

- b) Administer all existing human resources;
- c) Plan and implement working hours for faculty and non-faculty staffs;
- d) Manage licenses, absences, appointments and exchanges;
- e) Execute all guidelines related to processes involving recruiting and assigning faculty and non-faculty staffs; (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.7/2010, 18)

This article emphasises that human resources are seen as a key instrument or resource that embodies a policy in the field.

Moreover, article 10f of Decree-law No.7/2010 encourages educational middle leaders' involvement in promoting of policies within organisation. The aforementioned article has been quoted below:

Promote policies towards the modernization of the basic education system in all its components.
(Timor-Leste Decree-law no.7/2010, 10f)

This paragraph urges a managerial role to include intervention such as socialising programmes to lower staff within the organisation.

Monitoring policy implementation

Timorese educational middle leaders are appointed by law to monitor the way public policies are implemented at departmental level. Decree-law no.14/2008 and Decree-law no.7/2010 regulate middle leaders roles connected to monitoring policy implementation. For instance, article 17.1 of Decree-law no.14/2008 quoted below:

Performance evaluation shall be the competence of the immediate hierarchical superior or of the civil servant with coordination responsibilities over the evaluatee.

This policy empowers middle leaders to monitor and evaluate the way subordinates implemented programmes established based on legal instructions established or stated in staff job descriptions. Furthermore, Decree-law no.7/2010 allows middle leaders to observe programmes implementation in the field. For instance, articles 13.2c and 16b, e, f and i of Decree-law no.7/2010 quoted in the following:

Article 13.2c

The Deputy Director must also perform the following activities:

Ensure the implementation of inclusive education policies;

Article 16 Financial and Planning Management

Within the scope of its duties related to financial and planning management, the Office of Technical Support is responsible for the following:

- b) Ensure the execution of the annual budget;
- e) Ensure performance of the contracts entered on behalf of the E.I.E.B.;
- f) Ensure the administrative operations of the E.I.E.B.;
- i) Ensure the execution of the system of scholarships and incentives for students and faculty. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.7/2010, 13.2d, 16b, e, f, & i)

This policy vested in authority to middle leaders to control budget execution, administrative work and professional development.

Key findings

Key findings show that Timor-Leste public policies permit middle leaders to engage in policy development by initiating and informing issues encountered, advice and engage in agenda-setting and participating in discussions to give feedback on the draft of policies before decision-making. Moreover, middle leaders are also vested with authority to interpret policy, manage planning and take action, as well as monitoring policy implementation in the field.

Possible issues that might impede middle leader's involvement in policy

This study discovers that some policy mandatory requirements are likely to induce a pathway for issues associated with personal or group interests, manipulation, or red tape that could hamper a middle leaders' involvement in policy development and implementation.

Status-quo

This documentary analysis discovered that some articles or sections of laws or decree-laws are ambiguous and may contain issues such as protecting the status-quo. This documentary analysis highlights three key mandatory requirements of policies that might be utilised by some senior bureaucrats to maintain the status-quo in policy development.

Firstly, the finding reveals that protection of the status-quo in decision-making could be drawn from policy mandatory associated with 'utilisation of power'. For example, article 19.1 of the Decree-law no.8/2004 gives opportunities for a senior leader to nominate someone he or she wants to occupy a certain position as follows:

The appointment on the Service Commission shall apply to the holding of management and leadership positions and shall be freely selected by the competent entity from among civil servants, in compliance with requirements set out in job descriptions to be approved by the Government (Timor-Leste Law no.8/2004, 19.1)

On the one end, this article devolves authority for a chief executive to select or nominate staff for a service commission. On the other end, this may tacitly foster an environment that ends in nepotism in nominating staff to a leadership or managerial position.

Secondly, protection of the status-quo might also be supported by mandatory laws or policies connected to 'showing obedience'. An example of showing obedience to a senior leader as a duty is quoted from Law no.8/2004 article 41. 2b as follows:

The duty of obedience that consists in obeying and complying with orders from superiors, provided that such orders are consistent with service objectives and given in a lawful manner (Timor-Leste Law no.8/2004, 41. 2b).

Senior leaders may use the notion of obedience to maintain their interests or the existing status-quo.

Thirdly, the notion of giving instructions to subordinates could be seen as a pathway to the practice of the status-quo maintenance. A senior leader may use an article of law as an absolute power to push his or her interests. For instance, article 43 of Law no.8/2004 permits senior leaders to instruct their subordinates. Article 43.1 and 2, are respectively quoted:

1. A civil servant or an agent of the public administration shall comply with the instructions and directions from his or her superior.
2. Disrespect for a superior's instructions shall be considered as an offence subject to disciplinary action. (Timor-Leste Law no.8/2004, 43.1-2)

Issues such as arbitrariness and personal interests might be derived from the aforementioned paragraphs. This is because the public service chief executive are also vested in authority to appraise their subordinates.

Skill-gaps

The notion of skill-gaps in this documentary analysis is limited to middle leaders' competencies in human resources management, and the use of Portuguese language in the policy documents.

Human resources management (HRM)

This documentary analysis identified two interlinked issues that have affected the process of public policy development and implementation. One issue is skill-gaps in grasping and interpreting mandatory policy. The second issue is drawn from leaders and managers' competency in human resources management which is central to policy development and implementation. For example, article 18 of Decree-law no.7/2010 permits educational leaders to design and propose the creation of a human resource management unit within educational institutions. Article 18 of Decree-law no.7/2010 has quoted below:

Article 18: Human Resources Management

Within the scope of its responsibilities in matters of human resources management, the Office of Technical Support must:

- a) Propose alterations in faculty and non-faculty staffs;
- b) Administer all existing human resources;
- c) Plan and implement working hours for faculty and non-faculty staffs;
- d) Manage licenses, absences, appointments and exchanges;
- e) Execute all guidelines related to processes involving recruiting and assigning faculty and non-faculty staffs;
- f) Provide relevant information in matters of school inspection. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.7/2010, 18)

This article provides an insight that an educational institution shall establish a department or unit that is accountable for activities like preparing policy proposals (as stated in paragraph a), running human resources management (paragraphs; b, c, and d), implementing policies or instructions (paragraph e), and preparing reports (paragraph f).

Ironically, the four institutions where this research was conducted between June and July 2015 have not established yet the human resources departments. The organisational structure charts of these institutions do not show the existence of a human resource department or unit. This is an example of a leadership skill-gap, facing some Timorese leaders

and managers in interpreting article 18 of Decree-law no.7/2010 aforementioned. One institution (with the pseudonym 'institution Y') has initiated some roles of personnel management across two divisions; Department XXX and Department YYY. Nonetheless, this information is not sufficient to represent the roles of human resources management that an institution should perform. The following quotation presents some roles of personnel management under the responsibilities of two different departments within institution 'Y':

Department of XXX (*verify proposals for study leaves, and verify proposals for after study leaves*)

Department of ZZZ (*analyse and verify the existence vacant and advice General Director about the proposal for recruitment, and produce the brochures about performance appraisal indicators*)

These quotations show that some roles of personnel management are shared randomly across departments. In conclusion, public institutions which do not have human resource management departments, either the roles of human resources management or personnel management might be randomly shared across departments. Thus, there will be overlapping or less organised responsibilities about who should do what.

Another example of a human resources management skill-gap has affected the absence of organisational terms of reference and staff job descriptions. Article 39 of the same law offers authority to the public service middle leaders to create staff job descriptions. Article 39 of Law no.8/2004 quoted below:

All levels and positions shall have job descriptions and an indication of requirements that will govern recruitment and serve as benchmarks to identify performance standards for the assessment of civil servants. (Timor-Leste Law no.8/2004, 39)

This law because it emphasises collocation of the right persons in the right post to embed policy implementation, the creation of the human resources units is sine qua non to dovetail the process of staffing within an educational institution.

However, a significant finding is that three out of four Timor-Leste public institutions where this research was conducted between June and July 2015, have not prepared staff job descriptions, yet. There is only one institution that had provided separated instructions for middle leaders and subordinates operational guides. Nonetheless, the information included in the instructions is not sufficient. Table 4.2 presents written instructions for the head of department and staff of department XXX in which, the institution ‘Y’ denotes this as staff job descriptions:

Table 4. 2: Job descriptions of Department XXX in Institution Y

Position	Responsibilities
Head Department	Coordinate and supervise departmental activities, and other tasks instructed by superior
Official 1	Training data; <i>maintain data collected from all government ministries, analyse data, and other tasks given by superior</i>
Official 2	Contacting ministries; <i>contact ministries to collect data associated with training and development, learning assistance, study leaves, and other tasks given by superior</i>
Official 3	After study leaves; <i>maintain data, contacting the secretion office institution ‘Y’, verify proposal for after study leaves, give advice, and other tasks given by superior</i>
Official 4	Learning assistance; <i>coordinate learning assistance programme, proposals and time table, verification, data maintenance, and other tasks given by superior</i>
Official 5	Human resources training activities; <i>coordinate meetings of steering committee and human resource training, data maintenance, publications, and other tasks given by superior</i>

The snapshot of information in table 4.2 above reveals that firstly, the head of department’s job description is not clearly articulated. Secondly, there are duplicated and unorganised roles or functions between the officials within Department XXX. For instance, the five staff perform the same functions such as ‘data collection’, data analysis’, and ‘data maintenance’. Moreover, there are three officials (Officials 1, 2 and 3) who duplicate jobs in line with staff capacity building, and two officials (Officials 4 and 5) who duplicate jobs associated with intern-ministerial communication.

Language issue

The Constitution urges utilisation of Portuguese and Tetum in education and other public institutions. Section 13 of the Constitution states:

1. Tetum and Portuguese shall be the official languages in the Democratic Republic of East Timor.
2. Tetum and the other national languages shall be valued and developed by the State. (Timor-Leste Constitution, 13)

This gives an understanding that a civil servant should at least speak, read, or write in one of the official languages aforementioned.

Moreover, utilisation of Portuguese and Tetum as one of the duties of civil servants is also outlined in Law no.8/2004, Decree-law no.27/2008 and Decree-law no.23/2010. The articles of the aforementioned policies quoted:

Law no.8/2004, article 41b:

- b. To actively use and promote Portuguese and Tetum as the languages of the public administration. (Timor-Leste Law no.8/2004, 41b)

Decree-law no.27/2008, article 8:

Where the nature of the functions so require, the notice of competition may demand that applicants have knowledge of one or more languages in addition to the knowledge of at least of one official language. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.27/2008, 8)

Decree-law no.23/2010, article 14 point b and c:

- b. Acquisition of higher levels of proficiency in the Tetum and Portuguese languages as conditions for entering and advancing in the teaching career.
- c. Maintain a proficient fluency in the Portuguese language as the main language for instruction and acquisition of science and knowledge, namely through the use of technical language and different stylistic resources to facilitate student comprehension. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.23/2010, 14b & c)

These three policy documents present a different focus on the two official languages used as main criteria for an applicant to be recruited as a civil servant. Firstly, the Law no.8/2004

encourages utilisation of Portuguese and Tetum as the duty of a civil servant in public administration. Secondly, Decree-law no.27/2008 provides an option for an applicant either mastering Tetum or Portuguese as the requirement to be accepted as a civil servant. However, the Decree-law no.23/2010 demands higher requirement in terms of the two official languages acquisition. For instance, article 14b of this decree-law urges an applicant must obtain a certain standard of language knowledge. In addition, article 14c of the decree-law prioritises high acquisition in Portuguese rather than Tetum.

The key finding in this documentary analysis presents that the majority of educational middle leaders are occupied by the Timorese young generation who went to schools during Indonesian occupation. These middle leaders speak Tetum and the majority of them do not speak Portuguese.

Key findings

This documentary analysis reveals that in the process of policy development, policy articles associated with utilisation of power, showing obedience, and giving instructions could generate misinterpretation and wrong utilisation. There is a propensity for some chief executives to maintain the status-quo and centralise control in decision making. While, issues regarding human resources management and the use of language in policy contents may challenge middle leaders to interpret, plan, take action and monitor policy implementation at department level.

Strategies that might help middle leaders' involvement in policy development and implementation

The Timor-Leste civil service policies give opportunities for civil servants to improve their knowledge, including enhancement of leadership and managerial skills. Firstly, article 49h of Law no.8/2004 considers the rights of civil servants to “participate in professional training courses and elevation of their qualification”. This paragraph permits the civil servants including middle leaders to utilise opportunities such as trainings, coaching, and mentoring to boost their knowledge in relation to public administration.

Secondly, the opportunity for the skills enhancement is also regulated in the Decree-law no.23/2010 titled ‘Approves the Statute of Careers for Child Educators and Teachers of Basic and Secondary Education (Statute of Teaching Careers)’. Article 23.3 of this law provides opportunity for educational civil service to enhance their managerial knowledge. For instance, article 23.3 quoted:

The results obtained with continuing education are valid for the purposes of:

- a) Performance review;
- b) Career advancement;
- c) Teacher placement procedures;
- d) Access to management positions. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.23/2010, 23.3)

This article gives the chance for the civil servants to improve their knowledge and experience in broad areas such as staff performance, career, placement and management. This decree-law encourages the development of leadership skills connected to planning, teamwork, delegation and monitoring.

Thirdly, the Decree-law no.12/2009 points out the types of scholarship that the Timor-Leste government has provided for the Timor-Leste civil servants. Article 9 of the decree-law

explains three types of scholarships that a civil servant can utilise to boost his or her skills.

Article 9 of the Decree-law no.12/2009 has been quoted below:

In order to obtain a degree or educational diploma, the Democratic Republic of East Timor attributes the following type of scholarships:

- a) Diploma scholarships I, II, III or IV;
- b) Licentiate degree scholarships;
- c) Master's scholarships – support to the thesis or dissertation. (Timor-Leste Decree-law no.12/2009, 9)

Through this article, the Timor-Leste government has opened the door of capacity building for its public servants. It depends on the expertise and creativity of leaders and human resources managers within educational organisations to identify the areas for further improvement and, in turn utilise this opportunity for the development of organisation.

Key findings

The key findings show that the Timor-Leste public policies permit public servants to improve their personal knowledge in order to boost organisational performance via short-terms courses, long-term learning, and trainings for career advancement and managerial positions.

Section Two: Interview

This section presents the result of data gathering via interviews conducted between June and July 2015 in Timor-Leste. The findings from the participants' interviews have been consolidated and are provided into four categories. The four categories cover the Timor-Leste public policy development, involvement of educational civil service middle leaders in policy, policy issues, and strategies that help middle leaders' involvement in policy.

Interview findings

The voices of participants have been translated from Tetum into English and their voices are presented via quotes. Seven out of nine the participants are male and only two of them are female. All the participants are middle leaders at different institutions. To protect the identity of participants and the institutions, pseudonyms are used for anonymity. The objective of providing verbatim evidence of participant voice is to link readers directly to the raw data gathered from the participants in order to help readers use their insight to grasp the real findings from this research. To assist the reader, Table 4.3 below provides general information about the participants' name, gender, position, and the institutions they are associated with.

Table 4. 3: Code, name, gender, position and institution

Code	Name	Gender	Position	Institution
An	Antonio	M	Head Department	Educational Institution
Je	Jose	M	Head Department	Educational Institution
Jo	João	M	Head Department	Educational Institution
Ne	Nella	F	Head Department	Educational Institution
Re	Rogério	M	Head Department	Educational Institution
Ad	Adolfo	M	Head Department	Government Institution
Li	Lidia	F	Head Department	Government Institution
Lu	Luis	M	Head Department	Government Institution
Ro	Ronaldo	M	Head Department	Government Institution

Timor-Leste public policy development

Authority responsible for public policy

The participants' understandings about the authority that develops public policies are varied. Some interviewees indicated the Timor-Leste National Parliament and government institutions as the organisations that create public policies. Five participants mentioned the Civil Service Commission as the organisation that develops public policies via collaboration with the government ministries. For example, Jose stated:

the policies or laws regarding public service are produced by the Civil Service Commission. However, the development of those policies is commenced at each directorate such as general directorate, national directorate and department". (Je)

Moreover, three interviewees say that the public policies are developed by the authority in the ministries. Ronaldo's voice is quoted:

In the previous years, the public policies and laws were developed by the policy-makers at the Council of Ministries meetings. The laws were sent directly to the National Parliament for approval. The final versions of the laws were, then, sent to the Civil Service Commission for implementation. (Ro)

However, two participants pointed out the National Parliament and the Civil Service Commission as the only bodies that develop public policies. Nella and Adolfo have respectively quoted:

Based on my understanding, especially in the education area, the majority of the policies are created by the National Parliament, and we are just the implementers. We do not create those policies. (Ne)

There is only one civil service commission, no other institutions. So, in terms of its function, only the Civil Service Commission has the authority to create the public policies, then we are asked to implement. (Ad)

Surprisingly, Luis mentioned the name of a chief executive at the Civil Service Commission as the person who developed public policies, “Mr. YX is one of the chief executives at the Civil Service Commission who developed the public policy such as performance evaluation”.

Key findings

The key findings of this research show that whilst some participants have a clear understanding of the authority that develop the Timor-Leste public policies such as the National Parliament, government ministries, and the Civil service Commission, others are vague or mistaken about where policies are actually developed. More than half of the participants view the educational middle leaders as the agents of the public policy implementers. These middle leaders still do not know their roles as the agents who have a stake in public policy development.

Middle leaders’ roles in the public policy

The nine participants viewed the educational civil service middle leaders’ roles from different perspectives. Three participants acknowledged their roles in public policy development and implementation, three others reported that their roles are limited to policy implementation, and the other three said that they have never been included in any policy development.

On the one hand, Lidia, Nella, and Luis are clear about their roles when participating in the policy development via activities such as agenda-setting and writing policy. The voices of Luis and Lidia are respectively quoted:

As the department head, I always attend the meetings with my director general and national directors to review laws and decree laws (Li).

I contribute ideas to develop public service code of conduct as the operational guide for the civil servants (Lu).

This data confirms that the aforementioned participants are involved in public policy development by contributing ideas in the meetings of policy agenda-setting and drafting an operational manual for staff. Moreover, the aforementioned participants also revealed that they know about their roles in public policy implementation. Nella and Luis exemplified their roles in policy implementation as follows:

I used to be involved in the meetings for policy decision-making, especially the establishment of the organisational annual action plan. ... In the meetings, we established an agreed plan for one period or one year that we all should follow. (Ne)

I am involved in the process of the public policy development and implementation. I am responsible for the civil servants' performance appraisal. (Lu)

This gives rise to an insight that these two participants used to be involved in the process of planning for action such as contributing to annual planning and monitoring policy like performance appraisal to implement policy at department level.

On the other hand, the majority of participants; João, Jose, Antonio, Ronaldo, Rogerio, and Adolfo who have been holding positions as department heads for more than two years stated that they have never been included in any public policy development. For instance, Adolfo who has been holding the position as the head of department for more than 10 years argued:

If you say that the middle leaders are involved in the process of policy development, I say 'No'. As middle leaders we have never been involved in the process of any public policy development. (Ad)

In addition, Antonio, Jose, Adolfo said that they did not know where and how the policies had been developed, but in the end they were instructed by the chief executives to implement the policies at the department levels. This signifies that many Timorese educational civil service middle leaders' ideas have not been considered in public policy development or, their

voices have been represented by senior leaders or policy decision-makers during the process of policy development.

Being excluded from policy agenda-setting, João, Rogerio and Jose are mistaken about the roles of educational civil service middle leaders in public policy development and implementation. Two examples of obscurity are quoted:

As a good citizen, I contribute to the process of national development. For example, I am a teacher, I serve the students, and this is a form of my involvement in the process of national development.
(Jo)

In my perspective, an educational civil service middle leader's role in public policy development is linked to civil service assessment and trainings for professional skills enhancement. (Je)

What is evident here is the lack of understanding regarding their possible contribution to policy development and implementation at the department level.

Key findings

The key findings presents that the educational civil service middle leaders who are involved in public policy development by their chief executives grasp their roles in public policy development. However, those who have never been involved in public policy development or those whose voices are represented by their chief executives in the policy agenda-setting are not clear about their roles and rights in the policy development and implementation.

Involving educational civil service middle leaders in policy

Information about the Timor-Leste middle leaders' involvement in policy is varied. The participants shared different experiences in relation to policy development and implementation. The following sub-topics will discuss how the educational middle leaders have been involved in public policy in Timor-Leste public institutions.

Involving educational middle leaders in policy development

Initiation and information gathering

The finding of the research reveals that there are very few chief executives who acknowledge the importance of involving educational middle leaders in public policy development. For instance, there were only two respondents (Antonio and Nella) who acknowledged that their institutions have six monthly meetings with the executives from the ministry. These participants said that via six monthly meetings two-way communication is facilitated. Antonio said “through these meetings, issues associated with administration system, finance, and skill gaps are raised to the executives”. The notion of two-way communication such as routine meetings between the chief executives and middle leaders gives an understanding that senior leaders provide opportunities for middle leaders’ to exercise their roles, express their ideas to influence public policy agenda.

Ironically, Lidia argued that some chief executives represent middle leaders’ voices in policy development. Lidia quoted:

The department heads are not included in these meetings because the chief executives think that the national directors can represent the department heads to inform or raise issues encountered by the department heads and the staff on the ground. (Li)

This gives an understanding that some Timorese middle leaders are not usually encouraged to raise issues facing them to policy makers.

Consultation and agenda-setting

The research identified that only three interviewees (Antonio, Nella, and Luis) provided evidence about their participation in the process of policy agenda-setting. For instance, Luis

emphasised that his senior leaders considered him as an important official who provided ideas or feedback in relation to public policy development. The voice of Luis is quoted below:

Yes, the policy authors always ask for my ideas about the first draft of policies regarding my operational area before submitting to the National Parliament. ... I always advocate the policy decision-makers about the importance of fair treatment to all public institutions and considering technical issues facing certain institutions. (Lu)

In contrary to the three participants mentioned, the majority of Timorese middle leaders have not been included in the process of policy agenda-setting and consultation. Six participants explicated that they were consulted only in some policies development or, in other words, senior leaders do not consider their voices in many policy developments. For instance, Rogerio exemplified that “there were some policies that the chief executives consult us; however, in many policies, the senior leaders did not include us and the community”.

Surprisingly, more than half of the respondents stated that there were practices such as interests and the status-quo maintenance by the senior leaders during the process of policy agenda-setting. An evidence of the status quo maintenance is done via nomination or recruitment of people to leadership positions as raised by Rogerio in the following quotation:

The majority of the laws were developed by the government. Our leaders who were nominated or trusted by the government are given authority to create the draft of public policies. These draft then, discussed in the Council of the Ministers’ meeting without consulting the department heads. (Re)

This quotation gives an understanding that the middle leaders’ voices have been represented by their chief executives in the process of policy development. This information gives an understanding that the Timor-Leste public administration chief executives have misconceptions about middle leaders’ direct involvement in the policy development. This is an example of senior leaders’ views that dominate public policy agenda-setting.

Moreover, João pointed to practice of blocking information by senior leaders within the educational institutions as follows:

We hardly access information associated with new public policies, and there is no opportunity for us to contribute ideas. This has affected my role to participate in public policy development. (Jo)

The notions of the status quo protection and the blocking of information by the senior leaders could be conjectured that many middle leaders were not given the chance to provide their views during a policy agenda-setting.

Writing policy

The finding of this research has shown that more than half of the participants described their involvement and discussions on policy drafts as an ad hoc theory. They said that some senior leaders organise quasi-formal activities such as seminars, workshops and meetings for the draft of policies, merely to inform the educational middle leaders about what the policies are. In the process of policy decision-making, the ideas of educational middle leaders could be manipulated by senior leaders. For example, five interviewees (Adolfo, Lidia, João, Jose and Antonio) stated that sometimes their chief executives invite them to attend the meetings about policies, but they had never been given the chance to question or comment on the policy drafts. Jose vindicated how the educational civil service middle leaders have been excluded from drafting of the policy:

The chief executives organised dissemination activities to inform us about policies, but our ideas were not considered in the draft of the policies. So, the dissemination activities were merely as ad hoc theories. (Je)

Moreover, Rogerio states political interests dominate the process of writing policy in that the voice of middle leaders are ignored during the process of policy writing:

Very little information has been shared with us in relation to the process of drafting policy documents. Our executive leaders hardly consult us or ask for our ideas. ... Many times our supervisors ignore the ideas that we present. This is a political issue that we encounter. (Ro)

This means that the policy information sharing or ideas collected for a new policy agenda is just circulated between senior leaders and middle managers who are affiliated to the political parties or groups that have similar interests.

Involving educational middle leaders in policy implementation

Interpreting policy

This research uncovers that only three participants (Jose, Antonio, and Rogerio) reported that they have competency in interpreting mandatory policy into their organisational vision and mission. For example, stated:

Yes, I understand the mandatory requirements in the policies, and it is easy to interpret into my department vision and mission. (Je)

Surprisingly the research identified that these middle leaders have vague or mistaken ideas about the insight of policy interpretation. On the one hand, Rogerio and Jose acknowledged that they have competency in interpreting public policy mandatory requirements into the organisational vision and mission. On the other hand, these participants are preoccupied with the absence of terms of reference and job descriptions in the institution he is associated with.

Rogerio quoted:

Many issues are derived from interpretation of policy mandatory requirements in the public policies. This is not only for me, but also for other department heads. (Ro)

This means that a middle leader is unable to interpret mandatory policy into his organisational vision and mission. Jose also emerged an issue associated with the middle leaders' competency in interpreting policy:

We still do not have the hierarchical job descriptions. Although implicitly the job descriptions are regulated in the institutional educational regulation, explicitly we do not have what so-call job descriptions. So, the job descriptions for each staff have not been established yet. (Je)

The absence of job descriptions unequivocally denotes ambiguity in relation to an educational middle leader understanding their role. This means that a middle leader is unable to create his departmental terms of reference and staff job descriptions.

Planning for action

This research revealed that only one participant (Nella) considered her involvement in planning for policy implementation at department level:

As the department heads, we work in a team to collect information and prepare a draft of a strategic plan based on the information gathered from different departments, we, then present proposals to the institution. Then, the proposals are accumulated and submitted to the department heads before submitting to the Ministry of Education.

However, six out of nine participants (Rogerio, Lidia, Jose, Ronaldo, João and Adolfo) referred to the issue regarding excessive bureaucracy that has centralised decision-making and planning by the senior leaders. This problem has prevented the educational civil service middle leaders from participating in planning and providing feedback about what should be the role of middle leaders and other staff in policy implementation. This is asserted by Rogerio as quoted in the following:

We have coordination line at our school, so there is always intervention by the superiors. I mean, we have limited power to make decisions at the department level. In terms internal school regulations, we cannot decide by our own. So, everything that you do must be based on the instruction given by the upper leaders. (Re)

It is evident that some chief executives control heads of department and intervene in action planning and decision-making.

Taking action

The research revealed that four participants (Rogerio, Ronaldo, Jose and Adolfo) considered their roles limited to policy implementation. Rogerio explained that implementation of curriculum such as teaching in the classrooms is a form of public policy implementation:

I implement curriculum at school, this is a form of my involvement in the process of policy implementation. (Re)

However, Ronaldo, Jose and Adolfo argued that their role is limited to policy implementation.

Ronaldo quoted:

As a department head, my role is to implement the policies which have being established. We are obliged to do our roles based on the public service decree laws as the guide for us to follow. (Ro)

It is evident that many educational middle leaders do not know how public policies have been developed; they just follow the instructions given by the chief executives to implement policies at the department level.

Monitoring policy

This research identified that from nine participants, only two of them (Luis and João) acknowledged that they exercise their roles in monitoring policy implementation within the organisations they are associated with:

My role in the public policy implementation is evaluating the civil servants performance via performance appraisal activities. (Lu)

In my perspective, the role that a middle leader should play in terms of public policy development is linked to civil service assessment. (Jo)

This gives rise to an understanding that in Timor-Leste public institutions, many middle leaders do not exercise their roles in relation to observing and monitoring staff performance and getting tasks done.

Key findings

The key findings emerged that very few chief executives consider the importance of middle leaders' and involved few middle leaders in information gathering, providing ideas and giving feedback on policy drafts, as contributing to policy development. For instance, few participants were included in taking action, but they had never been involved in planning and monitoring policy implementation.

Policy issues

Issues found in policy development

Many participants pointed out that protecting the status quo was a predominant issue facing the middle leaders in the process of public policy development.

Protecting of the Status-quo

Firstly, the vast majority of interviewees referred to the practice of fostering group or political interests as a way of protecting the status-quo in public policy development. Three interviewees (Adlofo, Antonio, and Rogerio) explicated that this happens via nomination of staff to the leadership and managerial positions in public institutions. Three examples of the status-quo maintenance are presented respectively by Adolfo and Ronaldo as in the following quotations:

Many chief executives are appointed not because of their capacity or experiences, but because of political interests. ... Several directors who were respectively nominated to institution X had to resign

from the leadership positions in the end, because they realised that they were not qualified and not capable of leading this institution. (Ad)

There is a political issue that does not permit me to make any decision. Technically, I can only present my ideas. As a department head, I cannot make any decision. It is quite difficult, so I can only prepare and present my ideas. (Ro)

This research discovered that the practice of protecting the status-quo is orderly and organised by appointing cronies into certain areas of public administration to push particular group or political interests and maintain the existence of the status-quo. Adolfo exemplifies how the status quo maintenance is promoted within the layers of bureaucracy within public institutions.

Secondly, senior leaders block information from middle leaders' access. This has emerged an issue linked to the creation of a policy merely based on the senior leaders' views, as middle leaders are excluded from the initiating issues, consulting ideas, and policy writing. For example, Jose exemplified that:

we all do not know where and how the law about XXX for institution YYY had been developed. The upper leaders and decision-makers produced this law as a secret process at the top levels then, we are asked to implement. (Je)

This quotation gives rise to a conjecture that some senior leaders or policy-makers may not open doors for people who are not affiliated to their groups or political parties to participate in policy agenda-setting.

Three participants highlighted a bureaucratic issue in communication between senior leaders and subordinates during the stage of policy development. Jose, Nella and Adolfo acknowledged that there is poor communication and coordination between chief executives and middle managers within public institutions. Nella gave an example of a communication issue as follows:

Not all teaching staff are allowed to have a face-to-face meeting with the head of the institution. The meeting with the chief executive is represented by team members who were selected via the division meetings. (Ne)

Delegation of some staff members to represent other civil servants in the meetings with chief executives is akin to bureaucratisation of a two-way communication. The long-drawn-out information and transferring processes can be seen as excessive bureaucracy along the levels of the hierarchy.

Issues found in policy implementation

The result of the data gathered from the research field shows that the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders encounter various issues in their roles as policy implementers. The interviewees revealed issues associated with red tape, political intervention, and skill-gaps in policy implementation.

Red tape

The majority of participants indicated the excessive control by chief executives as an impediment in public policy implementation. For instance, Lidia, Rogerio, João, Nella, Jose and Antonio explained that red tape is very obvious in the process of budgeting where, the department operational planning and financial proposal for activity implementation is very time consuming. There are excessive controls along the layers of hierarchy from national director to the director general before final approval. Lidia and João respectively quoted:

Oh no..., if you say that without any intervention from the upper leader, I say no. No one can say that he or she can make a decision without intervention. ... For example, the office maintenance budget proposed by the logistics unit is very time consuming, because this proposal must be approved by the national director then, submitted to the director general for final approval. (Li)

The intervention of chief executives at the ministerial level in the decision-making is quite strong. As a department head, I have no power to make decision to develop my department. This is because

the process of the decision-making is centralised, and we have to wait for the final decision made by the executives at the ministry. (Jo)

This information shows that the department heads are not devolved to making decision about budget execution at department level. Decisions about budget execution can only be made when there is a mandate from the chief executives at the ministerial levels and, this could affect timing for programme implementation.

Control of centralised decision-making

Seven out of nine participants (Rogerio, Nella, Lidia, Jose, Ronaldo, João and Adolfo) referred to the issue regarding centralised decision-making by the senior leaders. This problem has impeded the educational civil service middle leaders' roles in planning for programmes implementation at department level. This is asserted by Rogerio as quoted in the following:

We have coordination line at our school, so there is always intervention by the superiors. I mean, we have limited power to make decisions at the department level. In terms internal school regulations, we cannot decide by our own. So, everything that you do must be based on the instruction given by the upper leaders. (Re)

One main issue that impedes my role is the delay or cancelation of the implementation of plans that has been established at the departmental level. This is because of bureaucracy and politics issues, and the upper leaders have absolute power to make decisions. (Ne)

It is evident that some chief executives do intervene in the departmental action plans. This is a form of control by senior leaders in planning for action to implement policy.

Leadership and human resources competency policy

The majority of interviewees denoted the roles of human resources management and middle leaders' expertise as critical issues in public policy implementation. First, some participants directed the attention to the middle managers' incompetency in grasping and translation of policy mandatory requirements. For instance, Ronaldo and Lidia stated that they encounter

issues associated with grasping and interpreting public policy mandatory requirements into their institutions' vision and mission. The voices of Ronaldo and Lidia are respectively quoted:

Some policy mandatory requirements are clear, but some are not. ... The laws use written judiciary terms, so we have to interpret and understand them before implementation. (Ro)

Instructions in some laws and decree-law are not clearly stated. For instance, in the Decree-law of Performance Appraisal, some instructions are not clearly explained. (Li)

This analysis speculates that there might be two potential factors that underlie the notion of policy interpretation. One, middle leaders may encounter skill-gaps in policy interpretation. Or, language use in the policy document is another issue that challenges middle leaders' grasp in interpreting policy mandatory requirements.

Secondly, six participants (Rogerio, Jose, Antonio, Lidia, Ronaldo, and Adolfo) indicated the drawbacks in consolidation of staff expertise in policy implementation. These interviewees unequivocally pointed to the absence of hierarchical terms of reference and staff job descriptions. For example, Antonio said:

So far, our hierarchical terms of reference are still not clear. In de facto, we hold the positions as leaders and managers; however, there is no instruction that defines clearly what are (should be) the department heads' roles ... there is no separation between the main responsibilities of the chief executives and the department heads. (An)

This quotation provides an insight into the basic principles of human resource management that are not prioritised in some educational institutions and this affects middle leaders' competency in interpreting policy for implementation. The absence of terms of reference and job descriptions may result in overlapping jobs, and this could compound into a staffing issue in policy implementation.

Language

Some interviewees identified issues related to language use in the Timor-Leste public policy documents. Rogerio and Ronaldo view the use of Portuguese in the policy texts as an obligation. They draw attention to the fact that the majority of educational middle leaders who went to school in Indonesian occupation do not understand Portuguese but must use it.

Ronaldo claimed:

The Constitution of RDTL has determined two languages; Portuguese and Tetum as the official languages. The majority of our generation went to schools during the Indonesian occupation. Whilst the students understand Portuguese, the teachers are not able to teach in Portuguese. ... Whether you like or not, you have to force yourself to learn. (Ro)

Moreover, Ronaldo suggested technical translation assistance to explain the content of public policy documents to the local staff in the Tetum Language. This is also emphasised by Nella who used to go to a university in Portugal that:

there are many technical terms used in policy document which might compound the staff's understanding. If the translation versions or explanations of laws were also provided in Tetum, this will facilitate people's understandings. (Ne)

This gives an understanding that many education civil service middle leaders strive to grasp the content of public policy documents written in Portuguese. While many educational civil service middle leaders do not read and write in Portuguese, many public policy documents have not been produced in Tetum, the language which is widely spoken amidst Timorese people.

Key findings

Another key finding of this research that emerged was the status-quo maintenance in policy development. This is implemented by some Timorese public service chief executives via blocking information, centralised control and nepotism in nomination of staff to leadership

and managerial positions within public institutions. In the notion policy implementation, many middle leaders encounter issues such as practice of excessive bureaucracy by their senior leaders, leadership and managerial skills such as the ability connected to interpreting the mandatory policy, managing team work and delegation, the absence of roles connected to human resources management within public institutions, and utilisation of Portuguese in policy content.

Strategies that help middle leaders' involvement in policy

The interview findings pointed to leadership development, human resources management development, and provision of policy documents in Tetum as predominant factors that assist the educational middle leaders' involvement in public policy development and implementation.

Improve middle leaders involvement in policy development

Leadership development

All the interviewees unanimously highlighted the enhancement of the chief executives' ability in communication and collaborative decision-making, as critical aspects to support middle leaders' involvement in public policy development. These participants mentioned the importance of information gathering along a line of command from senior leaders down to front line managers, vertical and lateral coordination.

Firstly, five participants (Lidia, Jose, João, Ronaldo, and Nella) directed attention to clarity in the line of command by their senior leaders as one aspect that shows how communication and collaboration occur. For example, Lidia stated that "there must be clear information sharing between upper and middle leaders". This participant believes that clarity in the line

of command is essential to avoid confusion when information is collected from different sources.

Secondly, vertical and lateral coordination is another aspect that contributes to policy development. Five participants (Rogerio, Ronaldo, Jose, Nella and Lidia) suggested the enhancement of the senior leaders' skills in managing communication. These participants believe that via meetings and discussions, the middle leaders' voices need to be considered by the senior leaders. For instance, Ronaldo said:

There should be suggestions or inputs from the baseline to the decision-makers before a decision is made. ... We need to be involved directly in the meetings or discussions for policy decision-making. Meetings and discussions are the instruments we can utilise to provide our suggestions. (Ro)

The research discovered that some participants view communication between senior leaders and middle leaders, as well as interdepartmental coordination and collaboration, as crucial in order to share expertise and discuss solutions for the issues an organisation faces. Participants believe that a two-way communication is important so as to give chance to middle leaders to provide ideas and influence policy agenda-setting.

Some interviewees refer to consultation with senior leaders as crucial to engage educational middle leaders in the policy development. For instance, the voices of Ronaldo and Lidia are respectively quoted below:

Yes, I consult with my director general. Especially, in the new areas associated with the policy implementation, I always consult with my superiors and collaborate with other middle leaders. (Ro)

I always ask for my director's help to inform the higher levels of bureaucrats and other superiors about the issue I face, if they could help me addressing those issues. (Li)

In summary, a two-way communication encourages middle leaders to not only communicate issues they face in the organisations, but also to consult with their senior leaders about policies and mandatory requirements that are not clear for them to grasp.

Improve middle leaders involvement in policy implementation

Establishment of human resources management divisions

All participants directed attention to the reform of hierarchical structures which are central to the inclusion of middle leaders in public policy implementation. For example, Nella, Adolfo, and Luis suggested the establishment of human resources management units within educational institutions. These participants believe that the existence of a human resources management division could control issues regarding impartiality and, in turn promote merit-based nomination to management positions. Rogerio and Adolfo emphasised the necessity for the improvement of merit-based nomination as below:

I suggest relocating people to leadership and management positions based on their skills and qualifications. One should bear in mind that the objective of nomination is not because we are friends, or because we have known each other; overall, this must be based on the competencies that individuals have in relation to the positions they occupy. (Re)

In order to avoid political appointment, recruitment for the positions in the technical areas should be contextualised to the relevant educational background. (Ad)

So, the notion of merit-based selection mentioned by these participants refers to the role of human resources management to push role identification, job design, and appropriate staffing. Currently, this human resources management role and function is not evident in the department where people were interviewed.

In addition, Rogerio, Nella, Adolfo and Luis suggested the creation of human resources management departments which should be accountable for the review on the

implementation of policies that regulate recruitments and leadership and management positions. This is aimed at re-adjustment of the people who have knowledge backgrounds and experiences that suit the leadership and managerial positions. The voice of Rogerio and Adlofo are quoted in following:

Currently, we just allocate people to occupy the positions that are vacant. So, it is important to re-allocate the correct staff on the right posts. (Re)

I recommend 'reform' from the top leadership down to the baseline as a better strategy for involvement of middle leaders in public policy development and implementation. ... The evidence shows that some policies implemented by the government had failed to obtain the targeted goals due to the domination of political and group interests in nomination of people to leadership positions. (Ad)

These respondents believe that the presence of the human resources management within educational institutions is a precise strategy to surmount long-drawn-out in irregularities connected to recruitments and staff allocations that have precluded many middle leaders from becoming involved in public policy implementation.

Managing team planning by senior leaders

Three interviewees (Nella, João and Jose) recommended that improvement of integrated planning could support the educational middle leaders to be more involved in public policy development and implementation. These participants proposed improvement in the chief executives knowledge of institutional strategic planning where various department heads are involved. These participants believe that team planning is critical to address issues drawn from the department operational plan and decentralised budget allocation. Nella acknowledged that a good strategic plan would help middle leaders to implement public policies. Nella said:

Our strategic plan is the main factor that helps us implementing the policy at the departmental level. For example, we have stated the amount of money to be spent for our departmental operation in the action plan, so we just follow this plan. (Ne)

Moreover, Jose, Nella and João believed that the centralised budget at the ministry has retarded various activities at the department levels. Thus, they recommended decentralised budget allocation to the departments. Furthermore, these interviewees emphasised that the decentralised budget to educational department will support their operational planning to implement policy that suits departmental needs like laboratory and research activities. For example, Jose stated:

This department deals with teaching and learning. So, there should be budget allocation for research activities. However, no budget has been allocated for the lecturers to do research. (Je)

In conclusion, an integrated planning and decentralised budgeting are ways of power devolution. This gives middle leaders authority to execute their action plans to achieve the organisational objective.

Management development

Five participants (Rogerio, João, Jose, Nella and Luis) recommend enhancement of educational civil service middle leaders' managerial skills in managing policy implementation at department level. These respondents acknowledged that providing training opportunities for the educational middle leaders in interpreting policy could enhance middle leaders' skills and, in turn this motivates them to be more involved in policy implementation at the department level. Rogerio suggested that:

It is important to enhance the middle leaders' skills in management in order to help them managing the department programmes to implement public policies. (Re)

Moreover, Nella, Luis, João, and Jose pointed out the need for middle leaders to upskill in specified areas via training such as Portuguese lessons, laboratory and library management to support policy implementation at the department level. For example, Jose proposed “trainings or comparative study opportunities for the department heads”. This participant believes that comparative study or a study tour will help middle leaders to gain new experiences from other sites, and utilise their insights to contextualise new gained experiences into their departments. This is emphasised by João that it is crucial to “empower the department heads so that we can manage our departments”. This participant believes that management development boosts middle leaders’ competencies to plan, organise, monitor, and evaluate public policy implementation in the fields.

Provision of policy content in Tetum

More than half of participants (Lidia, Rogerio, Nella, João, Jose and Antonio) acknowledged that beside Portuguese, Tetum is also posited as the Timor-Leste official language in the Constitution of the Republic Democratic of Timor-Leste. Because the majority of Timor-Leste educational middle leaders understand Tetum; so, it is critical that provision of public policy documents in Tetum could support the educational civil middle leaders in managing policy implementation at the department level. Nella and Lidia have respectively quoted:

Few policy documents are provided in Tetum and; this helps us to grasp policy contents easily. (Ne)

If there are translation version of policy documents in Tetum, or if the laws are simplified such as providing the explanation in Tetum, this will facilitate people’s understanding. (Li)

Emphasising this, Rogerio suggested provision of policy content in Tetum, because the majority of teachers including middle leaders teach students in Tetum. Rogerio stated:

We have to translate teaching materials into Tetum, the language that we know better in order to transfer the knowledge to the students. What we usually do is by transferring the knowledge to students using Tetum or Indonesia. (Re)

This gives an understanding that many educational civil service middle leaders still find it difficult to grasp and interpret public policy mandatory requirements into departmental vision and mission. So, provision of public policy document in the Tetum which is spoken widely among the Timorese community may facilitate the educational civil service middle leaders understanding and to interpret policy mandatory requirement into department vision and mission easily.

Key finding

A key finding of this research reveals that to improve Timor-Leste policy development Timor-Leste public policy documents, leadership skills in policy interpretation should be enhanced. This is crucial to link policy mandatory into organisation operational planning and staff allocation. Moreover, the respondents' direct attention to the establishment of a division of human resources management and the provision of professional development such as managing team planning and management development. In addition, participants also recommend the provision of policy documents in Tetum for public access

Chapter Five

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part is discussion of the findings presented in chapter four. The second part of this chapter will present conclusions of the discussion of findings. Then, the last part of this chapter will present some recommendations regarding strategies to address issues identified in the study and suggestions for future research.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the research are discussed in relation to four headings: Timor-Leste public policy development; involvement of the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in the policy; policy issues; and strategies that support the educational middle managers' involvement in policy development and implementation.

The Timor-Leste public policy development

The research data revealed that the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders' understandings about the authority that develops public policy is varied. Three participants who were included by their chief executives in policy development referred to the Timor-Leste government institutions they are associated with as the authority that develop public policy. These middle leaders acknowledged their participation in the policy development via

meetings with their chief executives where they could provide information, contribute ideas for policy agenda-setting and comment on drafts of policy before decision-making. The inclusion of educational civil service middle managers by senior leaders as aforementioned reflects what Lingard and Ozga (2008) and Howlett et al. (2009) have identified that a government permits its civil service hierarchical bureaucrats to participate in policy development. In these situations senior leaders as decision-makers open the door for middle leaders to participate in public policy development. This reflects the statement of Taylor et al. (2002) that the department heads through collaboration with the upper hierarchical bureaucrats could advise on and influence the government policy agendas. In this study, however, only three of the nine middle leaders interviewed were involved in this way. This gives a preconception that the notion of distributed leadership (Grootenboer et al., 2014) and strategic thinking (Cardno, 2012) in policy development has not been prioritised by some Timorese civil service senior leaders.

The majority of participants (six out of the nine middle leaders in this study) were vague about the authority responsible for policy development and had mistaken ideas about their roles in the policy development process. In pointing to the National Parliament and Civil Service Commission as two bodies that have absolute authority in the Timor-Leste public policy development the participants provided a tangible example of the fallacious understanding of these educational middle leaders regarding policy development authority. They also had no involvement in the policy agenda-setting process. This does not mirror the way the literature (such as Taylor, et al., 2002; Phillips, 2005; Lingard & Ozga, 2008; Howlett et al., 2009) portrays the role that public administration department heads play in policymaking, in that they have obligations and rights to advise and influence government during policy agenda-setting.

This research discovered that the educational middle leaders' fallacious understanding about their roles in policymaking cycles and as public policy actors is a consequence of the educational civil service middle leaders' long-drawn-out and historical absenteeism in the development of previous public policies. For instance, many educational middle leaders were not involved by their chief executives in activities like policy dissemination, discussions or meetings about policy issues. This situation has driven some Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders' to view public policies as the final products which are ready for implementation without consideration of involvement in the policymaking process. Bell and Stevenson (2006) remind us not to see the policy as a final product or merely as an educational document; in other words, a policy must be the product of all entities who have a stake in it. According to Busher (2006) the voices of educational middle leaders must be acknowledged during the period of agenda-setting.

In Timor-Leste there is intent to involve a wide range of stakeholders in policy development. The Timor-Leste Decree-law no.2/2008 titled '*Structure of the Ministry of Education*' permits layers of authority within the Ministry of Education to design or plan for policy action that deals with educational operations. Provision for the involvement of Timor-Leste educational middle leaders in policy development is also highlighted in article 11.2 of Decree-law no.7/2010 titled '*Legal Regime for Administration and Management of basic education system*' which points out the school director, deputy director and head of the technical support office as levels of hierarchy within educational institutions. These policies highlight two-way communication and consultation between senior leaders and middle leaders in policy development. So, involving educational middle leaders in activities such as policy meetings or dissemination could convince them that aspects of their roles such as planning,

leading policy implementation, reporting progress of activities, communicating irregularities, and finding solutions to problems are part of policy development and implementation.

Involvement of the educational middle leaders in policy

Developing policy

This research reveals that on the one hand, the Timor-Leste public policies permit educational civil service middle leaders involvement in policy development. For example, the educational managers could participate in public policy development via; initiation or informing issues (18a and f of Decree-law no.7/2010 and article 41m and 49p of Law no.8/2004) and setting a policy agenda (article 3.2 of Decree-law no.7/2010, article 2.1 d and e of Decree-law no.2/2008, and article 19.2 of Decree-law No. 27/2008). This mirrors the statement of Sergiovanni et al. (1999) that the presence of middle leaders in the policy development process could influence the policy-makers to consider incorporating principles and values of a variety of stakeholders into the policy agenda.

However, in the practice of the Timor-Leste context, the vast majority of middle leaders are not included in public policy development. This research has identified that there are only a few senior leaders who acknowledge the importance of middle leaders' participation in the policy development. The data gathered from the interview revealed that only three participants were included by their senior leaders in meetings for initiating issues facing organisations. Moreover, only one respondent stated that he was asked for his ideas about the first draft of policies and felt he was a valued stakeholder. The interview data also shows that only three respondents were included in policy agenda-setting and not many of the participants were involved in the process of policy writing. This reflects Concidine's (1996) classical model of policy development where, many policies are developed by senior leaders

per se. Conidine (1996) states that this is because chief executives do not acknowledge their middle leaders as the experts or resources who should advise or influence a policy agenda.

The key finding of this research shows that many Timorese educational middle leaders have not been included in the policy development for two reasons. Firstly, chief executives practice centralised control and block policy information to their subordinates. Secondly, chief executives themselves encounter skill-gaps in grasping and interpreting policy mandatory requirements. The first issue is connected to groups or political interests and is used to protect the status quo. This research reveals that many chief executives in some Timor-Leste public institutions are affiliated to political groups and tacitly utilise a centralised control mechanism. The practice of centralised control is done via representing subordinates voices in the policy meetings or nominating colleagues to occupy positions connected to policy agenda-setting. The evidence of political interests that have emerged in this research mirrors the concern of Howlett et al. (2009) that political parties or groups are usually pushing their interests or protecting the status quo through people they nominate or delegate to central positions in policy decision-making. For this reason, the involvement of many educational civil service middle leaders in some policy development situations has been manipulated. In other words, the inclusion of middle leaders in the policy development guidelines appears to be present merely as an ad hoc theory. Inclusion of this level of civil servants is rare. The policy literature (Conidine, 1996; Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011) argues that if the senior leaders dominate a policy development process or, if the middle leaders voices have been represented by senior officials, the propensity for involving middle leaders in activities such as policy meetings or development is diminished.

Implementing policy

The Timor-Leste educational middle leaders are vested in authority to implement public policy at department levels. For instance, middle leaders are urged by law to use their knowledge in interpreting policy (articles 39 and 41r of Law no.8/2004, article 13h and i of Decree-law no.14/2008) and manage action planning (article 8.3 of Decree-law 14/2008 and articles 10.2b, 13.2d and 16a, g and h of Decree-law no.7/2010) to implement policy at department levels. Moreover, Timorese middle leaders are also encouraged by law to exert their managerial positions and competency associated with personnel management (article 25.2 and 25.3 of Decree-law no. 27/2008, article 18b, c, and d of Decree-law no.7/2010, and article 10f of Decree-law No.7/2010) to realise programmes implementation in the field.

In addition, the Timor-Leste public policies demand educational middle leaders to ensure or monitor the way policies are implemented (article 17.1 of Decree-law no.14/2008 and articles 13.2c and 16b, e, f and i of Decree-law no.7/2010) via activities such as ensuring administrative work, budget execution and staff capacity building and performance appraisal.

The notion of policy implementation at department level represents the work of Hales (2007) who defines middle leaders as bureaucrats who are accountable at meso-level such as planning, coordination, and implementation of policy at departmental levels. This gives rise to an understanding that educational middle leaders are key players in embodying a government policy in the field (Busher, 2006; Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Phillips, 2005; Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011) therefore; their involvement in policy implementation is sine qua non.

Ironically, this research has also identified issues associated with exclusion of middle leaders by chief executives in the process of policy implementation. This situation has driven many Timorese educational middle leaders' perceptions about public policy as educational documents or obligatory guides that they should follow without having any expectation of

contributing to the activities in line with interpretation, planning and monitoring. For instance, several participants exemplified that chief executives' intervention in the departmental action plans and budget proposals seems to be unavoidable in some Timor-Leste public institutions. This reflects the report on policy development provided by Phillips (2005) in which he states that the voices of many experts, individuals, and those who have a stake in a policy are sometimes ignored or not being represented in the process of planning for policy implementation.

Policy issues

The research reveals issues facing the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in relation to public policies during the periods of policy development and policy implementation. Maintenance of the status quo by senior leaders, red tape, skill-gaps, human resources management, and language use in the policy contents were predominant issues raised by the interviewees.

Issues encountered in policy development

Senior leaders maintain the status quo

The first type of the status quo protection by the Timor-Leste public administration chief executives is drawn from power exercising. This research discovered that participants were aware of practices such as nepotism by some senior managers. The participants believe that nomination or recruitment of people for some managerial positions within some public

institutions is dominated by political interests. The literature that unpacks policy study (Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011; Howlett et al., 2009) acknowledges that political party or group interests are sometimes organised and tacitly implemented via bureaucrats in the public administration where, those interests are pushed as a public policy agenda. Also some participants argue that there is the propensity for cronies' domination in a public policy agenda-setting is possible.

The second form of the status quo protection by some Timorese public administration chief executives identified in this research is linked with the practices of red tape driven by public policy mandatory requirements. For example, the red tape issues could be derived from some mandatory requirements that encourage senior leaders to 'utilise power' (as in article 19.1 of the Decree-law no.8/2004), oblige middle leaders to 'show obedience' to senior leaders (as in article 41.2b of Law no.8/2004) and mandatory that allows senior leaders to 'give instructions' to subordinates (as in article 43 of Law no.8/2004). This gives rise to a conjecture that some Timor-Leste public administration chief executives have mistaken notions of what Hersey et al. (2013) refer to as 'position power'. Hersey et al. (2013) clarify that "position power is the extent to which those people to whom managers report are willing to delegate authority and responsibility to them. So position power tends to flow down in an organization" (p. 141). The snapshot of delegation of persons to represent other staff meetings with senior leaders and representing middle leaders' voice by chief executives during policy agenda-setting as discussed in the previous chapter shows a conjecture that some Timorese public institutional chief executives view the legal authority they have as an absolute power, rather than a shared responsibility. Bolman and Deal (2008) said that many organisational chief executives exert the legal power they have to pressure or use various

mechanisms to continuously control and centralise the process of decision-making within the layers of bureaucracy within institutions. Maintaining the way things are done in Timor-Leste with regard to leaving the middle leaders level out of public policy development is how the status quo is preserved.

An implication of misinterpretation or manipulation drawn from policy mandatory guidelines about showing obedience, and giving instructions as aforementioned has impeded the flow of communication, and resulted in representation of subordinates' voices by some chief executives in policy meetings. This is also a way of status quo maintenance where, individuals or groups or political programmes are pushed into public policy agendas. Openshaw (2009) and Phillips (2005) argue that domination of policy decision-makers' views and excessive bureaucratic control by senior leaders is deemed to be a key issue that precludes participation of lower organisational level managers in policymaking. The educational civil service middle leaders in Timor-Leste experienced this kind of limitation of their involvement in policy development. In the point of view of Leavitt (2005), malpractices like excessive bureaucracy, blocking information and centralised control do not represent effective leadership problem-solving. Leavitt (2005) argues that problem-solving leadership can be made tangible through the way a chief executive involves both leaders and managers along levels of hierarchy within an organisation in the processes of decision-making in a collaborative manner.

The findings of this study show that most of these middle level leaders have not experienced open communication from their chief executives on policy matters. Argyris (2010) argues that many senior leaders become defensive because they are fearful of changes that might not benefit them. For this reason, senior leaders increase centralised control to influence policy agendas that may benefit their interests. Delegation of persons to represent other staff in

meetings with senior leaders, and submission of policy draft to the National Parliament without prior consultation with head departments as stated in the previous chapter are examples of communication gap between senior leaders and middle leaders in Timor-Leste public policy development.

Participants in this study revealed that they have to follow instructions given by senior leaders because they were expected to unconditionally obey the orders or instructions given by their senior leaders due to centralised controls. For instance, cancelations of department budget proposals and operational planning are forms of an unconditional situation that a middle leader should obey. This study reveals a conjecture of middle leaders' unconditional obedience to their senior leaders is connected to article 13.1a of Decree-law no.14/2008 which gives another power to senior leaders to appraise staff performance. So, this also tacitly gives space to senior leaders to strengthen the practices of the status quo. In the literature, a contradictory view is expressed by the statement of Taylor et al. (2002) that public department heads through collaboration with upper bureaucrats have privilege rights and responsibilities to present independent advice to the government in terms of solutions that fit the problems facing the organisation.

Issues encountered in policy implementation

Red tape

This research identified that there is practice of red tape by some chief executives in Timor-Leste public institutions. The majority of participants indicated the excessive control by chief executives as an impediment in public policy implementation and, six participants highlighted that this is the main barrier in middle leaders' roles in decision-making for policy

implementation. This reflects the statement of Gill (2011) and Scott (2001) that in many public institutions excessive bureaucracy is deemed as a generic impediment factor that challenge middle leaders in policy implementation. Critiquing this, Leavitt (2005) and Taylor et al. (2002) argue that bureaucracy should not be understood and utilised as an absolute power in decision-making; above all, bureaucracy should be grasped as putting skills together for organisational tasks to be done. In this regards, Considine (1996) refers to power devolution, job delegation, and teamwork as a form of bureaucracy that leads to collaboration.

Leadership skill-gaps in interpreting policy

This research reveals that the Timor-Leste public service leaders and managers find difficulties in interpreting policy mandatory requirements and guidelines contained in the articles of policies that allow educational civil service middle leaders participation in policy implementation. Some literature that deals with policy (Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011; Howlett et al., 2009; Hudson & Lowe, 2009) has stated that metaphorical language used in policy documents can become a general issue faced by many leaders and managers within organisations. An example of technical and metaphorical terms used in the policy mandatory requirement is present in article 13.h of Decree-law 14/2008 below:

“Leadership and team management” – evaluates the manner in which the holder of a middle or senior level management post establishes the strategies deemed necessary for attaining the objectives and results of the sub-unit he or she is in charge of, as well as the manner in which he or she guides, motivates and communicates with the respective civil servants or agents. (Timor-Leste Decree-law 14/2008, 13h)

The technical terms containing ambiguity in this article are ‘leadership’, ‘management’, ‘middle’ and ‘senior’. This research discovered that in many Timor-Leste public institutions’ organisational structures, the terms ‘leadership’ and ‘senior level management’ are utilised

respectively to refer to the positions such as 'general director' and 'national director' which are akin to chief executives or positions in Bolman and Deal's (2008) 'strategic apex'; while, the terms 'management' and 'middle' are known as 'head of department' or 'division' which, Mintzberg (2009) depicts as a bureaucratic machine that links both the strategic apex and the operating core or the head of units below the department heads. Moreover, the phrase 'establishes the strategies deemed necessary for attaining the objectives' in the paragraph above indicates that directors and department heads' should have competence in creating mechanisms to support the lower managers' roles in the department or sub-units. These examples of technical terms and metaphoric language used in a policy content reflect Ryan's (1994) preoccupation that the policy mandatory requirements which are not written in the communicative language will challenge people's ability to grasp and implement policy.

Human resources management issues

Firstly, this research discovered that many Timor-Leste managers are vague about the function of human resource management within their institutions. For example, many educational institutions still do not provide managers with institutional terms of reference and job descriptions that lead to policy implementation. This has affected the clarity of the mandate or instructions given by senior leaders to the heads of department. The research discovered that the lack of human resources management functions has driven a practice of appointment by nomination of people to leadership and management positions which is not based on personal skills or expertises that fits those positions. This is linked to a perception in some instances of appointments that may be related to nepotism or cronyism, in turn related to those in power using such appointments to maintain the status quo. Without job

descriptions being provided middle leaders may remain in ignorance about their mandate to participate in the processes of policy implementation.

A finding of this study is that leaders and managers at both the executive and middle level may lack the knowledge and skills for participation and collaboration in policy implementation. Since Rudman (2002) considers that every manager is akin to a human resources manager, collocation or nomination of people to the leadership and management positions should be based on knowledge and experience in backgrounds that suit those positions. This is emphasised by Leavitt (2005) who states that people who hold both leadership and managerial positions are required to have problem solving skills such as critical thinking, planning, and ability to coordinate team work and influence people to get tasks done. Leavitt (2005) also urges that managers within organisations should monitor the way a policy is implemented, evaluate why issues persist and in turn, recommend strategies for improvement.

Secondly, this research surfaces that some Timor-Leste educational organisations have not established yet human resources management divisions or units within their organisation. Article 41r of Law no.8/2004 and article 18 of Decree-law no.7/2010 respectively permits establishment of human resources management units within educational institutions. However, since the Timorese educational middle leaders are unclear about the human resources management functions, the activities associated with staff performance appraisal, professional development, implementing policies are abandoned or not prioritised. For instance, unclear job descriptions of institution 'Y' as presented in chapter four above is an implication of the absence of the human resources management department within the institution. Since the literature on organisational development (Bolman & Deal, 2008;

Rudman, 2002) acknowledges the existence of human resource management as the panacea for the organisation to define employees roles, the creation of the human resources management department is crucially needed in order to be accountable for job design, establish job descriptions, recruiting and aligning staff, as well as monitoring and ensuring getting tasks done.

Language issue in the policy documents

This research uncovers a paramount issue pertinent to the use of language in the Timor-Leste public policy documents. Whilst the vast majority of Timorese middle leaders do not read, write and speak Portuguese, many of public policy documents are produced in Portuguese. Evidence shows that the Timor-Leste public laws or policies published in the official gazette named 'Jornal da República' are provided in Portuguese versions. The Tetum versions of the policies have not been introduced yet to accommodate many Timor-Leste middle leaders who do not understand Portuguese. Furthermore, whilst the Portuguese and English versions of public policy are published on the government website named <http://www.jornal.gov.tl/lawsTL/RDTL-Law/RDTL-Decree-Laws-P/RDTL-Decree-Laws.htm>, the Tetum versions of those policies have not been issued on the same website for public access. The research shows that the absence of public policies in Tetum has obstructed the majority of Timorese middle leaders' understandings and this could lead to misinterpretation. For instance, one of the respondents who graduated from Portugal tertiary education acknowledged that many policy terms in Portuguese are difficult to grasp; therefore, this participant suggested provision of the translation assistance in Tetum. This reflects what is said in the literature (Varenes, 1996) that when an official language used in the policy

documents is not the native language of a community, many people will be vague or mistaken about the contents of the policy. Varennes (1996) states that

one factor which may weigh against a declaration that a law restricting the language of administrative and government services is discriminatory can be the lack of resources, either human, financial or material, for a state to respond to such a demand. Especially in the case of languages not spoken by very large populations, there may be a dearth of written material, especially in education; this means a state would have to translate and produce this material, as well as ensure that it has sufficient staff to function properly in the language. (p. 298)

The absence of policy documents in Tetum unequivocally creates disharmony in the implementation of Section 13 Timor-Leste Constitution which legitimates utilisation of both Tetum and Portuguese as the Timor-Leste official languages in the public administration. Also, this constitutes partiality in the implementation of article 8 of Decree-law no.27/2008 that provides an option for a Timorese to master either one of the official languages; Tetum or Portuguese as the language of public administration, and article 41b of Law no.8/2004 that encourages the Timor-Leste public servants to promote both Tetum and Portuguese as the languages of Timor-Leste public administration. This research reveals that the absence of policy documents in Tetum has compromised the educational middle leaders' grasp of the policy contents. Varennes (1996) argues that the choice of an official language in public policy documents in a multi-lingual country where the majority of the community are not eloquently reading or writing in that official language can create issues associated with people's understandings of the policy contents.

In summary, the absence of the Timor-Leste public policy contents in Tetum has affected two main factors. First, there is disequilibrium in the implementation of article 8 of Decree-law no.27/2008 and article 41b of Decree-law no.23/2010. On the one hand, the development of

public policy documents in Portuguese is encouraged; on the other hand, there has not been serious attention given to the provision of policy documents in Tetum for public access. Second, the Timorese middle leaders who do not understand Portuguese will continue to have difficulty grasping public policy mandatory requirements. So, developing the eloquence of Timorese middle leaders in the language used in the policy contents is paramount to improve the way a policy is implemented in the public institutions.

Strategies that support the educational middle leaders' involvement in policy development and implementation

This research reveals that improvement of leadership skills, establishment of human resource management divisions, and provision of public policy documents in Tetum could support educational civil service middle leaders' involvement in public policy development and implementation.

Leadership skills development

Firstly, the data gathered from the interviews direct attention to enhancement of chief executives knowledge in interpreting the policy mandatory and integrating to organisational objectives as ways of involving the educational civil service middle leaders in policy development. The notion of collaborative decision-making, team work, and delegation of power to subordinates suggested by respondents reflects Bolman and Deal's (2008) enhancement of leadership skills which is not merely about upgrading personal skills or empower them; above all, it is about shared vision and teamwork via utilising various experiences to support staff and boost organisational performance. Cardno (2012) asserts this idea by saying that skills enhancement is an instrument that people use to develop their knowledge through sharing and working together for the change and development.

The research discovered that Timorese chief executives in some public institutions are not able in interpreting policy mandatory regulations such as article 10f and g of Decree-law No.7/2010 and article 13i of Decree-law 14/2008 which permit collaborative decision-making between senior leaders and their subordinates. Consequently many of these leaders do not approach policy development collaboratively. So, participants' recommendation about professional development is seen as a panacea for senior managers' knowledge enhancement and, in turn involves middle leaders in the policy development and implementation. The notion of leaders' professional development is depicted by Oldroyd (2005) as an ongoing development for individual and teams within organisations.

Secondly, the research discovered the need for boosting senior leaders' skills in managing teamwork and delegating power to the subsequent managers. As the foci of article 25.2-3 of Decree-law no. 27/2008, articles 19.1, 39, and 41t of Law no.8/2004 are devolution of power by educational senior leaders to middle leaders; these policies encourage teamwork in relation to policy implementation along the levels of hierarchy within an organisation. This reflects the seminal work of Argyris (2010) that "the really critical leadership skill is the ability to work with the leadership team to produce the best possible plan (p. 102). The data of the research shows that enhancement of senior leaders' skills in managing an integrated strategic plan, tasks delegation, teamwork, budgeting are crucial to not only enhance operational skills, but also empower department heads as decision-makers via collaborative planning, coordinating and monitoring activities implementation. This reflects the work of Leavitt (2005) that this is a chance where chief executives may lead a whole organisation to perform both leadership and managerial roles in tandem by distributed leadership. Leavitt (2005) highlights the importance of including various expertises in programmes implementation, as well as pathfinding which is about leaders' ability to instruct and monitor subordinates to act

according to vision and mission of the organisation. This gives middle leaders a chance to establish their programmes, propose action plans and budget allocation for programmes implementation.

The majority of respondents believed that the improvement of senior leaders' managerial skills is central to power devolution and better teamwork. This reflects the literature (Rudman, 2002; Macky & Johnson, 2003) which states that delegation of management roles to lower levels has empowered the middle leaders to lead decision-making about activities and financial planning, programme implementation, monitoring and evaluation which must be approved by the executive leaders at the strategic apex of the organisation.

Human resources management development

The data gathered from this research shows that the functions of human resources management have hitherto not been prioritised in some educational institutions that participated in this study. This has retarded various activities associated with policy implementation at department level because with a lack of formal job descriptions expectations at both the senior and middle level have been unclear. In addition, for instance, the findings show that some responsibilities of department XXX and department ZZZ, and written instructions for staff operational guides used by institution 'Y' only represent some functional areas associated with day-to-day 'personnel management' operations and short-term targets. This shows that many Timorese middle leaders perform some roles pertinent to personnel management which, Oldroyd (2005) defines as 'hard' human resources management which is more about final achievement or getting tasks done, rather than focusing on 'soft' human resources management such as 'human' capacity enhancement, vertical and horizontal relationships, and staff supervision. Randall and Sim (2014) exemplify

that in personnel management some of the tasks could be “recruitment and selection procedures, dealing with job applications, sifting through applications, arranging interviews, drawing up job contracts and keeping up-to-date files on all individuals in the company” (p. 3). Rudman (2002) emphasises that this is only one part of human resources management focused on functional, problem-solving and short-term focus.

This study detects that some of Timor-Leste civil service senior leaders and middle leaders’ understanding about human resources management is still vague. The literature that deals with organisational development (such as Beer et al., 1984; Rudman, 2002; Bolman & Deal, 2008) views the role of human resources management in a broader context which is more strategic, whole organisation and long-term focus. For instance, Rudman (2002) states “human resources management is directed mainly at management needs for human resources management (not necessarily employees) to be provided and employed. There is greater emphasis on planning, monitoring, and control, rather than on problem-solving and mediation” (p. 10). Also, this is connected to what Macky and Johnson (2003) have to say about one of the human resources management roles which is a ‘pluralist view’ where, staff at all hierarchical levels within an organisation are involved in “systematic thinking to ensure horizontal fit or unity among the system components” (p. 10), and the vertical fit such as “the link between these HR processes and practices, and a firm’s strategy for achieving its objectives” (p. 11).

This research discovered that article 18 of Decree-law no.7/2010 authorises people in roles of human resources management to be accountable for policy, administration, planning, staffing and reports. Moreover, this research also identifies that article 13.1a of Decree-law no.14/2008 regulates about implementation of staff performance appraisal along the levels

of hierarchies within public institutions. These two decree-laws mirror the seminal work of Beer et al. (1984) which posits the role of human resources management division as the mediator that integrates and ascertains how policies are implemented effectively at departmental level. Ironically, this research uncovers the fact that many Timor-Leste educational institutions have no divisions or units of human resources management. This does not fit with the work of Beer et al. (1984) where the human resources division is highlighted as the key integrator that links policy mandatory requirements to the organisation operational areas. The absence of human resources management divisions within educational institutions in Timor-Leste has affected issues connected to clarity of job design and matching recruitments to expectations of the organisation.

There was strong similarity in the way the interviewees in this study addressed this issue. Almost all the participants advised the establishment of the human resources management units within educational institutions to make managers accountable for well coordinated activities such as planning, networking, professional development, policy, payroll, terms of reference and job descriptions, recruitment, and performance appraisal. So, the respondents' urge to create human resources management units within educational institutions is not merely about the existence of physical structure where, people are allocated to the human resource management positions but suggests that attention should be given to Oldroyd's (2005) 'soft' human resource management which puts people and their expertise as the pivot of organisational operation. In this regard, Oldroyd (2005) emphasises the importance of human capacity development and motivating of individual who are accountable for getting tasks done.

The research also surfaces the existence of the human resources management divisions or units to monitor how a public policy is implemented at the department levels and, this helps to resolve issues such as time management, teamwork and clarity in line of command. This mirrors the statement of Newell and Scarbrough (2002) that a function of human resources management is to “form the organisational response to external pressures; when a new piece of legislation appears on the statute book, managers wait for policy guidance on its influence” (p. 35). Participants believe that establishment of the human resources management divisions or units within educational institutions could help middle leaders to focus on a more strategic onus such as planning, networking, monitoring, and organisational development.

Issuing public policy documents in Tetum

The absence of many public policy documents in Tetum has emerged as a major issue regarding wrong-guessing and misinterpreting of policy text that leads to ineffective implementation. A key finding of this study reveals that Section 13 of Timor-Leste Constitution, article 41b of Law no.8/2004, article 8 of Decree-law no.27/2008, and article 14 point b and c of Decree-law no.23/2010 authorise utilisation of Tetum as one of the language in public administration. A similarity key finding of interview data in this study also shows that provision of the Timor-Leste public policy documents in Tetum could help civil service middle leaders to grasp policy mandatory requirements. This is because the majority of middle leaders and teachers in the territory speak, read, and write in Tetum better, compared to Portuguese. So the respondents believe that the translation assistance and/or explanation of policy contents in Tetum could support the Timor-Leste middle leaders understanding about policy contents.

The literature that underpins policy research in bilingual and multilingual countries like the United States, Europe and Asia (Varenes, 1996) and Australia (Davis & Love, 1996) shows that production of policy in the official languages which are not the mother tongues of many people in one country may give rise to issues in grasping and interpreting the policy contents. Critiquing this issue, Ryan (1993) suggests that a policy could be well understood if it were written in the language which is grasped by the people who have a stake in the policy. So, Varenes (1996), Davis and Love (1996) and Ryan (1994) advise an option where a policy is more accessible and understandable because of choice and simplicity of language. In the context of Timor-Leste, the translation assistance in Tetum not only provides an option for those who do not understand Portuguese, but also embodies equilibrium of the official languages use in the public administration realm where more experts are involved in policy interpretation, planning for actions for implementation. Gonzalez (1996) who has attested how the translation assistance surmounts this policy issue states that all Philippines' public policies were initially drafted in English but then, translated by the Pilipino Commission into Filipino for public access.

Research in bilingual and multi-lingual countries has provided evidence that provision of translation assistance of policy contents supports people's understandings. So respondents' suggestions about provision of Timor-Leste public policy documents in Tetum could help many middle leaders to be more involved in policy implementation.

Conclusions

The Timor-Leste public policy development

This research brings to the surface new knowledge from the perceptions and experiences of the participants in this study that being excluded from public policy development, the vast majority of Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders are vague and confused, not only about their roles as those who have a stake in policy development, but also uncertain about the institutions that are accountable for public policy development. Evidence from this research shows that the few participants who were used to being involved in public policy development by their chief executives acknowledged their roles in policy development. These participants also mistakenly refer to the National Parliament, the Civil Service Commission and the government institutions as the institutions that are accountable for public policy development.

So, the long-drawn-out practice of blocking policy information to educational middle leaders or treating them just as the policy implementer could affect their abilities in grasping and interpreting policy context. Phillips (2005) argues that a policy that is developed merely based on the upper leaders' view might fail in its implementation. The literature that deals with public policy (Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011; Hudson & Lowe, 2009; Bell & Stevenson, 2006; Busher, 2006; Kilmister, 1993) posits middle leaders as the agents who know the nitty-gritty of society, economic conditions, values and the history of an organisation; therefore, middle leaders' voices should be heard in the process of policy development. This helps the educational middle leaders not only to influence policy agendas, but also supports them to boost their knowledge to lead policy implementation in the field. It is concluded that public policy development in Timor-Leste would benefit from the involvement of middle level leaders and that policy implementation would be strengthened as a result.

Involvement of educational middle leaders in policy

This research shows that Timor-Leste public policy documents vested middle leaders with authority to initiate issues or inform the necessity of institutions, provide ideas and advice on policy agenda-setting, and give feedback on drafts of public policies. Ironically, the data gathered from interviews shows that very few middle leaders were involved in Timor-Leste public policy development. Protection of the status quo and leadership skill-gaps are two key issues underlying the exclusion of middle leaders in policy development. The interview data directs attention to practice of the status quo maintenance by some chief executives in Timor-Leste public institutions. This is tacitly and neatly organised by nomination of cronies who have similar interest with the senior leaders to occupy importance positions connected to policy development. Howlett et al. (2009) has reminded us that one generic issue found in many public policy developments is practice of nepotism in recruiting and nomination of persons to leadership and managerial positions in order to push political party or group interests into a policy agenda.

The vast majority of participants highlighted this kind of practice in Timor-Leste by stating that many chief executives represent middle leaders during the process on policy development. This provides an understanding that the process of policy development in some public institutions in Timor-Leste is akin to Considine's (1996) classical approach of policy development where, some senior leaders may not acknowledge their subordinates as experts that should be collaborated with during information gathering, discussions of policy agenda and drafting policy.

Another factor underpinning the exclusion of Timor-Leste middle leaders from policy development is leadership issue. This research uncovers that many Timor-Leste chief

executives encounter a lack of competency in grasping and interpreting policy mandatory about middle leaders' roles. For instance, the absence of staff job descriptions as emerged in the previous chapter is an evidence of some Timor-Leste chief executives lack of competency in policy development.

In terms of policy implementation, the Timor-Leste public policies allow middle leaders to use their insight in interpreting policy, participating in team planning for policy action, lead programme implementation and monitoring policy implementation in which according to Hales (2007) those activities are meso-level responsibilities under heads of department's control. However, interview data has not shown that this is the practice in many public institutions in Timor-Leste. The majority of participants raised an issue associated with centralised control by some chief executives that has ended in exclusion of middle leaders from planning, taking action and monitoring policy implementation. For instance, the absence of staff job descriptions and intervention to action plans and cancellation of budget departmental proposals has emerged a conjecture that some chief executives impede some roles of middle leaders in leading policy implementation.

Policy issues

The practice of maintaining the status quo by chief executives is a key barrier in the process policy development in Timor-Leste. Participation of educational middle leaders in policy development has been impeded by practices of political interests and centralised control. Consequently this has led middle leaders to view public policy as final products or an ultimate goal. For example, the data gathered from documentary analysis and participants' interviews identified similar issues associated with centralised control in line with the use of position power, showing obedience to senior leaders and giving instructions by chief executives as

absolute power to protect the status quo. This has hampered Timorese middle leaders' such as informing on issues encountered, giving advice on solutions during agenda-setting, and providing feedback on policy drafts. In this regard, Shaw and Eichbaum (2011), Busher (2006), and Kilmister (1993) refer to the importance of two-way consultations and collaboration where, chief executives open doors to middle leaders during the process of policy development.

There are four prominent problems that barrier Timor-Leste middle leaders in policy implementation. Firstly, there is practice of excessive bureaucracy by some chief executives. Some participants explicated an issue of centralised control against departmental plans and decision-making. The practice of red tape has retarded the approvals of departmental action plans and budget proposals by the layers of bureaucrats such as national directors and director generals within public institutions. As Leavitt (2005) and Taylor et al. (2002) have stated that bureaucracy should be seen as the repository of experts or resources within the levels of hierarchy who work collaboratively to obtain an organisational objective, there should be distributed leadership that ease coordination and planning for policy implementation at all levels of the hierarchy within an organisation.

Secondly, many Timor-Leste chief executives and middle leaders encounter skills-gaps. This covers a series of personal competency regarding policy implementation. On the one hand, the interview data identified leadership skill-gaps such as interpreting policy mandatory that linked with team planning, allocating staff, managing activities implementation and monitoring. On the other hand, some respondents also highlighted that many middle leaders encounter issues associated with linking policy mandatory requirements into departmental planning. The problem occurs not only due to a lack middle leaders' competency in grasping

metaphorical language used in policy contents (Howlett et al. 2009; Shaw & Eichbaum, 2011)), but also as the implication of long-drawn-out practice where middle leaders were not included in the previous policies development.

Thirdly, human resources management is deemed by participants as key issues facing both senior leaders and middle leaders in leading and managing policy implementation. The key findings on both documentary and interviewing data indicated a gap in the roles pertinent to human resources management. On the one hand, the Timor-Leste policies highlighted the importance of human resources management as a key factor in embodying policy implementation at all levels within Timor-Leste public institutions. On the other hand, the division of human resources management is absent in many Timor-Leste public institutions. So, in the practice of some Timor-Leste public institutions, this is not yet reflected. Beet et al. (1984) and Considine (1996) have respectively emphasised that human resources management is interlinked with managerial roles; thus, this is pivotally needed to embody policy implementation within an organisation.

Finally, the absence of Timor-Leste public policy text written in Tetum has affected many Timorese civil service middle leaders ability in grasping policy contents and interpreting policy mandatory requirements into departmental vision and mission. The historical and current absence of policy documents in Tetum may affect the implementation of policy at the lower level of the Timor-Leste public administration realm. The literature (Gonzalez, 1996) has attested that the provision of translation assistance of policy documents in the language that communities understand could facilitates people's understandings. This research has concluded that the Portuguese language of Timorese policy documents creates a barrier to

understanding content and intent of at both a Decree-Law level and institutional policy level and that this could hinder the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Recommendations

Recommendations from this study are offered at several levels: to the Government of Timor-Leste; chief executives such as director general and national director; middle leaders of head departments, and research community.

The Timor-Leste Government level

This research proposes that the Timor-Leste government should consider the importance of providing policy documents in Tetum to support the needs of the majority of educational civil service middle leaders who are not able to grasp the context and content of policy documents in Portuguese. This will help middle leaders to interpret, plan, lead and monitor policy implementation at departmental level effectively. Issuing the Tetum version of public policies along with the Portuguese one in the same gazette name *Jornal da República* may present equilibrium of both Tetum and Portuguese as the official languages. This recommendation reinforces section 13 of Timor-Leste Constitution, article 41b of Law no.8/2004, article 8 of Decree-law no.27/2008, and article 14 point b and c of Decree-law no.23/2010 that legitimate utilisation of both official languages in the Timor-Leste public administration.

Moreover, issuing both Portuguese and Tetum versions of policy documents on the Timor-Leste government online website <http://www.jornal.gov.tl/lawsTL/RDTL-Law/RDTL-Decree-Laws-P/RDTL-Decree-Laws.htm>, could be assessable for more Timorese people both in Timor-Leste and overseas. As the majority of civil service middle leaders speak, read and write in Tetum, the translation assistance of public policies should be provided in Tetum.

Chief executives of Timor-Leste public institutions level

The research reveals that the educational middle leaders who know the nitty-gritty of society, economy, and culture of an organisation including real issues encountered in the fields have not been involved seriously in previous policy development process. This research proposes elimination of superiority views in policy agenda-setting and excessive controls against middle managers' involvement in policy. First, the key finding of the interview data suggests reducing of red tape and chief executives intervention into departmental action plan and budget proposals. This is because the excessive bureaucracy and centralised control by senior leaders has ended in the delay or cancellation of programmes implementation at department levels. Secondly, practices such as appointment of cronies and centralised controls for protection of the status quo which are tacitly done by some chief executives should be addressed seriously. In this regard, integrity, professionalism and skill-based nomination are key factors that chief executives or decision-makers should consider in the process of recruitments or staff allocation to the leadership and managerial positions. Second, leadership skills development in the human resources management areas (such as managing strategic planning, teamwork, communication and collaboration, delegation, job design and recruitment, and performance appraisal) and policy interpretation should be considered. This could help effective policy development and implementation within the hierarchical levels in organisations. Chief executives should encourage middle leaders' involvement in policy development and implementation via policy meetings or dissemination, gathering feedback, consultations, and discussions where middle leaders are given the chance to present issues facing the department heads and provide advice and solutions.

Middle leaders of Timor-Leste public institutions level

This research advocates enhancement of educational middle leaders' knowledge in Portuguese acquisition, human resources management, as well as, giving them the opportunities to comment on policy drafts before approval. Firstly, middle managers should be encouraged to give their ideas or comments on new public policies before the first drafts are submitted to policy decision-makers. Secondly, educational middle leaders should be given the chance to improve their managerial skills regarding managing programme implementation, taking action and monitoring the progress of activity implementation, detecting errors and identifying solution for problem-solving. Thirdly, there should be ongoing improvement in Portuguese knowledge including finesse in technical terms or metaphorical language used in policy documents.

Research community level

The focus of this research was on the roles of the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle leaders in the development and implementation of policy. Further research is needed to investigate the effectiveness of leadership and managerial skills associated with the public policy development and implementation. The researcher suggests future researchers to consider examining the roles of Timorese civil service middle leaders in initiating and informing policy issues, advice agenda-setting and writing policy as the process of policy development. In the end, the researcher suggests future researchers to consider investigating whether the availability of public policy documents in Tetum increases middle leaders' competency in interpreting policy mandatory requirements into organisational mission and goals, planning, taking action and monitoring policy implementation.

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Appendix A: Interview Schedule

Name of participant: _____

Date: ___/___/ 2015

The roles of the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle-leaders in policy development.

1. Do you know who developed the Timor-Leste civil service policies such as performance appraisal, leave and absence, and others?
2. Have you ever been involved in the process of a previous or current policy development?
3. What role do you play in the Timor-Leste civil service policy development?

Involving the Timor-Leste educational civil service middle-leaders in the policy cycles?

4. Do the civil service policy-makers (such as your senior leaders and experts) ask for your ideas about issues that the organisation encounters and/or solutions you provide during the policy development process?
5. Do the policy-makers discuss with you or ask for your ideas about the first draft of any policy before submitting to the Parliament's approval?
6. What issues have precluded your roles from being involved in the process of the Timor-Leste civil service policy development?

Issues middle-leaders encounter in policy implementation

Red tape and status quo

7. Does your organisation have clear instructions (for example, separable hierarchical terms of reference or job descriptions) that defines what are (should be) the roles of department heads in implementing policies?
8. Do you exert the authority vested in you as a chief of department to make decision, planning, and leading policy implementation at department level without any intervention?

Skill-gaps

9. Do the mandatory requirements or instructions in the Timor-Leste civil service policies are clear and understandable?
10. Do the mandatory requirements or instructions in the Timor-Leste civil service policies are understandable or easy to be interpreted into your organisational or departmental vision and mission?
11. Do the languages used in the Timor-Leste civil service policy documents are easy to be understood? Why or why not?
12. What are other issues that have precluded your roles from implementing the Timor-Leste civil service policies at the department level?
13. What have been helpful in your roles in implementing the Timor-Leste civil service policy at the department level?

What strategies might help to increase the involvement of the Timor-Leste educational middle-leaders in the development and implementation of policy?

14. What strategies could help your roles as a department head to be more involved in the Timor-Leste civil service policy development? Please mention those strategies.
15. Do you have any suggestions for the improvement of the Timor-Leste civil service department heads' roles to be more involved in the policy development and implementation?