Academic Experiences in Policy Development: a Grounded Theory Study Across Three Higher Education Institutions

Marie Brennan
Technological University Dublin, marie.brennan@tudublin.ie

Follow this and additional works at: https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ijap

Academic Experiences in Policy Development: A Grounded Theory Study across three Higher Education Institutions

Marie Brennan

TU Dublin Blanchardstown Campus

Marie.Brennan@tudublin.ie

Abstract

This research project aimed to study and observe academic lived experiences and perceptions on policy development across three higher-education institutes in Dublin, using a grounded theory approach. This paper presents the methodological approach and some early findings of ongoing research. Its original contribution will be in the form of a comparative analysis of literature and theory developed from the core concern of the participants. Data collection consisted of one-to-one interviews with academics across the three institutes, reflective of grounded theory following Glazer and Strauss's data gathering and coding mechanisms. Consequently the emergent theory is rooted in the data. Early findings indicate that there are concerns in development of policy, but the core concerns are implementation and interpretation of policy. The purpose of the research is to discover patterns of behaviour around policy that could be used to develop a theoretical framework to inform policy. A next step is to study policy at a national level, and thereby to develop a formal approach.

Keywords: Grounded Theory Study, Policy development, Policy implementation, Policy evaluation, Technological University, Education in Transformation.

Introduction

The *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030* (Hunt Report, 2011) suggested that a framework should be put in place to facilitate institutional mergers. Subsequently, three institutes of technology in Dublin signed a memorandum of understanding establishing the Technological University for Dublin Alliance (Dublin Institute of Technology, the Institute of Technology Tallaght and the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown.) The presidents from each institute formed a steering group that consisted of a team of staff from across the three campuses. The role of this team was to launch the foundation themes that were necessary for designation. One of these themes was the development of a teaching and learning strategy. During research into educational strategy, the precursor to these strategies – policy formation

1

– became the focal point. The study subsequently focused on policy and how each institute orchestrated policy development and implementation. This research then began to explore issues and concerns academics may have had with policy development, and their fears for future policy, as they transformed into a university.

One objective of the research, therefore, was to gain a greater understanding of the processes used in the development of policy. The personal lived experiences and concerns of the academics in the development of policy within their institutes were investigated. The second objective of the research was to apply the knowledge in the development of a theoretical framework that could inform policy development. The substantive area of study for this research is academic policy experience and concerns. If the research went outside the substantive area too soon, there would be a danger of irrelevance, fit, and workability of the theory. When the confidence of the fit and workability of the initial conceptual framework has been reached, then comparisons can be made with other data in other substantive areas to enrich the theoretical content of the substantive theory being developed as opposed to developing a formal theory (Glaser, 1978).

The paper presents the motivation behind the research, the methodological approach used to carry out the data gathering and analysis, and presents some early findings of an ongoing investigation.

Background and Motivation

The initial vision for the research was to explore the strategic processes inherent in the merger process and to formulate a participant-informed ideal strategy that was dynamic and accessible to encapsulate the learner experience. Instrumental in this approach was the discussion paper by Boyle & Humphries (2001), *A New Change Agenda for the Irish Public Service*, in which they argue that where no institutional strategy is implemented, over time, individual requirements had been met unintentionally. Lillis (2015) observes that the "Masters of the Universe" model assumes a stable environment where extreme change and unexpected events are not accounted for and that a contingency plan should be put in place in such events.

2

The research started to take shape from a top-down and a bottom-up perspective at this point. At the top were polices written within an institute and at the bottom were the implementers and the stakeholders where the effect could be measured.
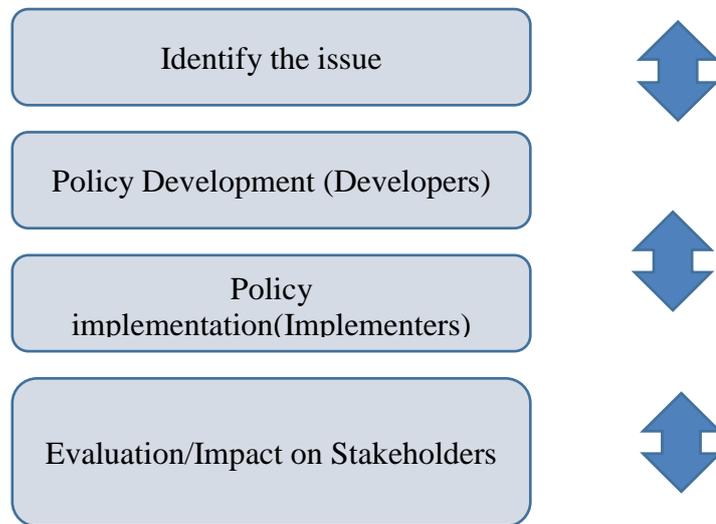
The National Forum, (2018a) study argues that 'implementable' polices can enable excellent practice. Policies deemed as enabling were identified as having a "high score to meeting criteria under being reflective of HEI's priorities or being implementable rather than being situated in practice" (p. 6). Furthermore, the study finds that without appropriate policy guidance, informal practices can emerge that may not serve institutions, staff or students well. Murphy & Maguire (2018) agree stating that "many existing policies do not adequately recognise the practice context within which they are situated" (p. 189). It is also suggested, where there is evidence of informal practices around policy, the need for a process of consultation with members of staff who will ultimately be implementing the policy is essential.

In terms of current practice and best practice, the HEA's *Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-2020* highlighted key objectives for higher education in Ireland. One of the requirements was to improve the quality of the learning environment with a close eye on international best practice through quality and academic excellence. Internationally, there is a move away from measuring quality through compliance and a move towards a quality culture rather than a following a box-ticking procedure. This means shifting the focus from process towards outcomes and putting the emphasis on the management of a quality culture (Higher Education Authority, 2018).

3

The Bologna process considers the gap between policy and practice in educational institutions.[1] Compared to the National Forum's review of policy documents, another project (which came to be known as the Maunimo Project), monitored several behaviours of staff and students within a university focusing on mobility (Colucci *et al*., 2012). According to Maria Helena Nazare, President of the European University Association (EUA) at the time "Both the governments of the EUA and the European commission have articulated a strategic vision for enhancing mobility, entailing concrete benchmarks and better measurement of progress". However, where policy has been articulated or documented, has progress been monitored sufficiently? The EUA has a specific role to play in over 850 universities in Europe to put policy into practice. The EUA document reflects on how policy and practice can be better coordinated. An exciting outcome of this project was the Mobility Mapping Tool developed to monitor progress.

One of the crucial steps in the policy process is the formulation stage where the solution to the public problem is selected, amongst various possible alternatives, for implementation (Parsons, 1995; Hillman & Hitt, 1999; Howlett & Ramesh, 2003; Goodin *et al*., 2008). Savio & Nikolopoulos (2010) suggests the use of a PIS (Policy Implementation Strategy), an instrument that is used to attain the objectives or targets set out by policy but is broader in scope. The literature reviewed so far was for background and motivation in the substantive area and to get a feel for issues and concerns. It is not to discover gaps but rather as a motivation to continue and explore the subject area. The following research carried out a more in-depth explorative study of the subject area and, by using grounded theory, allowed for other research questions or concerns to arise.

Method

Grounded Theory – classic

This research adopted a classical grounded theory (GT) approach, such that the "theory" that will emerge is grounded in the data (Glaser & Straus, 1967). Given the nature of this research, GT was deemed the preferred methodology as it is an authentic way of capturing the voices of the participants that, in turn, generate rich data. This "rich data" revealed participants' views, feelings, intentions, actions, and context structures of their lived experiences. GT is a more explorative method of inquiry that allows the researcher to use

---

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en

their own autonomy to develop a theory that describes patterns of behaviour. Therefore, this research inquiry sought descriptions through field notes, observations, written personal accounts, detailed narratives, and through interviews. GT is an inductive theory discovery methodology that allows the researcher to develop a theoretical account of the general features of a topic while simultaneously grounding the account in empirical observations or data (Martin & Turner, 1986). It provides a detailed, rigorous, and systematic method of analysis, with the advantage of reserving the need for the researcher to conceive preliminary hypotheses. It therefore provides the researcher with greater freedom to explore the research area and allow issues to emerge (Bryant, 2002; Glaser, 1978). The essential elements of GT are concepts and categories. According to Strauss & Corbin (1990) concepts are the basic units of analysis since it is from conceptualization of data, not the actual data, that the theory develops. Similarly, Pandit (1996) states that theories cannot be built with real incidents or activities as observed or reported, that is, from "raw data": the incidents, events, happenings are taken as, or analysed as, potential indicators of phenomena, which are thereby given conceptual labels.

The second element of GT is categories. According to Strauss & Corbin (1990) categories are higher in level and more abstract than the concepts they represent. They are generated through the process of making comparisons and highlighting similarities between the categories to develop lower-level concepts. According to Pandit, categories are the cornerstones of developing theory. "In the discovery of theory, one generates conceptual categories or their properties from evidence. Then the evidence from the category emerges and is used to illustrate the concept" (Glazer, 1967, p.23). So you first have the fact, then you have a category that emerges and that illustrates the concept. The evidence may not necessarily be accurate, but once you get the concept, it is a relevant theoretical abstraction about what is going on in the area being researched (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

GT describes developing the elements described above in stages that include open coding, memo-ing, sampling and sorting. Theoretical sampling is where new participants are sourced based on the results of previous data samples taken. Further questions may be generated from an interview and tested on new participants to compare results. Glaser's dictum is that "all is data", and so this may lead to other sources of data gathering including and not limited to books and journals. Throughout the process of data gathering and analysis, memos are recorded. Glaser refers to memo-ing as "the core stage in the process of generating theory,

5

the bedrock of theory generation" (Glaser, 1978, p.83). Memos are used to develop ideas, for note-taking, and constant comparison. These ideas should develop freely, should be stored centrally, and should be sortable. According to Charmaz (2006), memos compare data and explore ideas about the codes, and direct further data gathering.

Limitations of the Method

GT research is generally started with fieldwork in a substantive area where the researcher will enter the field with an issue or concern or question and take it from there. The idea of generating a theory that is grounded in the data is liberating, but the process is challenging. There is a significant learning curve with understanding the method and following the process correctly. As a researcher using the process and observing initial codes developed, it is easy to slip into being more descriptive rather than conceptual, but with adequate guidance the ability to conceptualize improves considerably.

Data Collection

Focus Groups

Data was gathered through an initial focus group to decipher the questions in the one-to-one interviews. Focus groups was a preferred method of data gathering initially as the participants were academics and are limited by time and workloads. The focus was to get a sense of the types of concerns held by the participants, which could give focus on what to ask in an interview. Staff were invited to attend the focus group, scheduled mid-semester, and seven participants attended. The focus group did verify that there were pressing concerns amongst academics concerning policy development and for future development in a larger institution. The remaining interviews were one-to-one, as the perceptions of the staff and their experiences was the focus and this could be explored in a one-to-one scenario. Conducting these interviews allowed a more interactive discussion with participants, to ask some questions, to listen to them, to gain access to their accounts and articulations and to analyse their use of language and constructions of discourse. According to Seidman (2006) "At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the learned experience of other people or the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p.9) which is the essence of a GT study. The focus group data was analysed and is subsumed into the theory being developed. Theoretical sampling may result in follow up one-to-one interviews with the focus group participants to compound the theory.

6

One-to-one Interviews

As the planning of the interview questions commenced, the big research questions presented, and possible sub-questions or prompts were developed to allow the participant to expand on their answer. The questions were open, and the aim was to use the prompts when needed. A total of seventeen interviews have been carried out to date. The interviews were recorded and transcribed into a Word document. Field notes were also taken during the interviews.

Participant Population

The participants in the focus group included one female and six male staff. For clarification purposes, gender has not been flagged as a concern in this study, and to date has not emerged as relevant in the study through qualitative analysis. The participants in the one-to-one interviews included eight males and nine females. The academic positions included lecturers, senior lecturers, heads of school, and heads of departments. The selection was based on awareness and knowledge of policy issues within the institutes. A profile of each participant has been stored for discussion and analysis. This profile is anonymous. The following chart illustrates a snapshot of the participant population profiles.

Table 1 Participant Profiles

	Gender	Position	Years at current position
P1	Female	SL (Senior Lecturer)	>10
P2	Female	Lecturer	>5
P3	Female	SL (Senior Lecturer)	>10
P4	Male	SL (Senior Lecturer)	>10
P5	Female	Lecturer	>10
P6	Male	Head of Department	>10
P7	Male	SL (Senior Lecturer)	>10
P8	Male	Lecturer	>5
P9	Male	Head of Department	>5
P10	Female	Head of Department	>10
P11	Female	Head of Department	>5
P12	Male	Head of School	>10
P13	Male	Head of Department	>10
P14	Female	Lecturer	>10
P15	Male	Lecturer	>10
P16	Female	Head of Department	>10
p17	Female	SL (Senior Lecturer)	>10

7

Ethical Considerations

The research was reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee, which is a sub-committee of the academic council at the Technological University Dublin - Blanchardstown Campus. The data is stored on a personal password-protected PC. NVIVO was implemented for initial data analysis where each institute is anonymized for cross-comparison for pattern and behaviour. For staff who agreed to one-to-one interviews and focus group attendance, a consent form was presented and signed before any conversation took place. Again, all contributions are anonymised. The aim is to observe patterns of behaviour to develop a theory. Data analysis at present is through pen and paper and protected in a locked office at all times. In all elements of data collection, analysis, and dissemination of strict ethical institutional guidelines have been upheld.

Data Analysis

Glaser's (1978) GT approach to data gathering and analysis was employed to examine and interrogate the interview data in depth. The focus group and the interviews are recorded and then transcribed for further analysis. Initially, NVIVO was implemented as a repository for the codes and the incidents of categories. Line-by-line coding was carried out at this stage. A total of 130 codes were generated from the data using this method. Field notes taken during the interviews were used for further investigation and theoretical sampling. They highlighted the main concerns of the participant rather than the recorded interviews. As a researcher using GT processes codes were very descriptive at this stage. These descriptive codes included:

1. Interpretation - The dominant category being Interpreting the data.
2. Implementation
3. Roles and Responsibilities
4. Participation
5. Time
6. Education
7. Communication
8. Support
9. Level of Application
10. Non-Compliance
11. Institutional Culture
12. Support

8

Following further analysis, codes and categories of the codes were developed. Substantive coding is how one can describe this process, the open coding of the data codes for as many categories as possible (Glaser, 1978). Codes for different incidents are also sorted into as many categories as possible. Open coding allows the analyst to see the direction to take in the study by theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling continued, which resulted in more data gathered through subsequent interviews. Rather than looking at the codes as being descriptive with multiple instances, codes were more conceptual, also known as theoretical coding. "The theoretical code conceptualizes how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into the theory" (Glaser, 1978, p.72). Line-by-line coding resulted in many more codes, so once analysis of the field notes commenced then codes reduced to 29. The conceptual codes are like the descriptive codes and incidents are the same. There was a confidence that came with this and helped verification of the codes developed through conceptualization. These codes proved as relevant in the investigation and will be further analysed to prove fit and workability in the theory. According to Glaser (1978), the essential relationship between data and theory is a conceptual code. The ideas were there through initial coding, but the challenge was then to continue the discipline of understanding them as concepts.

Conceptual Codes

The Tables below list the initial conceptual codes and examples of incidents. The codes can be compared, and further incidents will also be added and compared. For example, the interpretation code had 26 incidents associated with it. Several incidents appear across multiple codes, and these will be analysed further. The questions that needed to be asked throughout the analysis of the data were:

1. *What is the data a study of?*
2. *What category or property of a category is indicated?*
3. *What is happening in the data?*

When a pattern of behaviour is evident in the data, the researcher names the concept. Similar events are placed into categories. "Coding for concepts allows the researcher to transcend the empirical nature of the data while at the same time accounting for the processes within the data in a theoretically sensitive way" (Glaser, 1978, p.142). The following tables illustrate each concept, description and examples of incidents.

9

Table 2 Concept, Description and Incidents

Category/concept	Description	Example
Dissipating Policy	This code was created to study the issue where participants got involved in policy development and for reasons the policy was never created. Some participants stated that they got involved in policy development and put in a lot of work to see dissipate over time. There were different conditions; however, that may have led to this and that being time or coordination issues.	"I find that it may start, but it eventually peters out." "I do not think policy internalized enough within the school."
Imposed Policy	Some participants felt that policy documents were pushed onto them and they thought that they were "a bit alien" with one participant stating "I feel that policy is something that is done onto you rather than you doing the development of policy." This concern was coded to imposing policy.	"They are always something that is outside in rather than inside out."
Policy Power	There was a sense that policy development comes from a position of power and is created and it is not in the interest of academics yet the academics are expected to implement it. There were also references to policy becoming a weapon and a "stick to beat you with" when something went wrong. Some academics are unaware of all the polices and are only made aware of the policies if an issue arises and the policy is presented to them. The policy is then used as a reprimanding tool.	"There is a difference between empowerment and emancipation. As employees, we are empowered to work in a system governed by policy, but we are not emancipated to change or challenge." "What I would say is that most policy, especially academic, come from a position of power."
Interpreting	What was very prominent in the participant's concerns was the interpretation of the policy. However, this took on many nuances in different interviews. Some found the language of the documents complicated, and others found the materials to be very dense. There was also a link between complying and interpreting policy. If the academic cannot understand the document, then that led to a degree of non-compliance.	"I have found problems with a policy document that I have found very complicated, and it is not being implemented correctly by the lecturers" and "I suppose that people are doing their own thing when it comes to policy." "I find policy documents very dense, and I work in academia, and I find them difficult to read."
Implementation	There was a concern amongst academics that the day-to-day implementation of some policies is quite difficult. The idea of referring to documents as codes is very confusing and that they are not widely disseminated and not understood consistently and difficult to implement by the academics.	"Being cynical, sometimes the answer is ignoring policy, and hope that you are doing things right." "I would say that there is no overarching consideration into how those policies are being implemented." "I would say that people are doing their own thing when it comes to policy."

Table 3 Concept, Descriptions and Incidents

Category/concept	Description	Example
Density	"Dense" or "cumbersome" were words used to describe the readability of some of the documents and that they would be challenging to implement.	"Dense to access. Their day-to-day implementation is quite difficult." "The idea of referring to documents as codes is very difficult."
Policy meaning	The way that policy is interpreted can be measured in the meaning of the policy. If the policy is written by an academic for an academic, there is an increased understanding, whereas if it is written by someone outside of academia, there is some level of misinterpretation.	"Policy is always developed by admin, and they are not widely disseminated and not understood consistently and difficult to implement by the academics."
Policy development opportunity	Staff were given the opportunity to get involved in policy development, so they had opportunity. Some stated that they were never approached to develop policy. Some had negative experiences, and others had good experiences. Coordination and support were descriptive codes and had many incidents associated with them, so the degree of support and coordination will improve or negate the staff experience.	"We were asked to develop a strategy at the school level." "There is a lack of a process that provides a seamless flow of the development." "My fear is that policies will be developed in isolation and sent back to the campus, and possibly will become dry and dusty and ignored."
Policy effort	Policy opportunity could work well alongside or be compared with the code "policy effort" that indicates the opportunity that may arise to get involved in the development of policy. There was also an assumption that depending on the level of the academic the opportunity may not be there with one participant stating "I suppose I was never asked to develop policy; it tends not to be done at the lecturer level.	"You get involved in the development of policy, but it eventually peters out." "The frustrating element was that it was challenging to coordinate the development of policy."
Academic time design	Time design in the policy development impacted and shaped what people did. Constraints on developing policies included the time they were given to do so. Some participants felt that it was an extra-curricular activity that also had no impact on their timetable.	"You are busy doing day-to-day stuff, and sometimes interpreting policy or processes can be difficult." "I bit off more than I could chew developing policy, and it was a distraction from other work duties."
Disconnect	Some academics feel that there is a gap in policy or a disconnect between what is in the policy documents and what is being interpreted or happening on the ground. They feel that there is a level of con-compliance.	"I feel there is a disconnect between what is in the policy document and what is happening on the ground" "I tend to have a concern about working on a policy document that doesn't represent what is happening on the ground"
Implementation	There was a concern amongst academics that the day-to-day implementation of some policies is quite difficult. The idea of referring to documents as codes is very confusing and that they are not widely disseminated and not understood consistently and difficult to implement by the academics.	"Being cynical, sometimes the answer is ignoring policy, and hope that you are doing things right" "I would say that there is no overarching consideration into how those policies are being implemented" "I would say that people are doing their own thing when it comes to policy"

11

Table 4 Concept, Description and Incidents

Category/concept	Description	Example
Culture	The other main concern that has been evident in all the interviews to date, and will weave its way nicely into a theory, is institutional culture. This is particularly relevant to policy development in the future and in an institute in expansion. Many of the participants voiced concerns over policy development across multiple campuses.	"If the policy is not well understood and bought into at the coalface, it will be historical behaviour as opposed to adapting new policy."
Organizational Structure / Culture	There was a reference to the 4:1:1 ratio of campuses. Each campus has a way of doing things, and the concerns were that if blanket policies are developed, then there may be a struggle.	"My fear is in the future culture will be lost and will not be reflected in those global policies." "you have three or more different cultures coming together, you have different ideologies and three different perspectives: if they are all in opposition, you have a battleground."

Some participants were concerned about the impact on students. They had concerns with the size of the institute, as in a smaller institute the focus can be very student-centered, and in a larger institute they may become anonymous and be affected by these blanket policies.
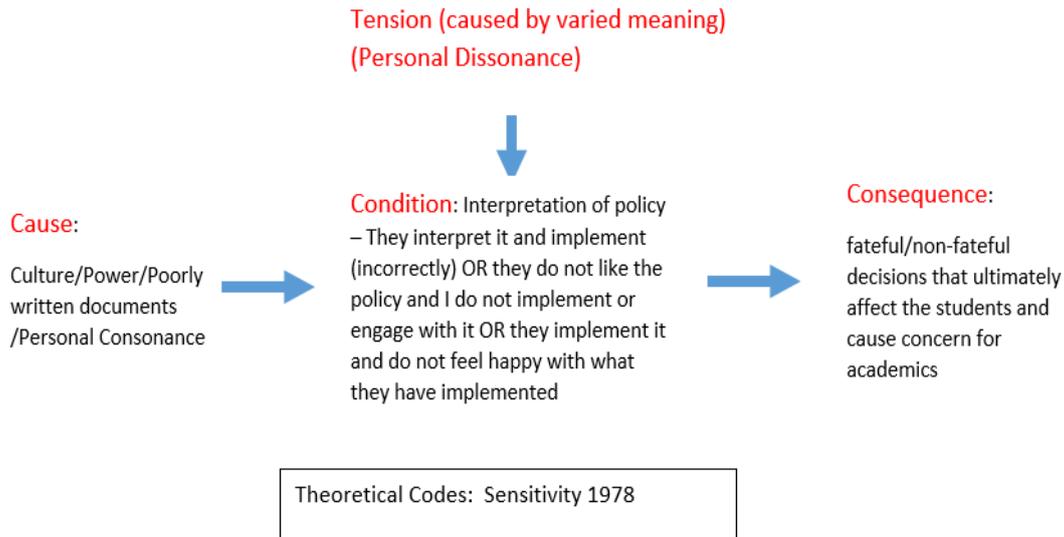
Thus far, the codes, categories, and incidents are being recorded and stored in memos and compared. For a GT study the resulting theory is indicative of a pattern of behavior and is abstract from the lower level analysis of roles of the participants and situations. However, the patterns show that heads of department or senior lecturers seemed to have more concerns with development of policy rather than implementation of same. Their concerns were in getting involved with policy that tended to dissipate after a period and the document never gets developed, or that policy development is a battleground: *"As we enter the larger institution, I fear we will become more political, and policy will be used as a political tool. Academic council will become a political battleground".*

Discussion

The analysis suggests that development and implementation of policy are prominent concerns. The patterns that are clustering around those concerns are meaning gaps, personal tensions and collective tensions. Implementation due to the number of incidents is more dominant. There are still substantial issues arising around development and it will be subsumed into the theory or will give rise to a subsequent study on policy development, and the theory will most likely revolve around implementation and interpretation issues. This will

12

happen organically at the next stage of the analysis and that is sorting of the memos through constant comparison of incidents and codes. However, patterns of behaviour around these concerns show that there is a level of tension felt by the academics. In terms of GT theoretical codes, this would be context: there is context when there is tension. Context in relation to theoretical codes for GT is the ambience or the feelings in the air within the group of people. What is happening, then, is a level of dissonance between interpreting and implementation: you have policy-intended meaning and you have policy-interpreted meaning. When a colleague asks another to explain the policy, you then have shared meaning, so you have a meaning gap. The problem arises when you have sets of individuals where their interpretive meanings vary. This creates an issue for the academics because they care about the students and they are accountable for their actions. Hazelkorn (2018) mentions that concepts of accountability and transparency have taken centre stage in public policy discourse and that there is "an emphasis on being responsive and answerable was well as being straightforward and truthful for one's actions". There may be personal tension where you do not like the policy and you do not enact it. We have personal dissonance here, and we also have collective tension. As a result, there is a level of non-compliance that came up as a concern for many of the participants.

Findings thus far align with those of the National Forum (2018a) and conclude that without appropriate policy guidance, informal practices can emerge that may not serve institutions, staff or students well. There are factors that influence what academics do and that includes culture, the power that policy has and their personal consonance so all of these codes are now comparable and can be applied to the theoretical code for further analysis. Policy has an intended meaning and sometimes interpretation is imposed upon the academics. Preliminary findings suggest that participants feel there is a power behind policy. They feel they were somewhat forced to implement policy that went against their personal or professional beliefs and they were unable to change that. Personal tension is felt whether they implemented them or not. If you do not implement, you are in trouble. It is used as a "stick to beat you with". There is a fateful decision made by the academics. You did not follow the policy and that is against your nature or you do and it is also against your nature. There are decisions made here by the academics that cause tension. These decisions have outcomes that ultimately affect the students, so they are fateful decisions. In terms of the theoretical codes, fateful or non-fateful decisions ultimately affect the students, cause concern for academics and have consequences.

13

Tension (caused by varied meaning)
(Personal Dissonance)

Cause:

Culture/Power/Poorly
written documents
/Personal Consonance

Condition: Interpretation of policy
– They interpret it and implement
(incorrectly) OR they do not like the
policy and I do not implement or
engage with it OR they implement it
and do not feel happy with what
they have implemented

Consequence:

fateful/non-fateful
decisions that ultimately
affect the students and
cause concern for
academics

Theoretical Codes: Sensitivity 1978

As these are the early-stage findings, the core concerns of the participants will become more evident through further conceptualization and abstraction of the data. There are some codes that remain to be integrated into the theory. Theoretical sensitivity can occur at this stage and it is allowed to look outside the substantive area to compound what the data is showing. Memos of the process are kept with a record of the decisions to develop codes and the relationships between codes as they are being further analysed.

Conclusion

The aim of the research was to investigate academic experience of policy development across three institutes of Technology in Dublin. The method of data gathering and analysis was grounded theory. The present findings confirm that there are concerns amongst academics with regards to policy. The main concerns of participants in relation to policy are development, interpretation, implementation, gaps, time, compliance and culture. There are other concerns not elaborated on that will most likely prove relevant in the theory going forward, including support and education. At this point, the research study is still focusing on the conceptualization of the ideas and memo-ing of the approach taken and ideas generated. Once a theory emerges, comparisons can be made with other substantive areas to develop the theory further. This will possibly result in further interviews with participants in other areas. What is liberating about the research is that the findings indicate very clear concerns of the staff and they will be addressed in a theory through a better understanding of the overall concern. The resolution of the core concern will be a theory generated. The data suggests that there still is more work to be carried out, more data to be gathered and further analysis that

14

will successfully develop a theory that can be used by the academics in the new technological university and indeed further afield. During the research process to date, there have been opportunities to interview participants from an institution in Canada that have been through the same transformation as the institutes in this study. These interviews have not been analysed as part of this research. Future studies aim to replicate results on a larger scale in the development of a formal theory to look at comparisons of policy experiences nationally and internationally.

15

References

Boyle, R., & Humphreys, P.C. (2001). *A New Change Agenda for the Irish Public Service*. CPMR Discussion Paper 17, Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

Bryant, A. (2002). Grounding systems research: Re-establishing grounded theory. In *Proceedings of the 35th Annual Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences* (pp. 3446-3455). Los Alamitos, CA: IEEE.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.

Colucci, E., Davies, H., Korhonen, J., & Gaebel, M. (2012). *Mobility: Closing the gap between policy and practice*. Brussels: European Universities Association.

Glazer, B. (1978). *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory*. San Francisco, CA: University of California Press.

Glaser, B. (2002). Constructivist grounded theory? *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/ Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *3*(3), Art. 12, 47.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. London: Routledge.

Goodin, R.E., Moran, M., & Rein, M. (2006). *The Oxford handbook of public policy.* (Vol. 6). Oxford: Oxford Handbooks.

Hazelkorn, E. (2018). The accountability and transparency agenda: Emerging issues in the global era. *European higher education area: The impact of past and future policies* (pp. 423-439). Berlin: Springer.

Higher Education Authority (2018). *Higher Education System Performance Framework 2018-2020. Higher Education Authority* (pp. 1-34). Available at: https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/higher-education-system-performance-framework-2018-2020.pdf

Hillman, A.J., & Hitt, M.A. (1999). Corporate political strategy formulation: A model of approach, participation, and strategy decisions. *Academy of Management Review*, *24*(4), 825-842.

Howlett, M., Ramesh, M., & Perl, A. (2009). *Studying public policy: Policy cycles and policy subsystems* (Vol. 3). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hunt, C. (2011). *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 - Report of the Strategy Group.* Department of Education and Skills. Available at: https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2017/06/National-Strategy-for-Higher-Education-2030.pdf

Jones, M., & Alony, I. (2011). Guiding the use of grounded theory in doctoral studies - An example from the Australian film industry. *International Journal of Doctoral Studies,* 6, 95-114.

16

Lillis, D. (2015). Masters of the Universe or Survival of the Fittest: Rethinking Strategy Development in a Technological University. *Stream 1: Enterprise and Engagement*, 7.

Martin, P.Y., & Turner, B.A. (1986). Grounded theory and organizational research. *The Journal of Applied Behavioural Science*, *22*(2), 141-157.

Murphy, T., & Maguire, T. (2018). A summary of the national forum's review of the existing higher education policy landscape for digital teaching and learning in Ireland. *DBS Business Review, 2.*

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (2018a). *A Review of the Existing Higher Education Policy Landscape for Digital Teaching and Learning in Ireland.* Available at: https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/publication/a-review-of-the-existing-higher-education-policy-landscape-for-digital-teaching-and-learning-in-ireland-2/

Pandit, N.R. (1996). The creation of theory: A recent application of the grounded theory method. *The Qualitative Report*, *2*(4), 1-15.

Parsons, D.W. (1995). *Public policy: an introduction to the theory and practice of policy analysis*. London: Edward Elgar Pub.

Savio, N., & Nikolopoulos, K. (2010). Forecasting the effectiveness of policy implementation strategies. *International Journal of Public Administration*, *33*(2), 88-97.

Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J.M. (1997). *Grounded theory in practice*. London: Sage.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Suddaby, R. (2006). From the editors: What grounded theory is not. *Academy of Management Journal*, *49*(4).

Van Manen, M. (1997). *Researching Lived Experience*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Whetten, D.A. (1989). What constitutes a theoretical contribution? *Academy of Management Review*, *14*(4), 490-495.

17