Teachers' lived experiences of communication with curriculum planning system in curriculum development and implementation processes in Iran: An experience of a centralized educational system

The purpose of the research was to investigate teachers' lived experiences of communication with curriculum planning system in curriculum development and implementation processes. The research was performed by qualitative approach and phenomenology method. The sample of the research included 20 experienced teachers of the elementary schools in Birjand, Mashhad and Tehran who were selected in a purposive method. In order to collect data, semi structured interviews were applicated. These interviews were recorded and made into written form with the permission of the participants. The deep analysis of teachers' viewpoints was carried out by Colaizzi Pattern and content analysis and entailed to identify 3 main categories and 10 subordinate categories. In this research, data validity was determined through the following techniques: the self-monitoring of researcher (verifiability), the accurate direction of interview and collecting data processes (reliability) and triangulation (deploying multiple researchers to provide confirming evidence). Teachers' experiences of communication with curriculum planning system in curriculum development and implementation processes were recognized and classified according to three categories: "communicative channels between teachers and curriculum planning system", "human communication factors" and "curriculum planning system status". Analyzing teachers' experiences explains that taking into account the subject of communication between teachers and curriculum planning system can lead to the realization of effective implementation of curricula by teachers. Relation between teachers and curriculum planning system through various and interactive communication networks in curriculum development and implementation processes is one of the suggestions of this study.

Keywords: *Teachers' lived experiences; curriculum planning; curriculum development; curriculum implementation*

Introduction

Curriculum change is a permanent and at the same time complicated process (Miles, 2021). Participation and contribution of teachers in this process is much crucial and no change simply comes into reality without their understanding and participation (wang, 2007; quoted from Butt, Mahmood & Urooj, 2021). By approving the Fundamental Reform Document of Education of Iran and after that the National Curriculum of Iran, this curriculum as a road map has provide the groundwork for many changes in the elementary schools curriculum. In the Fundamental Reform Document of Education (2010: 47), the role of teacher has been named as the most effective element in the

realization of the missions for curriculum planning system, and on the hand, establishing some mechanisms for raising capabilities of teachers in order to effectively participate in curriculum planning process has been demanded (2010: 49). Besides, in the Fundamental Reform Document of Education it has been mentioned that curriculum planning process should provide the groundwork for effective participation and interaction between teachers and other beneficiary groups in designing, development, implementation and evaluation of curricula. Some researchers believe that teachers should be the main beneficiaries in the processes of development and implementation; as this will strengthen their commitment and attitude toward the changes of curriculum (Janík, Janko, Pešková, Knecht, & Spurná, 2018). Hall and Hord (2015), through accepting Concerns-based Adoption Model, proved that a teacher has an important position in change process. This model places teachers and their concerns in the center of change process and by this way practically confirms the personal and evolutionary essence of any kind of learning and change acceptance by a teacher. According to Sinnema, Nieveen, & Priestley (2020), if the voice of teachers is heard in the process of changing curriculum and teachers are appreciated, they probably change their conventional methods. As Wang (2006) says, at least three main actors play role in curriculum change process: policy makers, middle-level managers and teachers. If these actors have no communication or one of main actors does not participate in this process, curriculum implementation may face difficulty. So, the lack of knowledge about new plans and no participation in curriculum planning among teachers somewhat decrease effectiveness of plans (Chimbunde & Kgari-Masondo, 2020; Ngussa, Waiswa, & Makewa, 2017). Totally, the communication of teachers and curriculum planning system is originated from this basic fact that curriculum planning activities will result in favorable outcomes only when they are performed in classroom. On the other hand, a teacher is the most important person in implementing curriculum (Iskandar, 2020; Alsubaie, 2016). When a new curriculum is developed, implementation occurs as an interactive process between curriculum planners and teachers. Despite the importance of teacher's role in curriculum implementation, researches imply ignorance of teachers and their interests, capabilities and viewpoints in curricula change process (Goldring, Grissom, Rubin, Neumerski, Cannata, Drake, & Schuermann, 2015; Saracaloğlu, Yılmaz, Çengel, Çöğmen, Karademir, & Kanmaz, 2010).

Based on 6-8 and 6-11 solutions mentioned in the paragraph 5-2-4 of the National Curriculum of Iran, in order to increase participation of teachers in curriculum planning process, some proceedings have been recommended in the national level; for example: informing teachers about the expectations of upper- hand documents from them, indirect participation of teachers in need assessment of curricula, participation of teachers in accreditation and development curricula and participation of teachers in producing educational kits (the National Curriculum of Iran , 2010).

Communication is a dynamic process which is carried out in order to meet others and the transmission of messages in an effective manner (Khan, Khan,

Zia-Ul-Islam, & Khan,2017). Although different features have been mentioned 1
for "Effective Teacher", but communicative skills which should be trained to 2
teachers have been ignored (Okoli, 2017). Gillies (2004) believes that as much 3
as teachers are more trained to use communicative skills, they are more 4
engaged in interactive learning. Problems such as the lack of enough support 5
by planners and resistance against change, and or the weak professional 6
development for a part of teachers can be removed through communication 7
(Carson ,2010). Crick Patrick (2001) has confirmed the role of communication 8
in implementing change and believes that it is necessary to consider the details 9
of change at first and then we can contribute to the efficient implementation of 10
change through communicating with the people who will be affected by change 11
and building their trust. Generally, several methods can be used to establish 12
communication. These methods include mass and interpersonal media (Rogers, 13
2010), oral and written communication, web-based communication, video 14
conference, E-mail and face to face sessions (Jain, 2012), websites and social 15
networks such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram (Singhal ,2016; Leonardi, 16
Huysman, & Steinfield, 2013). According to (Kauffmann & Carmi ;2014) and 17
(Huang, Chen, & Chen,2004), the appearance and development of modern 18
technologies such as E-mail and video conferences have changed the methods 19
of communication due to the lack of time and place limitation, exchangeability, 20
secrecy and the possibility of using multimedia messages. Sousa, Agante, 21
Quental, & Gouveia (2014), in their research, also found out that the Internet 22
can play a key role in communication between teachers union and educational 23
organizations. Although (Kupritz & Cowell ,2011) and (Men ,2014) emphasize 24
that face to face presenting information is more efficient than the usage of E- 25
mail, short messaging, and or phone contact as communicative appliance. 26
Stryker & Santoro (2012) have also stated that face to face communication 27
causes the enhancing productivity and the job satisfaction of personnel and 28
managers, and it more efficiently provides data for personnel and managers 29
better than any other communication, too. 30

Studies show that few innovative plan or design, which most of experts 31
consider them successful, can be found in the education system of Iran. Most 32
of innovative plans have failed, and or have not wrapped up because of 33
incorrect propagation and implementation (Tourani, Aghayee and Manteghi, 34
2010). One of the reasons for the failure of the implementation of new 35
curricula in centralized educational systems including the educational system 36
of Iran is that the suggestion of change have been propounded by high-level 37
managers and curricula are suddenly imparted in order to implement by the 38
head of the organization and is expanded to the educational system of the 39
country. This causes misunderstanding about change by teachers. At the same 40
time, appropriate communication has not been established with teachers to 41
understand correctly, to be justified and informed of new curricula, and in most 42
of cases, teachers begin to implement these curricula without correct 43
understanding and even without accepting them (Hosseini, 2015; Marsh, & 44
Willis, 2007). Because of the high importance of communication between 45
teachers and curriculum planning system and also few researches in this regard, 46

the purpose of our research is the investigating of teachers' lived experiences 1
of communication with curriculum planning system in curriculum development 2
and implementation processes in Iran. Considering the purpose of the research, 3
this question is discussed: "How are teachers' lived experiences of 4
communication with curriculum planning system in curriculum development 5
and implementation process' in Iran?" 6
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Method 9
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The purpose of this study which has been performed in the framework of 11
qualitative approach and based on phenomenological method was a 12
phenomenological description of the existing status of the communication 13
between teachers and curriculum planning system in Iran, considering the 14
teachers' lived experiences of elementary schools. In this research, the concept 15
"communication between teachers and curriculum planning system" means the 16
actions which are carried out in order to raise teachers' knowledge and 17
empowering them regarding new curricula, from development to the 18
implementation of curriculum and also during implementing the new curricula. 19
In other words, this research seeks for the meaning appertained to the 20
considered phenomenon from the viewpoint of elementary schools teachers in 21
order to find out and discover the essence of learners' experiences. The 22
researchers provided and developed protocols or written forms (protocols of 23
interview) for recording information in order to perform interviews and collect 24
data. 20 persons of the teachers in Birjand, Mashhad and Tehran were selected. 25
The logic of this selection was the consideration of teachers' experiences in the 26
different regions of Iran. 27
Specific and structured methods for analysis have been presented in 28
phenomenology, especially by Mustakas. Mustakas' revision on the method of 29
Stock -Colaizzi-Kane is the most practical and useful approach. So, the central 30
elements of qualitative data analysis are: data codification (including reducing 31
the data to significant parts and nominating the parts), data synthesis in the cast 32
of more comprehensive classes or themes and the presentation and comparison 33
of data in the cast of figures, tables and diagrams. In order to investigate 34
teachers' lived experiences regarding the under-study phenomenon, the date 35
achieved from interviews accurately studied at first. At the next stage, the 36
important phrases and statements related to the phenomenon were extracted. At 37
the third stage, the extracted statements were conceptualized. Then the joint 38
concepts were placed in specific clusters. At the fifth stage, an exhaustive 39
description of the extracted concepts was carried out and at the end, exhaustive 40
description of phenomenon presented briefly and was verified for the last time. 41
In this research, the validity of data was determined through the self- 42
revision of the researcher (verifiability), accurate direction of interview and 43
collecting data processes (reliability) and triangulation (deploying multiple 44
researchers to provide confirming evidence). In order to use this validation 45
strategy, a focus group consisting of participants in study virtually got together 46

and they were requested to remark and reflect on the accuracy of the presented descriptions and themes. According to adaptive-oriented approach, final approval was retained on the extracted categories and at last, a deep expression of the communication between teachers and curriculum planning system in the processes of development and implementation was obtained. In order to raise the reliability of the research, the interviews were sound-recorded by the permission of the participants. Then the data were made into handwritten and detailed notes got obtained. Besides this, MAX QDA software was used for the recodifying and analyzing the data. The method of adaptation among codifiers was applicated and several codifiers were deployed for analyzing the hand-written data. The stability of the codifiers' responses to the set of data showed the reliability of the data in this research.

Findings

After analyzing the data, three main categories and ten subordinate categories were extracted, which show the existing status of communication between teachers and curriculum planning system in the processes of curriculum development and implementation in Iran. In the following, each of the categories are presented by details.

Question 1. What are teachers' lived experiences of their own communicative channels and curriculum planning system in the processes of curriculum development and implementation?

In order to respond to this question and based on the performed interviews with teachers, 18 codes got obtained, which all of them were placed under a general category titled "Communicative channels of teachers and curriculum planning system".

Main category 1: Teachers' communicative channels and curriculum planning system

A part of teachers' lived experiences regarding communication with curriculum planning system was connected with ways and methods which are used for giving knowledge to teachers and raising their skills and as well as receiving their ideas and suggestions about new curricula. This category included two subcategories named as "real communicative channels" and "virtual communicative channels". Each of these subcategories also includes "one-sided communication" and "interactive communication".

Real communicative channels

Communication through the real space is the most important channel between teachers and curriculum planning system. These communications include issuing circulars and instructions (printed), delivering educational kits (book, CD, journal, poster, etc.), training the lecturers of on-the-job courses, holding educational workshops and on-the-job courses, establishing the

secretariat of designs and plans, etc. Circulars are the most important and the most formal communicative channel which through teachers are informed of new plans. Some critiques regarding circulars have been discussed by teachers, however. One teacher says:

"Ministerial circulars and instructions are the only legal way of informing about imparted plans including necessities for schools, principals and students. Of course, rigidity, inflexibility and one-sidedness are challenges for the issued circulars and instructions" (participant No. 10)

Some circulars generally are imparted to provincial offices by the Ministry (center) in order that the offices develop instructions based on their conditions and environmental possibilities and then deliver them to under their own control regional offices for performing. Educational group-heads play an important role in this case. One of teachers says:

"The heads of educational groups in provincial and regional offices are one channel (among the other channels) for receiving information about new curriculum; that is why those are the first people who are informed of changes and are responsible for teachers' educational missions. Thus they should be dominant on the plans so that they can present needed instructions to teachers" (participant No. 18)

Nowadays, no organization is needless of on-the-job education for its personnel. On-the-job education is one of the most basic needs of education system in each society and can contribute teachers' professional growth and development. Unfortunately, evidence shows the inappropriateness and insufficiency of these courses. One teacher says:

"Informing teachers of plans through on-the-job courses and educational workshops is carried out. Unfortunately, due to budget deficit, on-the-job courses are performed less. Besides, there are sometimes contradictions in the remarks of the lecturers of these courses and this confuses teachers. The weak points of these courses which makes them inefficient are: the lack of balance between the content of courses with devoted time, concentration on theorical content instead of practical content, and the lack of motivation for participating in these courses." (participants No. 3 & 8)

Virtual communicative channels

During the recent years, after the day to day expanding of communication in the cyberspace, there has been an attempt to also use the capacities of this space to develop communication between teachers and curriculum planning system. Although communication through the cyberspace has not been recognized as a formal channel yet, it can play an important role to give knowledge to teachers about curriculum change. Teachers have also welcomed this communicative channel due to rapid access to the space and more comfortable communication with officials. A teacher:

"Today, communication is done very rapidly due to the cyberspace, websites and social media. Opinion polls are performed easily and the officials can see the results." (participant No. 11)

It is too difficult to control and manage communication in the cyberspace because of its expansion and this needs a careful and purposeful planning. Right now, teachers are facing different issues in the cyberspace and more discuss the problems and subjects which are out of their own profession with other teachers. A teacher remarks:

"The human resources movement has been appeared so strong in the cyberspace. Though economical and subsistent problems may be more discussed in the cyberspace, it is totally helpful and raises the courage of teachers to establish communication." (participant No. 18)

In the recent years, it seems that the communication in the cyberspace has had more expansion and development than communication in the real space so that the most of communications (e.g. informing through circulars, holding educational courses and workshops, sessions, seminars, etc.), which in the past would happen in a face to face manner and in the real space, have gravitated to use the capacities of the cyberspace. Nonetheless, communication through the cyberspace has not been recognized as a formal channel yet and the content of this space cannot be accepted decisively and be adduced because of the penetrating some incorrect news and announcements in this space. A group of teachers believe that achieving knowledge and skills through face to face communication is still more efficient despite the development of technology.

Question 2. What are teachers' lived experiences of human communication in the processes of curriculum development and implementation?

In order to respond to this question and based on the performed interviews with teachers, 30 codes got obtained. Among these codes, three subcategories were extracted, which all of them were placed under a general category titled "Factors of human communications".

Main category 2: Factors of human communication

One type of communications is human communication. The most important human factors engaged in the subject curriculum implementation are teachers, principals, students and their parents. These people had been pointed out in teachers' lived experiences. This category included the factors related to teacher, the role of principal and the position of families and parents.

Factors related to teacher

A Teacher is the most important element in implementing curriculum. Taking into account the demands and needs of teachers and developing their professional skills entails the effective implementation of curricula. This subcategory included: (A) Resumes and work experiences of teachers; (B) Teachers' professional competences; (C) Teachers' motives

A) Resumes and work experiences of teachers

It is an ordinary thing to resist against change and the rejection of new plans at the beginning of an activity. Over time, it is expected that the resistance of people reduces and necessary acceptance toward change occurs. The teachers in the last years of their service accept new plans and communicate with them much later than young teachers. The changing of the teachers' attitudes with a history of service is more difficult than young teachers' ones. The remarks of a teacher has come in the following:

"The motiveless teachers who are in the last years of their service, especially in the scope of elementary education are one of challenges we are facing. These teachers do not communicate with new plans due to tiredness, ignorance and low motivation." (participant No. 12)

On the other hand, young teachers may suggest designs and plans due to have modern knowledge and high motives, but they are not accepted because of different reasons. This will also entails the reduction of their motivation. The remarks of a teacher:

"They do not want to see young personnel beside themselves. The disposition to youngism is so weak and there is no acceptance toward their plans. Of course, we are slogging in the education system step by step and we are leaving our footprint there. Building distance between generations is one of the factors which entails resistance and not performing the changes well. We hope this distance to be reduced as soon as possible." (participant No. 18)

B) Teachers' professional competences

Curriculum change without changing teachers comes to naught. Teachers should also achieve necessary knowledge and skills coinciding the change. According to the most of teachers, they will be able to perform changes accurately provided that they have achieved needed professional competences. In the recent years, good actions have been carried out for developing teachers' professional competences. Holding the festivals of action research and lesson study for teachers is one of these actions. These festivals alongside the educational workshops and courses which are held for teachers can entail the professional development of teachers. One of teachers has expressed an idea about this issue in the following:

"At the present time, there are two models for the enhancement of teachers' professional competences: lesson study and action research. A colleague's supervising on another colleague and having dialogue with the group of colleagues are placed among the measures of lesson study; of course, self-direction can be effective too. Some teachers seek for learning and attempt to raise the level of their own knowledge through studying and establishing communication with knowledgeable people; of course, some of others are also disinterested." (participant No. 7)

In the recent years, the Ministry of Education has begun to deploy unofficial and nonexpert teachers especially in the elementary course, due to the shortage of human resources on one hand and the high costs of employing official and expert teachers on the other hand. This has entailed the reduction of teachers' professional competences. One teacher says:

"The most important challenge in the education system and the elementary courses is the problem of efficient and capable personnel. Unfortunately, we have to employ some of teachers because of urgency and based on needs. Due to the lack of specialized knowledge and weakness in profession, these unofficial teachers cause us to face difficulty in implementing plans." (participants No. 10 & 12)

Without holding specialized curriculum planning courses for teachers, they should not be expected to begin to develop a curriculum or cooperate with the planning group in the process of curriculum planning. Teachers without having this specialized knowledge should not also claim that they can carry out such thing. A teacher:

"Teachers would like to create change, but their changes are according to their lived experiences and are not originated from professional knowledge. Many teachers have not carried out curriculum planning yet and are only waiting for imparting plans from up. Holding educational courses are necessary for raising the knowledge and skill of curriculum planning." (participant No. 14).

C) Teachers' motives

Having motive is so important to successfully do things. Teachers should have enough motives to be able to afford the assigned heavy responsibility and well perform plans. Unfortunately, not only the necessary actions are not done to raise teachers' motives, but also due to some behaviors, their motives reduce day by day. A teacher remarks:

"Teachers are usually taken opinion poll in the earlier stages of the implementation of any plan, but they are motiveless and inattentive. Our teachers are practically silent and say nothing and don't participate seriously and this idea is common that if we don't remark our ideas, there are other teachers who will remark their ideas. One of the reasons which entails low motives in teachers is the fact that many of their viewpoints and ideas are not considered in change process, and teachers become disappointed. Even some of teachers with high experience avoid participating in sessions and committees, and don't present themselves." (participant No. 4).

Some teachers have no inner motive for implementing new plans, and they begin to perform plans only due to outer motives and in the hope of receiving letters of commendation and advances. One teacher tells:

"The problem we have in implementing plans and designs is the low motives of teachers. They have no motivation for performing plans. The need of some

teachers for achieving job advances concludes that they perform plans well, and 1
the teachers who don't need job advances do not perform plans well. The cause 2
of participating in some festivals is only achieving advances and letters of 3
commendation; there is no inner motive for the implementation of plans." 4
(participant No. 15) 5

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The role of principal 7

Schools are the ultimate destination of all the curricula and principals play 8
a key and important role in both justifying and giving knowledge to teachers 9
and the parents of students regarding plans and supporting and providing the 10
needed resources and possibilities, and also in accurately controlling the 11
performance of plans. So, this key component should be regarded and there 12
should be necessary accuracy in appointing principals. Two instances of 13
teachers' remarks have come in the following: 14

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"The principal, despite having high position, doesn't almost have any authority. 16
Besides, principals are engaged in such problems and challenges that they can't 17
concentrate on the main problems of the education system." (participant No. 2) 18

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"Often, a principal has had the role of an encourager for implementing plans, as 20
a factor of motivation. The schools which have had a capable principal and have 21
been able to coordinate teachers and families with themselves and to justify them 22
regarding the plans both have been successful and have had less problems. On 23
the contrary, dictatorial management doesn't establish appropriate communication 24
with teachers and effectiveness doesn't occur." (participant No. 4) 25

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The position of families and parents 27

Students spend most of their own time at home and with their parents. The 28
parents of students have good capacities in order to cooperate with teachers in 29
the successful implementation of plans. So, it is necessary for parents and 30
teachers to keep contacts and that the parents of students have enough 31
knowledge about plans. Holding the sessions of "parents and teachers 32
association" in schools is one of the most important ways for communicating 33
with parents and giving knowledge to them. At the same time, communicative 34
channels should be expanded and a variety of trainings should be presented to 35
families. Two instances of teachers' remarks: 36

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"Although some steps are taken regarding the justification and instruction of 38
teachers in all the plans which are performed, the subject of instructing families 39
is not regarded. After passing several years of implementation of some plans such 40
as Qualitative-Descriptive Evaluation, we still see that families are not justified." 41
(participant No. 4) 42

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"I more try to communicate and coordinate with the parents in implementing 44
designs and plans and get their help. Giving knowledge to the parents about the 45
designs and plans will affect the effective implementation of the plans." 46
(participant No. 19) 47

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It seems that teachers' motivation is the most important component for successfully implementing plans. Teachers would like to be seen and their ideas and suggestions are regarded. If teachers aren't considered as the only implementer of plans and at the same time, they are communicated in the process of curriculum development, they will not show much resistance against change. Principals as the representatives and mediators of the educational system in schools can play an important role in the effective implementation of plans as well. The importance of this role will more appear in the case of appropriately appointing principals and giving more authorities to them. Besides, the parents of students are the lost ring in education. Totally, if the officials of the education system would like the endeavors of planners not to be wasted and the developed plans to be performed successfully, they should pay a special attention to the triangle of teachers, principals and the parents of students.

Question 3. What are teachers' lived experiences of curriculum planning system status in the processes of curriculum development and implementation?

In order to respond to this question and based on the performed interviews with teachers, 38 codes got obtained. Among these codes, five subcategories were extracted, which all of them were placed under a general category titled "curriculum planning system status".

Main category 3: Curriculum planning system status

Curriculum planning system contains the stages of development, implementation and evaluation. Curriculum development shows that who and during which stages a curriculum has been formed. Curriculum implementation includes the process of preparing teachers, students and society, providing necessary possibilities, controlling actions and supporting predicted proceedings. This category included the support of curriculum, the supervision of curriculum implementation, the multiplicity of plans and curricula, informing about curriculum and centralized educational system.

The support of curriculum

Any plan needs support to be implemented accurately. If new curricula and their implementers are not supported and the necessary possibilities aren't provided for implementation, performing these curricula will face difficulty. The remarks of one teacher:

"The designs and plans of the elementary courses don't have necessary supports. On-the-job educational courses aren't enough and are not performed for teachers at the proper time. Besides, the shortage of resources and possibilities creates restrictions for teachers which this problem prevents reaching educational goals." (participant No. 1)

The supervision of curriculum implementation

The uninterrupted control by officials and experts is needed and necessary during the process of curriculum implementation. After passing several months

of implementing a curriculum, teachers may have met challenges and problems, or have not accurately performed the procedure of implementation. Even in the case of accurately performing a curriculum, it needs feedbacks as well. Thus, without control, you can't expect the accurate implementation of a curriculum. One of the teachers expresses the following about this point:

"This is a defect that our plans are not measured and logical from the beginning to the end, and they aren't monitored. The evaluation of plans are not made after performing for two or three years in order to see whether teachers have accepted these plans or not." (participant No. 14)

The multiplicity of plans and curricula

Many formal and informal plans are performed in the educational system of Iran. All of these plans are originated from the Fundamental Reform Document of Education and also the National Curriculum. Formal curricula include contents and subjects which have been developed in the cast of textbooks and are presented to all of students. Due to the wide range of subjects and issues related to students, it is not possible for all of them to be contained in textbooks. So, these subjects are educated to students in the cast of some plans and designs. This has resulted in the multiplicity of plans and designs in the elementary course. The examples of the participants' remarks have come in the following:

"The number of designs and plans in the elementary course is high. Some of plans are greatened and some not. When a plan loses its importance, it is not taken into consideration by teachers. Some plans are hasty, and they aren't corresponded with the existing realities in schools. Most of these plans aren't also performed well because they have been the complement of curriculum and haven't been placed in the formal curriculum directly." (participants No. 7,12 &18)

Informing about curriculum

Teachers as the main implementers of curricula should have enough information about the logic and goals of the plans they perform and the manner of performing them. Thus, correct and on-time informing in this case will play a key role in accepting curriculum change and the successful performance of the curricula. On the contrary, weak informing will entail the failure of change. Some of teachers have remarked regarding this issue:

"The lecturers of the Ministry discussed a set of subjects and methods in an on-the-job course of instructor training, and in another course with new team and lecturers, much of the presented materials by previous lecturers were rejected. This happening resulted in contradiction in the contents of different courses." (participant No. 3)
"Some failure factors of some plans are the way and time of informing about changing the plans, not careful justifying the implementers of change and their distrust in change plans. The time of informing about plans is usually in the

middle of school year when teachers are engaged in many other problems." (participants No. 1,3,8 &17)

Centralized educational system

The type of educational system affects the method of teachers' communication. In centralized educational systems, all decisions are made in the center and the developed curricula are imparted from up to down. These curricula usually do not have necessary flexibility, and teachers are obligated to completely implement these curricula while in non-centralized educational systems, making decisions are assigned to provinces so that they make decision for students according to their own possibilities, conditions and culture and develop curricula and contents. The following are some teachers' remarks about this item:

"At the level of province, down to up communication can be established easily, but at a higher level (the level of the Ministry), down to up communication is not possible, or it is difficult due to the wideness of the country and the high number of schools and teachers. When a Deputy Minister came to our city (Birjand), we could communicate with her easily, but when she is in Tehran, communicating with her is hard." (participant No. 19)
"Since the structure of making decision is centralized, the suggestions of teachers are not often penetrative. Sometimes, contradictory ideas and suggestions by the teachers of across the country are delivered to the Ministry and decision makers also are not able to reach a final conclusion due to systemic limitations." (participants No. 4 & 12)

It seems that the centralized curriculum planning system in Iran has affected the other components such as the support of curriculum, the supervision of curriculum implementation, the multiplicity of plans and curricula and also informing about curricula. Due to the shortage of credits and financial resources in the educational system in Iran, consequently the issue of the shortage of educational per capita share and also the shortage of educational tools and materials are exposed to discussion. The spread and dispersal of schools on one hand and the shortage of expert human resources on the other hand, have caused the reduction of controls. Besides, the endeavors of the educational system for reducing centralism and giving some authorities to provinces have entailed the creation of new plans out of the formal school programs. Above all, despite its importance in giving knowledge and justifying teachers as the main implementers of curricula, the subject of informing about plans and curricula has not been carried out well. All of these items have concurred together so that the changes of curricula are not performed successfully and teachers are not satisfied with the status quo.

Table 1. The structure of categories extracted from collected data   1

Main categories	Subordinate categories		Explanations
Communicative channels of teachers and curriculum planning system	Real communicative channels	One- sided (Circulars and instructions, books and documents, journals, CDs, etc.)	This channel is not flexible enough and teachers should implement the curricula as they have been presented. The most formal and the most practical type of informing teachers is circular.
		Interactive (On-the-job courses and educational workshops, sessions and conventions, educational group leaders, etc.)	This type of communication takes place through holding attending face to face sessions with the possibility of remarking ideas and direct interaction. Teachers prefer this type of communication to one-sided communicative channel.
	Virtual communicative channels	One- sided (Websites, films and podcasts in cyberspace, etc.)	The contents of these channels are not referable and reliable, and there are formalized only by the approval of related organizations.
		Interactive (E-mails, social networks, phone contacts, virtual educational sessions, etc.)	The capacities of the Internet and the cyberspace provide the possibility of establishing the communications which are not truly possible.
Factors of human communications	Factors related to teacher	Resumes and work experiences of teachers	Teachers with a history of service usually show more resistance against change.
		Teachers' professional competences	Only few teachers are seeking for their own professional competences.
		Teachers' motives	The factors such as the exclusion of teachers' ideas and ignoring them have entailed the lack of

		motivation in them.
	The role of principal	Principals have been ignored.
	The position of families and parents	There are weakness and shortage in the realm of informing families of new curriculum.
Curriculum planning system status	The support of curriculum	There is not enough support for curriculum.
	The supervision of curriculum implementation	There is not enough control on curriculum.
	The multiplicity of plans and curricula	The number of plans for implementing in the elementary schools is high.
	Informing about curriculum	The method of informing of curriculum is weak.
	Centralized educational system	Teachers are only implementer of developed curricula in the center, and down to up communicative channels are limited.

Conclusion

The purpose of the research was to investigate the elementary school teachers' lived experiences of communication with curriculum planning system in curriculum development and implementation processes in Iran. The results of researches show that creating motive and the sense of possession in teachers and moreover their professional development are necessary for effective implementation of curricula (Priestley & Drew, 2019). On the other hand, Rahman (2014) believes that communication between teachers and curriculum planning system can increase teachers' professional competences and their understanding of the intended change and subsequently develop their commitment and motivation for implementing change. The results of this research can be classified according to three categories: "communicative channels between teachers and curriculum planning system", "human communication factors" and "curriculum planning system status". Communicative channels mean the ways and methods which are applied in order to inform teachers and develop their skills regarding new curricula and also receive their ideas and suggestions; this happens in both the real and the virtual spaces. Instances of these communicative channels have been stated in the researches such as: Jain (2012), Leonardi, Huysman, & Steinfield (2013),

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Kauffmann & Carmi (2014) & Singhal (2016). One of the communicative
channels which has had many applications in skill development and the
informativeness of teachers regarding changes of curricula is holding on-the-
job educational courses in the recent years. According to the findings of this
research, these courses hasn't had necessary efficiency for the elementary
school teachers in Iran. Based on the World Bank report (2012; quoted from Al
Shabibi & Silvennoinen, 2018), the main critiques of teachers of on-the-job
educational courses are the instances including impractibility, not discussing
important subjects, teachers' lack of knowledge of the presented contents and
also being short-term and having little effectiveness on teachers.

    Human communication factors include the persons engaged in the process
of curriculum implantation. It is necessary to maintain the communication
between these persons and curriculum planning system during the processes of
curriculum development and implementation in order to effectively perform
plans. These people include teachers, managers and families. Casp (2003)
argues that programs of skill development and trainings for teachers should
actively support the improvement of teachers' communicative skills. Teachers
not only should be skillful at the art of pedagogy but also enhance their own
knowledge and competences toward sufficient communication with managers,
society, parents and so on (Quoted from Ozmen, Akuzum, Zincirli & Selcuk,
2016). The relation of teachers with managers and the other personnel of
school had been researched for several decades. These studies show that
teachers are often isolated from their colleagues in school; so creating the
opportunities of interaction and empathy for teachers has been the aim of
recent endeavors in order to raise the professionalism of teachers (Wang &
Haertel ,2017). The communication not only with principals and teachers but
also with the parents of students plays a very important role in effectively
implementing curricula and the efficiency of curricula is guaranteed by the
realization of informing, giving knowledge and training parents (Osler &
Coser,2015 and Schussler, 2003; quoted in Ozmen et al, 2016). One another of
the findings in this research points out the low motivation of teachers for
implementing curriculum. Saracaloğlu et al (2010) have mentioned that the
reasons for the lack of teachers' motives include excluding their viewpoints
and ignoring their needs in curriculum development process.

    In the third category, the existing status of curriculum planning system in
Iran has been investigated based on these subordinate categories: "supporting
curriculum", "supervising the implementation of curriculum", "the multiplicity
of plans and curricula", "informing about curriculum" and "centralized
educational system". According to Fullan (2007: 87), change in curriculum is a
complex process which can be affected by some factors such as the support of
change plans and also teachers. Donald Elly (1990; quoted from Myers, 2017)
believes that some environmental conditions exist, which can help promoting
change. One of these conditions is supporting teachers by the leaders of
change. Schermerhorn, James & Richard (2007:9) have mentioned six common
approaches for overcoming resistance against change including material and
spiritual supports for teachers. Based on the findings of the research, the

necessary supports are not accomplished for the change plans in Iran. On the other hand, one of effective actions before implementing a new curriculum is rapid and on-time informing teachers of changes. Informing and giving knowledge to teachers is so helpful for linking their thoughts with the new thoughts in relation with specialized and thematic areas and also regarding the improvement and modification of teachers' attitudes toward change and new curricula. According to the findings of the research, the method of informing about the changes of curricula in Iran is at a weak level. Generally speaking, curriculum planning system in Iran is centralized, and the biggest problem in centralized curriculum planning systems which are managed from up to down is that supporting the low levels of change in these systems is very difficult. Teachers may bear this sort of communications in critical situations, but they do not accept it as a common procedure and an every-day reality (Rowley & Sherman ,2004). Besides, the messages coming from the opposite side may not be noticed in centralized curriculum planning systems (Ernestine & Hankins, 2017). Gad (2015), of course, believes that communication from up to down entails the raising of efficiency for control process; however, the findings of this study show that sufficient control on implementing curricula does not take place in Iran.

Totally, our findings can improve the trend of change in curricula and prevent the failure of them. According to the research literature and the remarks of the research participants, the following actions for solving the existing problems are suggested:

1. Communicative channels should be established and reinforced in organizations and offices and these channels should be open so that teachers are able to communicate with high-level officials in the process of change and present their questions, ideas and suggestions.
2. It is necessary to be careful about appointing the managers of different organizational levels, especially principals and the managers with high communicative skills and strong public relations should be deployed.
3. On-the-job education should be reviewed, revised and innovated, and the existing weak points in this area should be eliminated.
4. It is necessary to inform teachers of the goals and results of new curricula before implementing them through holding conventions, seminars and educational workshops.
5. It is suggested that the following actions are accomplished in order to empower the relation between teachers and curriculum planning system in the processes of curriculum development and implementation:
   Preparing conditions for teachers' professional growth
   Giving counselling services to teachers
   Providing Scientific supports for teachers and freeing up their time to study
   Letting them participate in the sessions of curriculum planning councils

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