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Composite Storytelling Affiliated College Faculty Narratives in India to Propose Curriculum and Exam Policy Revisions



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Abstract

Affiliated college academic staff members in India represent an abundance of frontline knowledges which hold great promise for impacting bottom-up policy. However, their knowledges are typically missing from the literature nor shared cross-institutionally. While it is common for them to express a lack of discretion, many find avenues for invoking high impact practices common to street-level bureaucrats. This study focuses on how they navigate university curriculum and exam policies through six emerging and high impact practices. This study highlights their high impact practices performed by illustrating meaningful mechanisms for coping and adapting to policies, and emerging insights regarding the role policymakers play in response to academics. We do this via composite storytelling, which merges participants' perspectives into narratives. Findings suggest grounding (in part) street-level bureaucrats high impact practices when (re)developing policies and the channels through which policies flow, to support the ways frontline workers cope and adapt to their work.

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Keywords: India; Higher Education; Affiliated Colleges; Composite Storytelling; Policy

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Introduction

Affiliated college academic staff, who comprise approximately 90% of India's higher education teachers, represent an enormous wealth of frontline knowledges (Altbach, 2009; UGC, 2017). Whereas universities oversee the administration and development of curriculum and exam policies, academic staff at their many affiliated colleges play the indispensable role of interpreting these policies to facilitate learning for the bulk of the nation's post-secondary students. However, these knowledges, which hold great promise for impacting policy from the bottom-up, are typically untapped in the literature nor shared across their respective universities. While it is common for affiliated college academics to express a lack of discretion within their work, many of them find avenues for invoking high impact practices common to street-level bureaucrats- those who have high levels of professional training at the bottom of a bureaucracy who work at the intersection of policy and discretion (Lipsky, 2010).

Simulating clear depictions of street-level bureaucrat patterns of practice across academic staff insights/perspectives offers promise for cross-institutional knowledge-building, individual academic staff member upskilling and potential policy upgradation from the bottom-up. In this study, we focus on how affiliated college academics navigate university curriculum and exam policies through a set of six emerging and high impact practices. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to highlight high impact patterns of practice performed by Indian affiliated college academic staff to illustrate meaningful mechanisms for coping and adapting to policies, in concert with emerging insights regarding the role policymakers play in responding to academics about their coping mechanisms. We attempt to do this through composite storytelling, which essentially merges participants' perspectives into narratives.

To demonstrate policy flow through the data, we present two linking, short narratives. The first one, styled as an executive report about a recent "3-day Faculty Development Forum" is a collective response from affiliated college academic staff members to the university Vice Chancellor (the chief academic officer). The Vice Chancellor's response is in the form of a memo in response to affiliated college academic staffs' executive report. Consequently, the two guiding questions for this study are: 1) How do Indian affiliated college academics successfully use coping and adapting mechanisms to inform better higher education bottom-up policy development; and how do policymakers initially respond to them?; and 2) How can this be illustrated through composite storytelling by utilizing Indian affiliated college high impact practices to inform the policymaker's responses?

Literature

Affiliated Colleges/Academic Staff

Indian universities typically have many colleges affiliated to them; consequently, communities in which they serve are highly diverse (Aminoff, 2011). As Singh (2003) shared, they are the overwhelming majority of higher education institutions in an overextended system which never intended to grow this massively. However, they play a critical role in the higher education landscape regardless of their limited policy development role, particularly since they are rooted in communities (Altbach, 2014).

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Curriculum and Exam Policies

Curriculum and exam policy and development is highly centralized at the university; therefore, affiliated colleges and their academic staff play limited policy/development roles (Agarwal, 2009; Altbach, 2009; Witenstein, 2015). While universities have a Board of Exams and Board of Studies (curriculum development) for each faculty/study area, limited affiliated college academic staff representation is present on them. As Aminoff (2011) shared, the Indian higher education landscape is largely organised with affiliated college academics as disseminators of information/teaching to the student body whereas universities develop curriculum and exams/policies. In sum, the autonomy of affiliated colleges and their academic staff is constrained; therefore, mechanisms for enhancing it may increase academic staff member engagement (National Educational Policy, 2019).

Street-Level Bureaucracy and the Academic Staff Member Role

To better understand and contextualize the composited narratives, we utilize Lipsky's (2010) street-level bureaucracy framework. By definition, street-level bureaucrats are employees who work at the front lines of a bureaucracy while navigating top-down policy and adapting to clients' unique situations (Lipsky, 2010). While Lipsky (2010) mentioned government workers as street-level bureaucrats, he also included teachers due to the nature of their job interacting with citizens and impacting their lives (Lipsky, 1971). Nonetheless, Khelifi (2019) demonstrated how the street-level bureaucracy framework can help us understand how bottom-up policies are implemented in higher education settings since he considered academics street-level bureaucrats.

Street-Level Bureaucrats' Coping and Adapting

Acknowledging and studying coping and adapting mechanisms of street-level work offers a needed window into the practices employed by street-level bureaucrats successfully completing their work. As Lipsky (2010) shared, patterns of practice are embedded in the fabric of front-line work and workers typically do not abandon coping mechanisms that help them accomplish their work. Consequently, it is easier to alter/manipulate policies from above than it is to change street-level bureaucrats' practices and coping mechanisms (Lipsky, 2010) due to the social and structural conditions and demands of street-level bureaucracy work. With this in mind, the ways in which street-level bureaucrats cope and adapt ultimately shape institutional policy, outcomes, and organisational change (Khelifi, 2019). Therefore, we take an asset-based approach of not only highlighting coping and adapting practices and consider how they can productively impact policy development and implementation from the bottom-up and the top-down.

Street-Level Bureaucracy Framework for Education Policy Discernment

In addition to the definition/premise of Lipsky's framework, we use Witenstein and Abdallah's integrated (2022) Street-Level Bureaucracy Framework for Education Policy Discernment model derived from his work to analyse how Indian affiliated college academics navigated exam and curriculum policies. The model in Figure 1, highlighted four interrelated tenets indispensable to Lipsky's street-level bureaucracy framework: the exercise of discretion, relative autonomy from organisational authority, maintaining and developing

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autonomy, and de facto policy makers. All tenets are based on the central element of the existence of human judgment that dominates street-level bureaucrats' work.

To further explain, the core element, existence of human judgment, highlights the nature of street-level bureaucrats work. As street-level bureaucrats encounter unique and ambiguous cases while serving others at the front line, these conditions call for them to resort to their human judgment rather than the direct application of policy (Lipsky, 2010). Subsequently, the four tenets are based on the presence of street-level bureaucrats' human judgment as they carry on their daily work. In order to make an independent judgment, street-level bureaucrats exercise discretion while maintaining relative autonomy and independence from their organisational authority. In addition, they strive to maintain and develop their autonomy in their role at their organisation. Finally, building on the last three tenets, the fourth tenet suggests that they become de facto policy makers when they maintain all tenets as they perform their job. Since all four tenets are interrelated, some street-level bureaucrats may not meet the components of one tenet if they do not perform in line with another tenet.



Figure 1. Street-Level Bureaucracy Framework for Education Policy Discernment Tenets (Witenstein and Abdallah, 2022).

Conceptual Pathway and Explanation

In the analysis of their study, Witenstein and Abdallah (2022) found six emerging and high impact practices of academic staff at Indian affiliated colleges that helped them cope and adapt to the stringent university curriculum and exam policies. The first high impact practice, flexibility, change, and adaptation (FCA), focuses on academics' need for a mindset of flexibility and adaptability to cope with the implementation of exam and curriculum policies. Moreover, successful coping and adapting (SCA) went a step further from FCA by demonstrating academic's creative methods of going beyond the prescribed curriculum in the classroom through additional materials or alternative pedagogical approaches. To bridge

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the divide between academics and the outside world that the curriculum lacks, academics resorted to the high impact practice of connecting theory to practice and the global industry (CTP) to better prepare their students after graduation. As a culmination of the previous high impact practices, academics showed how their own training and capacities developed them into de-facto policy makers (DFPM) by naturally taking matters into their own hands. In addition to these practices, academics have creatively formed feedback channels from the bottom-up (EFBU) while also increasing their involvement in bureaucratic structures (BFI) to shape and reform exam and curriculum policies of affiliated colleges. Having outlined this common pathway that emerged from the data, the next step is to create a composited narrative of Indian affiliated college academic staff (shared in the Results section below) that illustrates the pathway through their experiences.

Research Methods

Compositing

Creese et al. (2021) shared that composited stories have been used in research to contextualize lived and work experiences of groups who may be reticent to share their perspectives and stories. Considering this was the case with some of our participants, it was meaningful to find precedence for compositing the narratives of street-level bureaucrats. Creese et al.'s (2021) study supported this connection because they studied frontline health workers during COVID-19 to better understand their experiences. Furthermore, the authors used this study to inform policy which is a critical goal of our work with Indian affiliated colleges. While Willis (2019) acknowledged that the burden is placed on the researchers to accurately develop portrayals of the data through the composited narratives, it offers an opportunity to more holistically and seamlessly present and describe the pathways through which Indian affiliated college academics navigate and implement the six high impact practices. In other words, we can capture the essence of how numerous academics engaged with the six practices through a similar pathway in one story, therefore, providing readers with an easy-to-follow narrative. Notably, Hubain et al. (2016) asserted that the creative and in-depth approach compositing offers de-centers traditional data (re)presentations and contributes a more holistic construction of knowledge. Through these stories, we aim to more clearly highlight this common pathway through which affiliated college academic staff members leverage six high impact practices which emerged from the model in Figure 1.

Phenomenological, Qualitative Inquiry

This article draws from a phenomenological study, constructed as a nine-question open-ended, in-depth interview protocol. The interviews were semi-structured and questions were developed in concert with the theoretical framework and associated literature. According to Krathwohl, (2009), qualitative inquiry was a suitable methodological choice to examine this understudied phenomenon of rethinking and revising curriculum and exam policies between Indian universities and their affiliated colleges. Finally, this study was granted approval by the Institutional Review Board at the researchers' home institution. Because of the sensitive nature and ethical concerns linked with the data collected, the transcripts of interviews are not publicly available. Questions regarding the data collection can be communicated to the corresponding author.

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Sample

This composite narrative is based on the 55 interviews collected in the larger study which took place in the following cities with the respective number of interviewees: Ahmedabad (6), Bengaluru (14), Mumbai (16) and Mysore (19). Interviews were collected at 13 college sites and represent academic staff from a diverse set of fields across the humanities, the liberal arts and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) fields. A strong balance of females (36) and males (19) participated as well as those with PhDs (33) and Masters Degrees (22).

Results

In the spirit of composite storytelling, you will find a pair of linked composited narratives below that were developed from the data. First, we present an executive report based collectively on a faculty development forum from faculty at the fictive University of Asmi. The report includes policy and practice recommendations from affiliated college academics across diverse fields of study. Following the report is a memo from the Vice Chancellor of the University which responds to and provides careful reflection regarding the executive report.

Executive Report of the Faculty Development Forum at University of Asmi to the Vice Chancellor

Dear Vice Chancellor:

At the recent three-day Faculty Development Forum for affiliated college academic staff, members across many of your affiliated colleges attended to discuss how they cope and adapt to curriculum and exam policies by implementing successful pedagogical practices in concert with their professional training. Since there have been some shifts in policy lately regarding the relationship between affiliated colleges and universities, we found it meaningful to reflect on our work and share new skills across faculties. We appreciated the recent Study Teams Think Tank Initiative that emerged from the changes. Leveraging this initiative alongside the Board of Studies and Board of Exams, academics across diverse disciplines have interacted several times to discuss important issues related to our work. During these meetings, we discussed the valuable knowledges possessed by individuals and decided to hold the three-day Faculty Development Forum to cross-pollinate these knowledges.

During these meetings, we discussed the valuable knowledges possessed by individual academic staff members and decided to hold the three-day Forum to cross-pollinate these knowledges. For example, we have learned that younger academics possess keener knowledge of technology and communication and more seasoned academics having deeper subject knowledge; therefore, we realized there was a lot to gain across our minions. This led us to developing a set of goals for the Forum to highlight the patterns of practice that best support how affiliated college professors cope and adapt to their work and learn from one another cross-faculty and academic staff members.

The focus of the Forum was linked to the ways academics cope and adapt to the curriculum and exam policies and how they best utilize their skills to support these policies and of course student learning. First, we hoped to learn what some of those best practices were through this Faculty Development Forum so that we could pass this information on across academic staff members of all colleges. Second, we were also interested in knowing

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how the Forum can inform the ways by which information can be passed up through bureaucratic channels in order to refine curriculum and exams (and of course the policies connected to them).

Productive workshops were held across two discussion tracks during the Faculty Development Forum that brought together people across different faculties to discuss their best practices for including voices in the development of curriculum and exams. The results of these tracks offered several suggestions that we will share in the recommendations section of this report. We wanted to pass this up to you in case there may be opportunities to reframe some of the policies in ways that may help inform better policy flow. After getting together we decided, how we could better disseminate this information to refine the emerging practices so that the high impact ones can be more broadly used and applied by more academic staff members.

After all academics shared the ways they have been coping and adapting [to policies] at the Forum, we highlighted practices that get them through their daily lives in the classroom. Not only did some academics demonstrate autonomous behaviours, but also innovative methods to pass information and feedback from the bottom up to enhance curriculum and exam policies at their college. Subsequently, we present our conversations in two tracks that emerged from academic staff member's patterns of practice/behaviour:

Track 1: Responding to External Needs and the Courage of Flexibility, Coping, and Adapting

After attending all sessions in Track 1, we were enlightened by the coping mechanisms of academics from different departments and colleges. Generally, when we receive the syllabus, what we see most of the time is an outdated structure of materials to educate our students in the classroom. This outdated structure is no commentary on senior academics or administrator presence in our system; these members are vital to the history and knowledge that helps inform our work. Particularly, we have taken this gap as an opportunity for us to both improve ourselves as teachers and offer our students the knowledge that exists beyond our classroom walls. We seek to provide them the information and skills so they can thrive in their respective industries and in society.

While exams are essential means of measuring learning outcomes, we heard many Forum participants voice a need to think beyond the exam; only then are we able to develop as teachers. Consequently, academics claimed to have taken it in their hands to do more research on their own to improve themselves as educators and add more to the classroom. For instance, some academics have taken the path of focusing their energy on efforts to connect their curriculum to the current context and practices of the industry. As we thought about disciplines like computer science and the IT industry, we acknowledge the fact that these subjects are ever-evolving within short time periods. Tapping into our autonomy as leaders of the classroom, we have adapted to this situation by bringing and creating conferences, workshops, and seminars for students to participate in.

Many academic staff members reminded us of the lack of time and space to introduce more topics and activities to the current curriculum in order to achieve their goal of educating beyond what is prescribed. Nonetheless, we learned plenty from colleagues' encouraging approaches to navigating this challenge, eliminating the barriers that the curriculum may have posed. For example, instead of cramming more topics into the syllabus, a finance colleague introduced their own expertise in the stock market by showing

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students how to operate stocks. In another classroom, one of our colleagues took it upon themselves to connect with students via WhatsApp group chats to facilitate and discuss self-study assignments. These occasions illustrate the spirit of growth, creativity, and development in education that the academics bring to life in their everyday practices in the classroom.

Track 2: Emergence of Academic Staff as De-Facto Policy Makers due to Successful Coping and Adapting

Our sessions in Track 2 revealed the adaptability, confidence, and creativity of so many academic staff members at the Faculty Development Forum! A major takeaway from the sessions was that academics tended to believe that, while there may often be tenuous challenges with the curriculum and exam policies, they can always invoke their professional training and expertise to devise solutions to support student learning. It was helpful to hear the voices of colleagues who deemed it their responsibility to dictate the curricular direction of their class versus feeling imposed upon by the curriculum handed down to them. These academics helped remind others in this track that they have been hired for their expertise and training and to explore the freedom they have to teach their classes the way they desire to.

Unlike the exploratory nature of the sessions in Track 1, Track 2 sessions highlighted the confidence of professors in making adaptive behaviours and practices a natural and regular part of their roles as educators. One practice that an English teacher has regularly incorporated into their class is assessing students' English skills by requiring them to write a paragraph introducing themselves. With that information, they incorporated the curriculum as a guide while adapting to the current students' unique needs. Participants in this track arrived at a common understanding that an essential aspect of being an educator is evoking and engaging our identities, experiences, and unique knowledges. We were highly impressed with one of our colleagues who invoked these elements by implementing a naturally adaptive pedagogical approach to engage with their students by using their bilingual method.

Another lesson that these sessions have offered us in this track is that coping and adapting happened by relying on our academic village. At times when some academic staff needed more direction and information, they resorted to our friends, colleagues, and senior academics for guidance. In a way, these small interactions have created an indirect alliance of academics that empowered educators to find their way throughout the curriculum and exam policies. As one professor put it, "…the barrier will not come to me. I don't pose any barrier." Academic staff recognized and echoed that the administration does not interfere in the day-to-day business of teachers in the classroom. As we heard academic voices in this track, we were able to further visualize the role of us academic staff as leaders while being implementors of policy.

Moving Forward: Our Recommendations to VC/Policymakers

While we laid out a summary of our experiences and realizations during the Forum sessions, we would like to conclude this report with a few recommendations. We consensually agreed the following points could help develop academic staff roles and affiliated college policies and procedures:

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1. Sponsorship of events, seminars, and conferences similar to the Faculty Development Forum
2. Crosspollination of ideas from different academic staff, faculties, and colleges to inspire coping and adapting mechanisms for academic staff
3. Promotion of collaboration across academic staff members regardless of their disciplinary affiliation
4. Maintenance and development of industry contacts/connections with affiliated colleges
5. Providing resources for academics to tap into and utilize their knowledge and expertise in the classroom and in global settings
6. Top-down involvement to help with building and reframing curriculum and exam policies that promote coping and adapting

Vice Chancellor's Response Memo to Affiliated College Academic Staff Member's Executive Report of the Faculty Development Forum at University of Asmi

Dear academic staff,

I write this letter to acknowledge your innovative efforts in enhancing the work of academics across University of Asmi's affiliated colleges. After reading your executive report, I found myself reflecting and re-thinking many aspects of our university structure linked with curriculum and exam policies, particularly my role. Specifically, I reflected on what it means to be vice chancellor in context and relation to your work as frontline policy developers and implementors. While I may help develop policies, I am not always finely attuned to their implications at the ground-level and the constant adaptations academic staff must take to meaningfully actionize them. Hence, knowing that policies may not be changed overnight, I wanted to share my appreciation and encouragement of the work and spirit you bring to the University through these efforts.

As you have demonstrated in your executive report, I appreciably recognize the amount of autonomy and discretion you need to carry out your duties as professors. However, my recognition of your efforts alone is not enough: as your vice chancellor, I empower you to continue applying your autonomy, discretion, and creativity to cope and adapt to your daily work at your college, inside and outside the classroom. Your adaptive behaviours and solutions have unveiled much more than the commonly cited problems; you have highlighted areas that policy itself cannot even completely resolve. Notably, the information you have presented is essential to informing our curriculum and exam policies at University of Asmi.

To make it crystal clear, I welcome our affiliated college academic staff members to help inform and potentially reshape these policies and to work with me (and college and university leadership) in considering how this may structurally occur. Moreover, I welcome and promote the following actions you have already taken the lead on developing. I am particularly fond of your creation of emerging feedback structures that address the different levels of your work, from serving as practitioners to policy implementors. This area of growth could be centrally informative as we work together to revise and create new curriculum and exam policies. Alternatively, I envision your emerging structures as essential communication

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points that allow us to maintain a healthy feedback loop between the colleges and the University, and to inform our work, processes and communication of policies to academics.

Finally, thank you for all the work you do, and for distilling it through the thoughtfully organised Faculty Development Forum and informative executive report. I hope to continue these conversations as you proceed with your critical, innovative work at the front lines of University of Asmi.

Discussion

The composite narratives, crafted into an executive report and a response memo, illuminate a meaningful policy development and implementation opportunity to close the gap between top-level bureaucrats and those at the front lines. The Vice Chancellor's response back demonstrates acknowledgement of the gap and the constant juggling street-level bureaucrats do to cope and adapt with curriculum and exam policies for them to effectively perform their work. Yet the VC also recognized that work needs to be done in collaboration with affiliated college academic staff (and perhaps other institutional agents) to better revise and develop policy that supports affiliated college academics' needs versus crafting new top-down policy based on the report without further dialog.

This brings up an important point to consider regarding curriculum and exam policy implementation- where is the in-between space where top-level bureaucrats and street-level bureaucrats can work together to best support on-the-ground needs of those being served (in this case, college students)? And what shall that space look like and be composed of? Joshi and Rao (2017) discussed a "sandwich" approach where active support of top-level bureaucrats, who typically have high-level technical skills and political clout, can work in concert with front-line professional workers who have deeper local community knowledges and therefore keener insight to tap into students' funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge, as Bensimon (2007) shared, signifies "…the intellectual and social knowledge of an individual or community" (p. 451). Inevitably, academics can be more adept at coping and adapting to curriculum and exam policies because of their ability to relevantly incorporate students' communal knowledges in the learning space (Kiyama, 2011).

We argue through this study's findings that policies written and based upon bottom-up development through street-level bureaucrats' successful coping/adapting, better supports and empowers individual academic staff member agency to invoke de facto policymaking by using their professional knowledges and skills (Lipsky, 2010). This requires leaders/policymakers listening to street-level bureaucrats so that when policies could be better served through revision, the requisite steps can be taken. Heeding the warnings of Joshi and Rao's (2017) work, it is critical for the VC in this case to discern potential mismatches (in our case in terms of policy development and implementation) that may be seen as either overreach or cultural mismatch at the college level. When making these critical decisions, it could be helpful to lean into Sabatier's (1986) seminal discussion on the benefits of top-down and bottom-up approaches when considering meaningful pathways to orient policy. Finally, extending that discussion by considering the in-between space may further benefit the organisation.

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Conclusions

Observing policy workflow through composited narratives has allowed us to illustrate the pathways by which street-level bureaucrats can navigate higher education settings and policies and impact bottom-up policy feedback. Essentially, the Faculty Development Forum has demonstrated the daily activity of academics in the form of an invisible street-level bureaucracy, operating out of a need to cope and adapt to constraining curriculum and exam policies. However, the academic staff's executive report to the vice chancellor solidified their agency and their role in impacting policy from the bottom-up. Therefore, while this study points to a gap or a vacated space between top-down and bottom-up channels, we suggest that this gap is an opportunity to explore a "third space" where policymakers and street-level bureaucrats meet to evaluate and rethink policies and their impact on ground-level work. Finally, this study suggests a larger question of whether top-level bureaucratic policymakers and street-level bureaucrats, in this third space, can create a policy that is broad, yet flexible enough to thrive, let alone survive in complex organisational settings susceptible to social, political, and structural changes.

Implications for Policy and Practice

As we consider the narratives presented in the executive report and the vice chancellor's response memo, we noticed that there are multiple implications for policy and practice, applicable and useful for policymakers, educational leaders, and academics/street-level bureaucrats. Particularly, our findings redirect us to the nature of street-level bureaucracy work that requires a frequent mode of coping and adapting. However, leaders and policymakers' acknowledgements of street-level bureaucrats' creative efforts to cope and adapt to policies and transparency, may facilitate enhanced policy implementation and reform through clearer bottom-up/top-down communication spaces and places. Nonetheless, while policies do not resolve all organisational issues, the role of policymakers at this street-level bureaucracy [affiliated colleges] is to create policies, based on bottom-up feedback, that support and empower individual academic staff agency to invoke de facto policymaking by using their professional knowledges and skills.

Given that organisational dynamics will forever be influenced by unique permutations of social, political, and structural changes, policies therefore can never be all-encompassing to address each unique case that organisational members encounter. In facing natural challenge, the opening of bureaucratic channels from the front lines, and then heading up to the top formal leadership/policy leaders, can help inform higher quality results, opportunities, and policies that support street-level bureaucrats coping and adapting to the constantly morphing dynamics of their daily work. Hence, policymakers should focus on emerging high impact practices that are critical to further unpack and develop because they offer better opportunities for building more seamless feedback loops from the bottom-up.

Implications for Research

To further explore the implications of our findings in this paper, future researchers must explore this policy-oriented, organisational case from multiple standpoints and elements.

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First, researchers could study this policy communication and implementation process from the perspective of policymakers with a specific focus on effective responses to bottom-up policy feedback. From the ground level, future research should focus on the impact of leveraging academic's emerging high impact practices to improve and expedite the process of high impact practice generativity and application. Not to mention, researchers could also explore the role of policymakers in leveraging these emerging high impact practices as they attempt to build consistent feedback loops and improve policies. As such, further research and policy examinations regarding the development of in-between dialogic space may help facilitate more meaningful policy revision and development that suits the needs of the university, the affiliated colleges, affiliated college academic staff, and their students. This endeavor could perhaps be informed by Sabatier's (1986) framework and Joshi and Rao's (2017) study that both explore intersections of bottom-up and top-down processes of policy communication, implementation, and reorganisation.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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Human Participants

We confirm that informed consent was obtained from all participants of the study. The University of Dayton Institutional Review Board approved the research included in this study. We confirm that all research was performed in accordance with relevant guidelines/regulations applicable when human participants are involved. Because of the sensitive nature and ethical concerns linked with the data collected, the transcripts of interviews are not publicly available. Questions regarding the data collection can be communicated to the corresponding author.

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