



# European Journal of Educational Research

Volume 10, Issue 3, 1423 - 1436.

ISSN: 2165-8714

<http://www.eu-jer.com/>

## Social Constructivist Approach: Opinions of History Teachers at Intermediate Secondary Schools

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Received: October 4, 2020 • Revised: February 8, 2021 • Accepted: June 19, 2021

**Abstract:** This study investigated the influences of social constructivist approaches on history teachers' opinions of social science education. The purpose of the study was to examine the effectiveness of social constructivist approaches and explore the views and practices of teachers in their current use of teaching approaches in social science education. For this study, a qualitative study approach was employed. The study was conducted at intermediate secondary schools in the city of Erbil. For open semi-structured interviews, eight teachers of social science education were purposely selected from eight intermediate secondary schools of grade ninth, and eight social science classes were observed. The results revealed that despite significant changes of the system of education, many challenges were identified in implementing social constructivist approaches in social science education such as the environment of fear, the shortage of proper public infrastructure, lack of care, and resources. Also, the study revealed several barriers like absence of sufficient well-designed teaching guidelines, lack of adequate clear instructions, inadequacy classroom teachers' autonomy, and no freedom. Lastly, the study ends up by specifying several conclusions.

**Keywords:** *Social constructivist, social science, history teachers, learning environment, constructivist approaches.*

**To cite this article:** Muhammad, A. E. (2021). Social constructivist approach: Opinions of history teachers at intermediate secondary schools. *European Journal of Educational Research*, 10(3), 1423-1436. <https://doi.org/10.12973/eu-jer.10.3.1423>

### Introduction

In many developing countries, education reforms are currently in progress, including Iraqi Kurdistan. The high quality of education qualifies individual learners to think critically, help to solve their problems, boost self-confidence, and collaborate. Mohammed (2016) claims that Iraq has used the education system for political purposes through the curriculum or other educational material.

This current research emphasizes the social constructivist approach that has been familiarized in public and private schools in the city of Erbil, which is situated in the north of Iraq, neighboring Syria to the west, Iran to the east, Turkey to the north. It encompasses three provinces Sulaimaniyah, Dohuk, and Erbil.

It is undeniable that by the latest booming economy in Iraqi Kurdistan, Kurdistan Regional Government has strived to achieve an international standard regarding education by shifting philosophy teaching from traditional education standards to new approaches of teaching standard or knowledge construction. Primary and secondary education has experienced a tremendous transformation by introducing new curricula for new teachers. It is mandatory and a requirement to attend four years of bachelor's education to become qualified teachers, this new approach of education focuses on learners' progress and social effectiveness based on integrated technology into education supported learning environment (Balisane, 2015; Muhammad, 2020a). Education has become the main priority for the Kurdistan Regional Government. To meet and respond to the demands and challenges facing the region, human capacity needs to be boosted (Ludwig, 2014). Therefore, educational transformations have had influences on the teachers' implementation of education programs in the region, and education innovations are reflected in schools in the city of Erbil. The stability and peace in the north of Iraq inspired numerous non-governmental organizations to move to the region to emphasis on the development of the area in different aspects including education system. The high level of security and the economic development provided support to growing the number of private schools in the city Erbil. This helped NGOs to work in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of Iraqi Kurdistan to introduce new changes in schools curricula, subjects and textbooks concerning human right education and civic education (Issa & Jamil, 2010). By close cooperation of the Swedish government with the regional government, that contributed to the implantation of

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Swedish system of education in this region. The Kurdistan Regional Government familiarized universal ethics and moral values such as human rights education, civic education, and democracy to the learners in the region. This collaboration enabled the government to introduce a modern image of liberal government (Mohammed, 2016). Furthermore, receiving global standards of education helps learners to be open-minded; this benefits them to know that they have the right to express different opinions. In this region, this is particularly important as there are different nationalities living in harmony together: Turkmen, Christian, and Yezidis (Darweish & Mohammed, 2018).

### Literature Review

Social constructivist with a multifaceted approach has broadly covered in contemporary discussions in the literature concerning teaching and learning teacher education in fostering learners' learning (Beck & Kosnik, 2006) particularly. The fundamental theoretical vision of constructivism is that the real world is the context for learners to construct their knowledge. Ontologically, the understanding reality is the original philosophy of constructivism as noted that ideas or ideals occur only in reality (Brophy, 2002). Philosophically constructivism emerges from the creation of knowledge. Idealists regard the construction of knowledge as a feature of experience, reasoning, and reflection of reality, the understanding of knowledge is then restricted to the creators engaged in the educational environment. Therefore, ontological and epistemological perspectives have led in distinct words for a practical explanation of the construction of knowledge (Mishra, 2014).

#### *Social constructivist view of teacher*

In this model, instructors are presented as facilitators rather than as teachers only according to the social constructivism interpretation (Issa & Jamil, 2010). While a teacher demonstrates on the topic, a facilitator enables the student to understand the material of his or her own. The student appears to be playing a passive role in the teachers' teaching, but the student keeps playing an influential role throughout the learning experience by making it easier for the students to truly understand. According to Brophy (2002) the social constructivism emphasizes the teacher, the content, as well as the learner. This important transition in the position of a teacher means that an instructor as a facilitator must demonstrate a whole different range of skills than a teacher (Drake & Brown, 2003). A teacher assigns responses based on a pre-determined school curriculum, a facilitator offers guidance and generates a relevant social atmosphere for students to reach their response and findings; the teacher mainly offers a monolog, and the facilitator is engaged in ongoing and social dialog with the students (Kalpana, 2014).

#### *The views of teachers and historical thinking as a socio-constructivist approach*

Studies have shown that teacher views influence the procedures of classrooms in several respects (Levin & Wadmany, 2006). They state that the plan for teachers to practice instructional innovation has been proved improper when the attitudes, understanding, and expectations of teachers in the creation of the program are not taken into consideration. Teachers will probably support transition if they lack beliefs, essential conversational habits, restricted on-going instruction, limited time for teaching, and lack of educational tools and equipment to help to learn (Voogt et al., 2011). Therefore, it is essential to play a role in guiding the decision making of the teachers for social constructivist teachings and learning (Levin & Wadmany, 2006).

The primary interest of Vygotsky was to research the development of construction and practice (Chaiklin, 2003) as he stressed the cultural and social framework under which the knowledge and understanding construction occurs. In this situation, historical thinking is demonstrated as a notion of socio-constructivism. The relevant question is not to emphasize the competent citizen of the community in a learning review, but instead, what is the interaction among them? (Cengiz, 2015). The earlier knowledge of historical thought processes, in particular about in-service teachers, is of particular importance for Seixas (2017). Through specifically examining their interpretations of history and their learners, history teachers acquire a more in-depth insight into how one can learn properly. Since all these components are related to their basic principles and purposes, the teacher and the students "history is a pre-inquiry whereby their understanding of the past can be influenced and transformed" (Drake & Brown, 2003).

Socio-constructivism described as a practical and comprehensive philosophy of learning that is efficient as the basis for teachers to establish a conceptual practice, including history. The review of significant historical thought, constructed educational methods, and socio-constructivist concepts and proven learning theory will serve as a way to examine and comprehend the difference regarding teaching theory and practice as teachers start their career as public school teachers in classrooms.

#### *The social constructivist approaches' challenges in modern practice*

There are challenges identified by Rosenfeld and Rosenfeld (2006): Conceptual problems are deeply embedded in the attempt of the teachers to understand the complex philosophical grounds and social constructivism. In this context, it is of utmost significance to teachers to understand the notion of the social constructivist attitude to teaching before the

classroom approach is implemented. If this is not taken into account, teachers may not adopt a modern method and choose the traditional teaching canter practice (Schweisfurth, 2011).

The use of a complicated strategy is to design curriculum and experience learning environments that support the social constructivist approach. This approach involves pedagogical challenges for teachers. The new philosophy of teaching needs a longer time to master, prepare, manage, and apply collaborative learning approaches (Keengwe et al., 2008).

Due to the radical transformation of the class roles required for the social constructivism, cultural challenges emerge between teachers and learners. Teachers are challenged in negotiating the views and practices of students to build relevant knowledge and provide opportunities to engage in a classroom monologue. Teachers experience challenges in balancing respectively their faiths and practices in incorporating the new model into the social framework (Schweisfurth, 2011). Thus, the main purpose of this research is to provide an insight into the views and practices of the history teachers regarding social constructivist approach to social science education.

### *The research problem*

Academics of scientific researchers examined several types of research to gain more insight regarding social constructivist approaches (Djordjevic et al., 2016; Harris et al., 2009; Palincsar, 1998; Srinivasalu, 2014). Many scholars support that not only tutors, but also teachers need to be skilled in the social constructivist approach regarding the subject matter, practice of pedagogy, teaching resources, and learning environment (Beck & Kosnik, 2006). Nevertheless, the results of studies indicate that due to limited studies, teachers' knowledge concerning social constructivist is not adequately explicit (Harris et al., 2009). Consequently, minimal literature conducted about social science disciplines related to constructivism not only at school levels but also at university teacher education levels. There was a profound need for a study to examine the influences of social constructivist on history teacher's views at intermediate secondary schools in the city of Erbil.

### *Research question*

1. How do history teachers perceive social constructivist approaches at intermediate secondary schools?
2. What are history teachers' opinions about the challenges of social constructivist approaches in teaching social science?

### *Significance of the study*

The research will bring understanding about social constructivist learning in teacher training programs to policymakers, curriculum designers, and academic scientists. Also, the framework of understanding is anticipated to be adjusted for social constructivist education in other situations of the teacher education programs. The study should additionally include knowledge on social construction approaches to learning in social sciences and transfer of knowledge and abilities in the classroom to both local and international literature.

## **Methodology**

This study utilizes a qualitative method to investigate the respondents' understanding and experience in applying social constructivist approaches in social science education (Patton, 1990). Qualitative research utilizes methods that enable investigators to examine their views inside their social and cultural backgrounds in the inner world of respondents (Sugawara & Nikaido, 2014). The researcher involved in describing, interpreting the views and practices in the light of the socio-cultural context in which they were perceived by the participants (Grunbaum, 2007). The researcher focused on the information provided by the respondents. Qualitative research, after all, reflects on context-based on individual behavior within a social context that also leads to social constructivism.

The researcher has seen the case study design as the most fitting to explain the problem of the study. Case studies analyze the importance of a particular concept by subjects in their original sense (Creswell et al., 2007). Eight respondents were observed in the classrooms with a social and structural dimension to examine how the students had interacted. In addition, eight respondents were questioned in order to gather knowledge about their views, views and experiences in introducing the innovative teaching and learning methods. Therefore, the researcher found that it is important in particular to use the case study to examine the views, and behaviors of the teachers and students in the area of classroom learning environment.

### *Setting*

The study investigated the opinions and practices of eight teachers and eight social science classes in intermediate secondary schools. This study was carried out in Erbil city in Iraq. Intermediate secondary education schools have been intentionally chosen with several purposes, including:

- a) Geographic area: The researcher took into account the teachers of intermediate secondary education schools in the city of Erbil, which provided the researcher with a broader range of options, as well as access to the research site for each of the schools involved.
- b) The researcher's experience and knowledge of the social-cultural environment in the city of Erbil were regarded to facilitate research data gathering and lower research costs.
- c) Characteristics of respondents: a bachelor of education was the primary qualification of a teacher for this class of social science education.
- d) State control: State-owned and managed intermediate high schools relying on the Ministry of Education politics. The Ministry of Education recruited qualified permanent teachers who were provided all the requisite incentives that made sure of their work commitment.

In eight secondary schools in Erbil city, eight teacher participants were recruited through purposive sampling techniques; one participant of each school. The teachers who have been teaching social science education in a combined textbook (history, geography, and civics) at intermediate secondary school in the city of Erbil participated in the current study.

The representative samples are intended to provide essential and productive data on the views and experiences of respondents following social constructivist teaching. The inclusion of respondents in the context examined and their insightful perceptions of teaching social sciences allowed the researcher to acquire findings that are important to the study question and to recognize the meaning of learning and to explain further.

#### *Tools of data collection*

This research used two techniques for data collection: semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. These techniques can produce data directly in their original context. That was able to help collect information associated with the research question (Yin, 2013).

#### *Semi-structured interviews*

Eight intermediate secondary school teachers' classes were interviewed to express their views and understanding as history teachers in teaching social science. The semi-structured interviews focused on collecting perspectives from social science education as teachers in teaching social science how they consider an effective teaching process based on social constructivist approaches for teaching.

The following table specifics the demographics of eight teachers of social science education who were interviewed for this study in state intermediate secondary schools in the city of Erbil. To protect the participants' privacy, their names have been changed.

*Table 1: Demographic of interviewed teachers*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years teaching intermediate secondary school</b>	<b>Years of teaching social science</b>
Muhammad	M	41	9	7
Khalid	M	40	11	9
Amjad	M	37	8	7
Sameera	F	42	8	8
Qadir	M	38	9	9
Salwa	F	44	13	12
Sardar	M	46	16	11
Suhayla	F	39	10	9

The researcher designed semi-structured interview plans to facilitate the collection of data. The questions of the interview were checked and tested by two experts in the field study of social studies to verify the reliability of the questions. The experts checked the details of the interview to insure that the main questions were particularly suitable for participants. The questions were improved based on the experts' ideas and comments before the interview was conducted.

The researcher received the teachers' permission to start the collection of data by meeting teachers and presenting them with a particular piece of sheet. With teacher consent, the investigator recorded the interviewees' voices, which meant that the original data from the respondents were appropriately obtained. Every interview session lasted 30 to 50 minutes, and it was explicitly designed to catch the teachers' views of social constructive teaching principles, the planning, and preparation for classes, the atmosphere of learners, the engagement of students, and evaluation.

The researcher had to transcribe every interview for nearly half an hour. The transcripts of the conducted interview are circulated with the respondent to confirm accuracy, error, and to verify whether the ideas represent what was said

during the respondent's contexts. Every respondent was asked to read the documents, correct them, and remove details, not to explain what they said during the meeting of the interview. The researchers were able to receive direct feedback on the research by reading the interview transcripts.

*Table 2: Timeline for data collection (September - October 2019)*

<b>Tools used as activity of the research</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
Semi-structured interviews with teachers	September 30 through October 3
Conduct observation in classrooms	September 28 through October 2

#### *Classroom observation*

For this study in intermediate secondary schools in the city of Erbil eight intermediate secondary school grade ninth teachers of social science classes were observed for this research. Table 2 describes the demographic of classroom observation of eight intermediate secondary schools. In these school history teachers who taught social science education, their classes were observed for this research. To protect the participants' privacy, their identities have been changed.

*Table 3: Demographics of participants' observation*

<b>Observed teacher</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Years teaching intermediate secondary school</b>	<b>Years teaching social science by history teachers</b>
Saman	M	38	9	9
Sarkawt	M	40	12	8
Layla	F	42	10	6
Zardasht	M	37	8	8
Muzhdah	F	43	14	11
Sundus	F	39	12	9
Ganim	M	40	12	8
Sarween	F	38	9	8

For this research, eight intermediate secondary school grade ninth social science classes were observed (history, geography, civics), and this took place in September- October 2019. Data gathered from a phenomenon's natural environment appears to be more accurate and reliable (Yin, 2013). The observations were continuously conducted for around two months of in-classroom participating. In the morning schools (8:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 a.m.), there were three social-science classes, while on the afternoons schools, the two classes of social science were scheduled (1:30 a.m., and 2:30 p.m.). In the morning (8:00, 9:00, and 11:00), the other three groups are observed. In 45 minutes to one hour, many of the teachers organized their time.

There were arrangements with teachers to receive the teaching schedules for their classrooms. The researchers collected data during class observations by writing things down on the teaching strategies, the classroom design, and the resources of the teachers. The researcher wanted to collect qualitative data from the experiences of teachers in the classroom with proper attention to:

- How did teachers interact with learners when they use collaborative teaching approach, learning methods, and the classroom discussion?
- How did the teachers take care of the students with motivation managed time for student learning, student difficulties, and a spirit of cooperation in the context of teaching?
- How teachers showed comprehension of subject knowledge, the use of prior experience in the learning process, the provision of resources for students to develop insight and discourse, the use of content knowledge generated by and within the social sciences, and real-life situation.
- How educational assists and technological tools were used in the instruction of the classroom. The researcher evaluated the features of teaching aids / technological teaching aids (including the environment, Internet usage, calculators, books and papers, flip charts and diagrams, models informal teaching aids of teachers).

At the end of each classroom observation session, the researcher had a short discussion with the teacher to pose questions to gain any feedback and perspective on the problems found in the classroom environment. There was a briefing discourse about 5 and 15 minutes, and sometimes no conversation was conducted because the teachers repeated the same details and practice. The researcher recorded the transcripts of the study observations, which the subject teacher shared to confirm whether what was written in that transcript was the same or something different. The researcher provided the teacher with the freedom to alter or eliminate details that he/she did not want on the quotations. To verify the data in transcripts for accuracy, this process of modification and reflection with individuals involved during data gathering was necessary.

### *Analysis of data*

After collecting the data, the data analysis started simultaneously (Merriam, 2009). Also, qualitative information is less repetitive and extremely complex than quantitative data analysis (Suter, 2012). The analysis process begins by defining segments of the data set that addresses the question of study (Merriam, 2009). To acquire an outline of the sources of data that can be derived from the evidence and to begin classifying them into general themes and concepts influencing social constructivist approaches on history social science teachers (Sugawara & Nikaido, 2014).

This research depended on the conceptual proposal to focus attention on history teachers and the teaching experience based on social constructivist approaches and the current learning setting (Yin, 2013). Multiple source information and data have been described, classified, and transcribed (Yin, 2013). After having collected several forms of evidence, the triangulation of data collected and the findings from different sources is necessary, and the triangulation of several sources of data supports the same findings and increases the credibility (Rowley, 2002; Sugawara & Nikaido, 2014).

Since the researcher expected large quantities of information from interviews and observations, the particular reduction of the data was able to be undertaken but only checked for data related to the study question. The researcher has been expected to implement the method of reducing information, arranging and decreasing, and reorganizing massive amounts of data into relevant and easy to manage content segments (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The purpose of data reduction is to classify, concentrate more, interpret, and transform the evidence which is obtained through recorded transcription classroom notes, Grunbaum, (2007) added. The interview transcripts and observation transcripts had to be reviewed by the researcher number of times and then checked for crucial phrases, patterns, themes, or insights for organizing and guiding the study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The researcher then specified how the information would be classified, sorted, and arranged to draw and certify the conclusions and findings accurately (see Punch, 2005).

Also the most important tool for classifying and interpreting the data collected is coding. The coding method organizes different aspects of the information gathered for constant, potential in-depth analysis into usable categories. This method has been shown to catch important data from teacher transcripts and field observations, to reorganize, analysis or to foster correlations within classifications and to contribute to the creation of conceptual frameworks. Systems of codes possibly to be labels or identifiers of data components obtained in the research study (Maxwell, 2009).

The researcher will explore the themes and variations on influences of social constructivist approaches on history teachers though various gathered data resources (Maxwell, 2009).

### *Validity and credibility*

The qualitative research utilized the crucial lenses of teaching and social constructivism to assess whether observations and their analyses were relevant (Flick, 2018). The investigator rigorously engaged in the gathering, evaluation, and interpretation of data through different approaches and sets of data to improve their credibility (Patton, 2002). There were various techniques used for the collection of data: semi-structured interviews, and recordings of the voices of the subjects, as well as classroom observations of the evidence reliability.

Data collection took around two months, and also the classroom observations were carried out during three rounds on separate days with each participant. The researcher transcribed the information collected from diverse sources, and the participants reviewed for validity. The researcher tried to ensure that information obtained from various sources was consistent with creating keys, variations, and themes throughout data gathering.

The researcher allowed every participant the appropriate time to check and comment on the ideas of the transcript until agreeing to modify the relevant data. The respondents in the field had several opportunities during "Member Checks" to read and change formed transcripts of the investigator to make sense in the context for the expressive validity of data and understanding (Flick, 2018).

To order to achieve validity, the researcher conducted purposive sampling. For instance, a considerable and managing number of participants in their natural environment enabled the researcher to obtain valuable and precious information from various sources. Data was collected in a stable (negotiable) setting, and the researcher was open to ethical considerations for the participants informing evidence. Once the data achieved a point of saturation, the researcher decided to pursue the next phase throughout the study process.

### *Salient themes emergent from data analysis*

#### *Theme 1: Challenges to implementing social constructivist approaches*

According to teachers' interviews, the majority of teachers stated that the lack of cooperation and collaboration between instructional actors is noticeable in implementation, partially because the Ministry of Education approaches lack consistency concerning explicit or specific goals and guidance for how to incorporate the new approaches. Understanding the new system and its goals and how they can work cooperatively with the integration of it is

challenging for teachers. In particular, documented strategies for new teaching are suffering from a lack of guidelines in the Ministry of Education and classrooms. The researcher identified that the Ministry of Education's procedures and strategies for teaching are indeed focused on verbal instructions, instead of written rules by supervisory and school decisions by school principals. Others, therefore, indicated that a critical gap exists between the Ministry of Education development goals, policy implementation, and the system as a whole fails to capture a planned view of the future, effective mechanisms for implementing them, and commitment from decision-makers and teachers. The shortage of available written teacher instructions can indeed imply the Ministry of Education's failure in schools to implement a new teaching method of social constructivist approaches.

The classroom observations revealed the responsibility of teachers to encourage students to be purely moral and modest. It can make students feel shy and passive to enquire about everything that can raise public awareness about their cultural and political problems. Likewise, the teacher interviews and my observations showed that bright students learned respectfully and patiently with no disruption.

However, the lack of teacher guidance and the better conditions at school make it less inspired for teachers to adopt the social constructivist approaches in social science education. There is no motivation for teachers to create a learning environment that enhances students to think, construct, challenge, and solve problems in the classroom. Adams (2006) points out in this context that "underlying motivation is the key to improve learning" But, the researchers noticed that the significant size of students and also the style of teaching and method could be the reasons why teachers do not seem to encourage students to engage. The new way of teaching based social constructivist approaches cannot also improve teachers' morale, as one teacher reported, *"smart teachers and unqualified teachers are considered equal. There is no incentive or bonus for teachers to work hard because the Ministry of Education does not appreciate even it."*

*Theme 2: Lack of classroom management skills, knowledge, and social interaction.*

All almost all the classrooms that were observed distinguished by a climate of fear, lack of collaboration, and engagement of students utilizing approaches of banking education.

The observations of classrooms indicated that the current teaching methodology is banking education that has been used. Abbott and Badley (2020) believe that in the banking system, learners are regarded as mere objects: teachers chose content and students embrace it; teachers behave and learners have the impression of acting through a teacher; teachers control and learners are restrained; teachers regularly talk, and students pay much attention; teachers think, and students acknowledge their thoughts.

That was shown throughout the practical work, when the researcher participated in many classrooms, in which students remained passive, did not engage or respond to teachers mostly without asking questions or making a comment. Students usually approved with all that the teacher mentioned. The researcher has found no exception, became interested in knowing how and why, and asked students in the classroom observation study about the code of silence and passive listening.

The explicit form of the oppressive nature of the banking method showed in many ways in classrooms. The researcher observed this throughout the observation processes in the classes. As one teacher admitted that the Ministry of Education promotes teachers to use discussion and dialogue in the new education model-based social constructivist approaches, teachers have taught without a pause or a stop, and ready to deliver all the lessons without making interaction or inquiries. One teacher explained the justifications of why teachers did not allow students to participate and ask questions: "teaching students the content of the subject is more important and not get confused by them."

The observations furthermore showed that students engaged throughout the lesson in any way. At the same time, teachers permitted a few students to overtake the time of the teaching, and almost all students were efficiently soundless. The research discovered that the reason for this hegemony was that one teacher claimed

*"Only such students know the answers as they prepare and study hard for the class at home. Also, over forty students in a class do not complete the social science textbook if teachers give every student time to take part" (Ganim).*

The researcher observed teachers tried to inform students about what was essential during the examinations. One teacher clarified

*"Almost all times, teachers are unable to complete the curriculum because there are so many public holidays. The teachers are expected to include topics from even the textbook as a whole. Thus, many topics may not be studied or presented in classes so that teachers tell students everything relevant to study unless supervisors remind teachers why the exam questions are not comprehensive" (Layla).*

New methods supporting social constructivist approaches are limited in implementation. Providing collaborative learning methods can be challenging for teachers since they have not previously practiced or have been qualified on how to use them. As can be seen, by the Ministry of Education policy recommendations, rote memorization approaches

are included, and learners are expected to read the texts of the book by heart. On several times, students are asked during classroom observations to recite the same items over and over. Students were given questions of recall in exams and are tested about the many facts they learned from textbooks. The grades are, therefore, based on facts and not about their reflective thoughts. Teachers have all been interviewed to clarify their experience of the new group approaches in social science instruction. The following quotation outlines the opinions of the teachers on the above:

*"There are schools that use group models in the case of teachers in physical education lesson (Muhammad), for example, it would not indeed be possible to use groups as there are activities which cannot be performed by one or two students (Qadir). But it's hard for other teachers to incorporate the group model into the classroom." (Sameera).*

Throughout observations, there was evidence about teachers that they did not even know about collaborative learning or authentic teaching methods other than physical arrangements, and many of them were teaching. Students did not interact in the way they help to engage, share ideas or experiences, and make reflection. A few more teachers believed the active learning based social constructivist approaches will occur naturally when the students had been in groups. Indeed all teachers interviewed summarized the statement in a new method of teaching support social constructivist approaches as following: *"It is often not entirely possible to use such approaches due to the current size of the class and lack of material support (Amjad). Also, often, you might need another teacher to assist you in organizing them." (Salwa).*

During research work, the researcher revealed that school teachers are not able to manage the classroom due to lack of management skills, and also they are not inclined to think of the understanding of students. Some of the teachers argued this by stating, *"They can't control the class because there is likely to be disruption unless they encourage the students to share and discuss subjects (Sardar). Serious teaching should not involve fun as students cannot pay attention and learn or benefit." (Khalid).*

*"Teachers cannot benefit from students as they are lazy, ignorant, unmotivated,"* Suhayla claimed. Abbott and Badley (2020) description of the traditional banking system of learning and teaching process, according to their argument, "will extend the scope of practice allowed for students to receive, submit and storage deposits," was reflected in teachers' discussions.

Teachers for the participatory methods of teaching, and they clarified that

*"The new approaches of teaching that the Ministry of Education wants to teachers to implement are difficult to be used, the Ministry of Education appears to know that we don't implement them and that is expressed in our meetings with supervisors of our monitors." (Ganim).*

Other teachers started complaining in the interview concerning the current method of teaching, and one teacher criticized "when we (teachers) use the new approach in our teaching, we cannot fully finish the curriculum." (Salwa). Another teacher said,

*"We think that we have not been teaching unless we have talked throughout the class. The key limitations in implementing the new approaches of teaching that the Ministry of Education requires are, therefore, to allow students to discuss their views openly by giving them time, and overcrowded classes are considered to be the limitation to implement. It seems that because teachers have no resources or skills, it is difficult to implement the Ministry of Education priorities" (Sameera).*

Hence honestly believe also that students under such an old program of teaching method do not have the potential to explore and discuss the things they think critically and so cannot understand and change their way of living. This has become probably part of the reasons why social science classrooms in schools in Erbil city lack new methods of teaching support social constructivist approaches.

*Theme 3: The contrasts between the educational analysis of the Ministry of National Education and the constructivist approach.*

One of the new ways of education philosophy based on social constructivist approaches in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a learner-centered approach to teaching. Even though the Ministry of Education advises that teachers incorporate learner-centered strategies that emphasize such instructions and several teachers have confirmed that the difficulties of implementing have been faced. As Amjad expressed, *"only teachers who had been qualified to use student-centered methods typically returned to teacher approaches because they were overpressurized to complete the content of textbooks in preparing the students to the tests."* Therefore, the research work indicated, as described previously, in which the official approaches of teaching utilized in classrooms stayed completely controlled by teachers' practices.

Varied views conveyed by the teachers tended to deal with different views regarding social constructivist approaches that shaped the research question, which led the research. Various labels and descriptions introduced to describe the characteristics of the social constructivist approaches. Social constructivist approaches have been interpreted in the forms of a collaborative approach, critical thinking, learner-centered approach, and the dialogical

approach. Several concepts have emerged from the teachers' interview statements to show and deeper understand social constructivist approaches.

The new approaches of teaching to the Ministry of Education strongly recommends allowing teachers to make teaching more enjoyable and exciting by using behaviors that promote students' learning. In the introduction chapter to a variety of school textbooks, for instance, learning must become more pragmatic and less abstract. Teachers, nevertheless, claimed that bureaucracy is prohibitive because Ganim claimed

*"The new teaching system requires consent from the school principal to take the students out of the class and submit a request for confirmation to the Ministry of Education board of directors. The parents' approval and agreement are required".*

Learning through doing practice is nevertheless necessary for positive teaching methods, enabling learners to become more aware of social concerns as well as how to overcome them, thus becoming more focused on working with the community and promote tolerance. Data on classroom observations show that students are incredibly interested in skills and behavior that can be achieved and learned by experiences so that they can relate to learning with society as a whole. However, the Ministry of Education supports teachers to take advantage of activities and to make learning more meaningful. As Qadir claimed,

*"The Ministry of Education expects school teachers to keep good ties between both students and teachers and with real learning experiences, develops relationships and full self-confident among students and that enables them to interact effectively with no fearing of teachers."*

This offers people the platform to share personal thoughts as well as learn what is unfair and how to stop injustice in what seems like a positive and productive atmosphere. Abbott and Badley (2020) identify a professional discussion with particular features: "deep love for the global community and citizens, kindness, optimism and mutual respect." These criteria can be applied to allow a discussion in the classroom setting since effective teaching involves the social interaction process (van der Linden & Renshaw, 2004).

Concerning the goals of effective teaching for teachers, two teachers reported that the new education platform seeks explicitly to encourage dialogue largely dependent on positive ties among teachers and students. Moreover, teachers need further experience in dealing with and handle students to improve unstable interactions between teachers and students as dialogical practices also allow and promote democracy among teachers and students. As the existing teaching approach is unacceptably focused on a teacher-centered approach, students are required to engage openly and discuss problems with teachers, and therefore to reason about the continuing systemic oppression they encounter in schools and community.

## Results

Findings indicate the teachers' views on the social constructivist frames have proven to be different. There seems to be a significant incomprehension of public school teachers' approaches and the Ministry of Education objectives. Partly this is because the expectations of the Ministry are unrealistically high and, therefore, cannot meet demands. The critical purpose involves moving away first from the model of the teacher-centered approach; however, research findings powerfully revealed that the teaching approaches which are used for social science education appeared fundamentally authoritarian, and there are fairly limited numbers of instructional resources used in the teacher's practice. School teachers claimed the old teaching approach better suited their environment, and almost no better approach was applicable. The class sizes made managing the behavior and management of the students difficult for the teachers as most of the teachers expressed that

*"Teachers cannot benefit from students as they are lazy, ignorant, unmotivated. Likewise, they added that "It is often not entirely possible to use such approaches due to the current size of the class and lack of material support. Furthermore, often, you might need another teacher to assist you in organizing them".*

However, two classroom teachers claimed that they utilized strategies focused on learners by placing students' in-group members as well as using questioning and answering approaches. Certain constraints negatively impact the significant change of school teachers, including lack of care, resources, well-designed teaching guidelines and instructions clearly, school rules, and the system limit classroom teachers' autonomy and freedom. The environment of fear and the physical impoverishment of schools are also other difficulties for the students. Furthermore, neither school teacher nor student is aware of the benefits or effects of the new approaches of teaching support social constructiveness because, in certain respects, the Ministry of Education has had just lip service.

The discussions in the classroom revealed the hierarchies and the disparity in authority between the teachers and students, for instance, classroom teachers frequently controlled and asked quick and direct questions rather than open-ended or critical issues that lead to students' interaction. And when the students posed questions, they did so mainly to explain the teacher's argument. Besides, the results demonstrate that there was little expertise in reflecting on the generation of knowledge among many teachers. Lastly, advanced strategies are to enable instructional planners and

curriculum developers to pursue goals of education policy that impact the current application for transformation was not satisfactory to the physical condition of classes.

### Discussion

In this study, it was shown that teachers stated different views about social constructivist frameworks. Throughout this current research, teachers indicated different interpretations and views in practice about social constructivist strategies. The literature on social constructivism discusses related facts, especially the debate about whether the method is relevant in terms of divergent perspectives (Adams, 2006; Kalpana, 2014; Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005; Voogt et al., 2011). The results of research and insights in the schools that are related to the views of the teachers were consistent.

Results indicate that teaching by teachers in practice involves a relatively small number of instructional materials. In other terms, teaching and studying in areas with weak instructional strategies that formed against social constructivist approaches' priority were undertaken. Cultural influences of school and teachers often restricted the autonomy and personal freedom of the teachers to use various sources of instructional resources.

The class sizes made it hard for teachers to organize the student's behavior and classroom management, which took a lot of time. For example, it took an average of 5 to 10 minutes before the teacher decided class discussion to manage and prepare the groups. Thus, the amount of time allocated for learning is a way for a successful learning experience about social constructivist perceptions. For this situation, when sufficient time is given to teaching, the teachers transfer learning experience to involve their students in an insightful knowledge-building environment (Brophy, 2002). The banking system of education is not a decent concept; Abbott and Badley (2020) state. Therefore, they assert

*"The potential of the traditional method of teaching as they called banking education to limit the imaginative capacity of students to promote their belief that represents the desires of oppressors in the way they are not concerned to have the environment make understanding better for learners."*

In this study, many teachers indicated there was little experience of reflecting on the generation of knowledge. Some students asked several questions, and because of the overcrowded classrooms, teachers were struggling to pose several problems. The literature (Jonassen & Kim, 2010), along with the reporting and observing constraint about the time allowed to complete the syllable, was verified by the trend of widespread knowledge building and restricting information about setting or posing reflective questions (Kalpana, 2014).

It was felt that teachers had a poor experience of the use of computers and that they could cause harm, which costs their college if they were allowed to use them. There are various ways of making teaching approaches more motivating and inspiring. UNESCO promotes the need for contemporary media schemes, including inputs by sound and video systems and interactive multimedia, self-learning initiatives, and several collaborative activities that include group learning and critical thinking, inquiry, and discovery (Bekerman & Zembylas, 2014; Muhammad, 2020b). Experts stress the importance of practice as more of a platform to know and understand utilizing forms of practice, including such tasks, storytelling, and sightseeing tours, and provide students with ways to learn regarding communication, collaboration, and team spirit (Bretherton et al., 2003). All of these allow students to develop their innovation and cooperation skills (Cardozo, 2008). The social constructivist approach was hard to enforce in such a case. The literature indicates that teachers are required to develop classes and know about technological and non-technological raw materials with students to foster an integrated and cooperative environment for learning, which promotes problem-solving skills (Harris et al., 2009).

There was also in-class research focusing on the ways of interaction between both teachers and students while teaching and learning. In this context, teachers formed different approaches with learners according to the involvement of students and the absolute power of the teacher (Vavrus, 2009). The authoritarian approach, curricula, and the continued cultural value for teachers to be obeyed in the classroom can make it impossible to establish a truly egalitarian collaborative learning environment. Teachers and students all appeared to comply with known cultural values.

Cultural impact on teaching and learning (Karagiorgi & Symeou, 2005; Shah, 2019) is noted in the literature. According to Mohammed (2016), understanding is coherent with the social environment and the culture underlying it, and it is a framework where the tradition of appreciation for the authorities and the ancestor is recognized. For example, while the teachers and the students highly regarded the public officials needed to honor their teachers (Brophy, 2002). The socio-cultural distancing among people belongs to the cultural values as teachers and students consider bringing into their educational settings the classroom environment. Therefore the idea that learning for peace as an ideology educates students of nonviolence, empathy, affection, collaboration, and tolerance for all people on the universe is critical to ensure that educators are welcoming with learners (Harris et al., 2009). The importance of love pedagogy is emphasized by other academics, too (Brophy, 2002). "Teacher interaction with students is an important element throughout the process of learning," claimed Bretherton et al., (2003). In particular, most researchers support cooperative teaching methods in the classroom setting (Isaacs, 2013). This practice is called a collaborative process of

learning, collective student groups interacting with each other on a task by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2007). Scientific studies indicate that cooperative learning environments offer higher levels of performance foster self-confident between students, create better interactions, and provide social support within participants (Ageeva, 2016; Harris et al., 2009). Cooperative teaching and learning in the schools of Erbil city are, however, noticeably absent; instead, the model is based on cooperation, as mentioned earlier. For this cause, it is also vital to encourage dialogue to facilitate collaboration. This constrains the social constructivist learning and interactions of the students. As a consequence, teachers displayed all powers as a leader in the public and as individuals with specialized skills through authority dedicated by culture.

The findings add to the need for a more relevant issue improving the infrastructure of the school environment and the learning environment, which affected classroom instruction of teachers in the schools. This research discovered that the physical condition of the classrooms was undesirable to develop innovative interventions to signify the school administrators and educational leaders in achieving priorities for education policy that affect the new transition application. In this context, the initiatives and expectations of the officials play essential roles in reinforcing teacher preparation programs (Darweish & Mohammed, 2018; Issa & Jamil, 2010).

### Conclusion

The current approach of teaching reported in schools in Erbil was still the "banking model" and the new techniques, which corresponded to the objectives of the changed education system, and the skills needed to handle classroom environment peacefully, had a significant lack of knowledge, skills, and facilities. The shortage of proper public infrastructure, including the use of school classrooms or other sources, equipment, and facilities, worsened this deficiency. Teachers ultimately seek not just adequate educational help and support, but that also independence in their teaching approaches, and teachers constantly claimed that the process of learning had been controlled. So they are constrained through national curriculum and specific procedures. Indeed Fandy (2007) states that only the education crisis in the Islamic world was not mainly an infrastructure concern but rather an operating system concern, which is taught and trained among people. Besides, professional training teacher programs showed great seek to an open dialogue more about how to best instruct throughout the face of classroom difficulties and barriers. Policymakers and several school teachers were, however, mindful of the importance of changing the system.

As stated in the review of the literature, it is essential to empower teachers with skills and knowledge to foster critical reflection among high school students and use methods and techniques of meaningful interaction to aid social constructivist approaches in their teaching of social science education. The entire contents of school curricula are essential; however, these could indeed not be successful without including the competence of teachers in providing information. Thereby, school teachers required internalization information and understanding until they continue to teach social science learning through their skills, knowledge, beliefs, and values (Smith, 2014). The lack of qualifications for intermediate secondary school teachers is a significant obstacle that continues to impact the incorporation of collaborative teaching in classrooms negatively. The current research has revealed that new approaches to teaching that are proposed by the Ministry of Education have not been sufficiently implemented or fully embraced. The study found that most intermediate secondary school teachers preferred traditional teaching approaches. It claimed that since there were many drawbacks, like lack of interest, confidence, faith in the new methods and their advantages to both students and teachers. Also, the research found that the schools' atmosphere of a safe learning environment was not entirely satisfied with the change, even old approaches of teaching promote social and cultural expectations, including the absolute conformity of childhood to adulthood. Not only teachers but also parents do not allow their children to be taught to be highly critical, as they might be prepared to contradict and disregard their parents, local or religious leaders' views.

Nevertheless, alternative new approaches to learning and teaching encourage learners to boost self-confidence and create opportunities to strengthen their power structure in their competencies, depth of understanding, and attitudes or behavior. In general, the research found that new teaching approaches that support social constructivist approaches were unable to work efficiently in a learning environment with vicious limitations. They are hierarchical order restriction, authoritarian control by school teachers, restrictive interactions as well as the use of curricular activities, weak interaction or communication of both the teachers and stakeholders. Lastly, there is a complete absence of direct participation; including students based collaborations that result in improper communication or dialogue.

### Recommendations

It is important for the ministry of education to ascertain that all teachers, regardless of their specialty, have the appropriate pedagogical and material skills to adopt the social constructivist methodology for social science education. It may lead to switching teachers from teaching to a more realistic and structured practice. The implementation of education policies should be successfully monitored by maintaining high-quality curricula for effective teaching, appropriate educational conditions and realistic tools. Opportunity to adapt, understanding through experiences and ability to adjust will therefore increase the quality of the transfer of knowledge.

It is suggested to examine the suitable social constructivist approach paradigm for conditions in the Iraqi Kurdistan schooling system. A structure must be established that will create and enhance the credibility of teacher development programs and adapt to the school climate and society for a productive transfer of knowledge. There are several ethnic minorities living together who having their own language and culture in the northern region of Iraq. To accept the social constructivist, approach an analysis is needed which should investigate the material and educational strategies to teaching cultural differences of student- diversity in the classroom. Lastly, the existing teaching strategies in regard to social science education in the schools in the region suggested to be explored. What is worth maintaining and what needs to be amended / exempted from current procedures and teaching activities must be identified.

### Limitations

The results should not be interpreted for all teachers because of the above sampling restrictions. Further studies are also needed to obtain data from a wider range of social science teachers and from the geographical area of evidence. If certain additional questions are formed, it would be much more convenient to obtain more detailed relevant data.

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