

Testing Two Actors Contextual Interaction Theory in a Multi Actors Context: Case of COVID-19 Disease Prevention and Control Policy

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Abstract : Introduction: The study is based on the Contextual Interaction Theory (CIT) constructs to explore the role of policy actors in implementing the COVID-19 Disease Prevention and Control (DP&C) Policy. The study analyzes the role of healthcare workers' contextual factors, such as cognition, motives, and resources, and their interactions in implementing Social Distancing (SD). In this way, we test a two actors policy implementation theory, i.e., the CIT in a three-actor context. Methods: Data was collected through document analysis and semi-structured interviews. For a qualitative study design, interviews were conducted with questions on cognition, motives, and resources from the healthcare workers involved in implementing SD in the local context in Multan - Pakistan. The possible interactions resulting from contextual factors of the policy actors - healthcare workers were identified through framework analysis protocol guided by CIT and supported by trustworthiness criterion and data saturation. Results: This inquiry resulted in theory application, addition, and enrichment. The theoretical application in the three actor's contexts illustrates the different levels of motives, cognition, and resources of healthcare workers - senior administrators, managers, and healthcare professionals. The senior administrators working in National Command and Operations Center (NCOC), Provincial Technical Committees (PTCs), and Districts Covid Teams (DCTs) were playing their role with high motivation. They were fully informed about the policy and moderately resourceful. The policy implementors: healthcare managers working on implementing the SD within their respective hospitals were playing their role with high motivation and were fully informed about the policy. However, they lacked the required resources to implement SD. The target medical and allied healthcare professionals were moderately motivated but lack of resources and information. The interaction resulted in cooperation and the need for learning to manage the future healthcare crisis. However, the lack of resources created opposition to the implementation of SD. Objectives of the Study: The study aimed to apply a two actors theory in a multi actors context. We take this as an opportunity to qualitatively test the theory in a novel situation of the Covid-19 pandemic and make way for its quantitative application by designing a survey instrument so that implementation researchers can apply CIT through multivariate analyses or higher-order statistical modeling. Conclusion: Applying two actors' implementation theory in exploring a complex case of healthcare intervention in three actors context is a unique work that has never been done before, up to the best of our knowledge. So, the work will contribute to the policy implementation studies by applying, extending, and enriching an implementation theory in a novel case of the Covi-19 pandemic, ultimately fulfilling the gap in implementation literature. Policy institutions and other low or middle-income countries can learn from this research and improve SD implementation by working on the variables with weak significance levels.

Keywords : COVID-19, disease prevention and control policy, implementation, policy actors, social distancing

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