



**Female Leaders' Experiences in Azerbaijan's Public Schools Within Early Career  
Experience**

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### STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

We have read ADA's policy on plagiarism and certify that, to the best of our knowledge, the content of this paper, entitled "Female Leaders' Experiences in Azerbaijan's Public Schools Within Early Career Experience" is all our own work and does not contain any unacknowledged work.

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### **Abstract**

This study explored the early career experiences of female leaders in Azerbaijani public schools, emphasizing their points of view in both urban and rural environments. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the female leaders' early career experiences in the context of Azerbaijan public schools?
  - a. What factors contribute to the differences in the female leaders' early career experiences in urban and rural areas of Azerbaijan public schools?

This exploratory qualitative study focused on the viewpoints of female school principals in both urban and rural settings as it explores their early career experiences in Azerbaijani public schools. Even though more women are assuming leadership positions in Azerbaijani public schools, these female leaders still encounter many obstacles that limit their ability to develop effectively, especially at the beginning of their careers. This research emphasizes the cultural, socioeconomic, and gender-related aspects that influence these issues, building on the findings of Oyneniran and Lili (2020). It also looks at the different experiences of female leaders in rural and urban areas, pointing out that rural leaders frequently handle a wider range of duties with fewer resources (Wirth, 2001). Six participants, three from rural and three from urban areas, participated in semi-structured interviews for the study's comprehensive review of these experiences. The research attempted to provide insights that might help the success and professional growth of female leaders in Azerbaijan's public education sector by identifying the variables causing these discrepancies.

*Keywords:* female school principals, early career experience.

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## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

In the contemporary world, the role of females in the leadership sphere has become a remarkably crucial factor as a shield against gender discrimination which has been prevailing for centuries within the means of patriarchy. As asserted by Komariah et al. (2020), women have the prevailing role in advancing educational organizations, which hereinto contributes to improving high-quality education. Indeed, the features of the females such as emotional intelligence, sensitive approach to students, sense of motherhood, and as such, establish a comfortable atmosphere for the students to learn and improve their skills. Even though the personnel of educational institutions mainly consist of female teachers compared to male colleagues, female teachers face more challenges and obstacles in progressing their career paths than men (Addi-Raccah & Ayalon, 2002).

The increasing role of female leaders is one of the focal agendas of the contemporary practices of Azerbaijan, especially in the educational sector. In this transformation stage, Azerbaijan practices Western education standards, which corresponds to the innovative and global agenda, by simultaneously respecting the gender equality phenomenon (Aghayeva, 2012).

### **Problem Statement**

Azerbaijani society has changed a lot during the past few decades in terms of social, cultural, and political contexts. These changes impacted all spheres of human life and triggered gender equity issues in public discourse. More women are constantly improving in terms of professional development and the number of women taking leadership positions in school is rapidly rising. However, after the promotion to the school leadership position, females may face some barriers, prejudices, and social and cultural challenges (Aghayeva, 2012). Female school principals devote a significant portion of their spare time to household obligations, and this does

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not change if a woman participates in income-generating activities and spends a typical 6 hours a day on unpaid work. In contrast, men devote just two hours, and the disparities in increased workload are worse for rural women (Asian Development Bank,2019). And female rural school principals are supposed to show a variety of leadership skills. They are accountable for student accomplishment and improvement (Raney,2020). Compared to urban principals, rural principals handle many more hats in their schools. They are frequently called upon to serve as classroom teachers, educational coaches, family engagement specialists, social workers, assessment specialists, and community connectors (Renihan & Noonan, 2012).

In the research study, as the preliminary data, exciting literature on neighborhood countries with similar cultures and some data about female leaders' experiences (Mert, 2021). According to this, female school leaders may face challenges regarding cultural and societal expectations, work and life balance, gender stereotypes and bias, networking and mentorship, age, and promotion which can have the potential to influence their leadership roles.

**Cultural and Societal Expectations:** It is still quite common for women in Azerbaijan to be associated with the domestic sphere as Azerbaijan has a traditional culture. Bringing up children, doing housework, and paying attention to personal and family relationships is not an easy task and they may affect their leadership experiences, especially in the early stage of their career.

**Work-Life Balance:** Finding and maintaining a balance between job and life is frequently difficult for women, as they typically have more domestic duties (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014). Overall job satisfaction is highly dependent on the healthy balance between job and life.

**Gender Stereotypes and Biases:** At the same time, Coleman (2005) discovered that men are more often associated with leadership in schools. There are prejudices against women's

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leadership, even if female leaders are successful, they could still face unfavorable criticism and bias (Smith, 2011). According to Celikten (2005), women are seen to be unsuitable for school leadership roles because of their inherent emotionality.

**Networking and Mentorship:** Women may feel a lack of professional networks and relationships that are necessary for career growth. At the same time, there is a lack of mentors and communities which might be beneficial for exchanging experiences and improving leadership skills.

**Age and Promotion:** Women are often hired for leadership roles and promoted at somewhat older ages compared with men (Grogan & Shakeshaft 2011; Roser et al. 2009 Pinar).

### **Research Question**

The main question that will guide this study is the following:

1. What are the experiences that female leaders have in the context of Azerbaijan public schools during early career experiences?

a. Are there differences in the experiences of female leaders in urban and rural areas of Azerbaijan public schools during the early stages of their careers, and if so, what factors contribute to these differences?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The objective of this study is to explore the opportunities and barriers (experiences) of female leaders in their first three years in leadership and how all these factors influence their position and to gain a more comprehensive understanding of female leaders' perspectives in Baku and regional public schools through study, and our results will serve to promote awareness

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among school communities. The research specifically aims to identify and raise awareness of existing issues. Besides, understanding the experience of female leaders in Azerbaijan is crucial to bridge the gap in research and enhance awareness.

### **Significance of Study**

Leadership is one of the most essential concerns in education, and studies have found that female leaders successfully lead their schools, yet the explanations behind how women lead experiences and obstacles are unknown (Oyneniran & Lili, 2020). There are various challenges for female leaders in many sectors, particularly in education, where women leaders may have unpleasant experiences and some invisible barriers (Ozkan & Levent, 2020). These experiences, known as the glass ceiling, keep women from obtaining positions of leadership (Wirth, 2001). Uncovering the leadership experiences of women's principles would encourage more women to pursue and succeed in the principles of leadership.

By doing research, we aim to obtain a better understanding of female leaders' experiences in Baku and regional public schools and these findings will help to raise awareness among communities of school.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

Female leadership leaders are accepted as role models for other models. Being a female leader can motivate women and girls to strive for a leadership position. (Offermann & Foley, 2020).

Glass ceiling –The term "glass ceiling" is defined as the idea that women are prevented from rising to senior leadership roles by structural patterns of gender discrimination. It is used to describe the construction of the glass ceiling as a result of cultural values, practices, and gender

ideologies that women have absorbed have undermined their ability to self-promote, act assertively, or take risks (Crosby-Hillier, 2012).

## CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter explores the experiences of female school leaders in the early stages of their fields. The objective of the present review of literature is to comprehensively investigate existing studies as well as scholarly works that explain the challenges, opportunities, and special qualities of female education leaders. Much research on female leaders and their experiences has been done. The literature shows that the school leader is responsible for determining the school's future as well as offering a positive educational environment to develop the future potential of learners, and educators (Adair, 2007). In modern times, the significance of women in leadership has evolved into an extremely important component. (Komeriah et al,2020). Researchers and practitioners in education throughout the world have focused on the positions and abilities of female leaders (Omair, 2008; Stead & Eliot, 2009, Gronan & Shakeshaft, 2011, Sugiharti,2021).

Due to emerging findings from UNICEF's Data Must Speak research in Laos, the most effective schools are nearly twice as likely as more impoverished performing schools to have a female school leader (UNICEF,2020). However, the research findings demonstrate that female school leaders face a variety of obstacles in terms of family, society, and education. (Mbepera,2021).

Based on studies published, women have specific leadership traits and skills in leading, particularly in educational institutions, despite some problems and obstacles that impair their leadership effectiveness (Martin,2011& Chabaya et al,2009).

The research shows that the glass ceiling and advances to positions of leadership in organizations, women must overcome basic gender bias and stereotypes. The term (glass

ceiling) defines a barrier which prevents women from reaching the top. Some of the obstacles belong to the women, and their families, while others have a connection to their organizations (Singh, 2007).

### **Cultural Societal Expectations**

Development in countries' economic, social, and political spheres suggests a prospective dynamic trend toward more women assuming administration roles in schools (Oplatka, 2006). Nevertheless, holding the position of school principal may be challenging because of a variety of factors, such as family-related issues, traditions and different biases, various work pressures, and lack of professional networking (Brunner 2000; Moorosi, 2010; Coleman, 2011). According to Oplatka (2006), the cultural and social structure that divides society into male and female arenas is one of the barriers to women's access to leadership positions. Many countries' cultures, such as Turkey, China, and Islamic countries, assign specific tasks and spheres of responsibility to each gender, assuming that one must behave according to the social expectations of one's gender (Celikten, 2005; Guoqing & Yongxin, 2000; Sidani, 2005). Female school principals may face unique challenges related to gender roles and expectations depending on the country's level of development, culture, and religion, and contradictory viewpoints.

Culture in Turkey is one of the most similar to Azerbaijani culture, which is why, articles with Turkish context were investigated.

Research articles that investigate female leaders' experiences regarding cultural and societal expectations in Turkey, shows that many women refrain from taking school leadership position because their primary role is seen as a wife and a mother (Celikten, 2005). According to studies conducted in Turkiye, women are not always regarded as having the talents and capacity to advance in professional jobs. They emphasize how Turkish society views women as inferior to

men since women are innately emotional, rendering them unsuited for positions of leadership. As a result, traditional Turkish society holds that women should first and foremost prepare themselves for a domestic job as a wife and mother. Work should only be considered by a woman as a last resort, and only under terrible situations and circumstances (Mert, 2021; Celikten, 2005; Katrinli & Timurcanday, 1994). Celikten (2005) has also found that these cultural and societal expectations and unfavorable assumptions about women in Turkish society have slowed the advancement of professional working women, notably those in school administration (Celikten, 2005).

Nevertheless, the research article about England and Wales headteachers shows that in the UK female leaders face the prejudice that Women strongly identify with a domestic stereotype, when the woman is seen as a housewife doing all the housework, particularly those females who are married and have children (Coleman 2005).

### **Work-life Balance**

Achieving a good work-life balance is particularly challenging for those in leadership positions. In the research, Duncan (2013) reported that the school principals' work is stressful because of various issues, such as deadlines, issues with parents, amount of workload, and this can be a reason for work-life imbalance (Duncan, 2013).

However, many female school leaders, besides the work pressure, may have a conflict between work and home/family responsibilities, because women frequently have more domestic responsibilities than men (Coleman 2005, Walker & Qian, 2006; Wrushen & Sherman, 2008). A number of studies shows that male and female principals experience different levels of stress due to different home and family responsibilities and demands, and workplace support may necessitate different emphases. Such factors have a greater impact on their work-life balance

(Walker & Qian, 2006; Mert, 2021; Celikten, 2005). Duncan (2013) states that the majority of their male counterparts have spouses who are in charge of domestic arrangements. Balancing work and home and taking care of children and the elderly is a major concern for many female principals, which can be more difficult especially if female principals are single, divorced, or separated.

### **Gender Stereotypes and Biases**

In many communities, gender biases and misconceptions about women in leadership continue to be major obstacles. These prejudices and stereotypes can take many different forms, which can affect how people view, expect, and provide opportunities for women in leadership roles.

According to Zhong and Enrich (2010), since the 1970s, several studies in Western nations have demonstrated that gender plays a significant role in determining leadership. Compared to male leaders, female executives are more likely to share authority with their staff and adopt a more democratic leadership style.

Even though women's roles in many fields have changed, one field where they still make up a sizable minority in senior leadership posts in the US is educational administration (Celikten, 2005). Given that women make up the vast majority of employees in educational institutions, the minority leadership role that they play in educational administration is very concerning. Children also pick up on modeling and examples from their elders, hence the absence of women in high leadership positions suggests that there are gender gaps in these educational institutions. In addition to promoting diverse viewpoints and life experiences to inform educational goals, gender parity in educational administration gives young people a mental model that shows both sexes are capable of rising to the top executive roles. The early images of leadership that children

see and experience shape their perceptions of the world and how they make decisions (Ostos, 2012).

In USA Women's own decision to not apply for promotion in education for a variety of reasons, including a lack of necessary aspirations, ignorance of the promotion system, lack of confidence in their ability to succeed, gender-based socialization, fear of failure, and lack of competitiveness, may also be blamed for the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in education (Oplatka, 2006).

Studies conducted both nationally and internationally show how the principal's role is framed in terms of male stereotypes and is therefore thought to be better suited for men. Additionally, women appear to be implicitly considered less capable of leading and managing than their male counterparts (Coleman 2005). This puts obstacles in the way of women's advancement. Given the lack of existing studies, more investigation is warranted into attitudes about women serving as principals in Turkey. This kind of study could help women advance into leadership roles in education and support those already in principalships to stay in them (Celikten, 2005).

### **Networking, Mentorship, and Promotion**

As the essential elements of the career-building phase of individuals, networking, mentorship and promotion are remarkably essential factors in the career path of employees in academia, which directly contributes to their self-efficacy, confidence, performance, professional development, mentorship, and promotion are the remarkably essential factors in the career path of employees in academia, which directly contribute to their self-efficacy, confidence, performance, and professional development (Ferrari et al.,2022; Hill & Wheat, 2017; Ismail et al., 200).

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Research studies claim that networking is a crucial factor that strengthens the career development of individuals in academia. Ismail et al. (2007) make an in-depth analysis of the networking phenomenon by referring to its role for both male and female leaders' career paths in academia and hereinto draw attention to the fact that networking has been considered a masculine culture in workplaces, which has only recently started to be normalized among the female leaders. In a general sense, while male leaders can conveniently contribute to their self-efficacy, career, and professional development, based on common networking habits, women are more prone to face challenges due to a lack of networking availability. Indeed, the possibility of establishing communication and reaching out to the scholars or other professional staff plays a role in a fast-career mobilization as asserted by Nokkala et al. (2017). He especially draws attention to the fact that the networking availability in the early career stage of the female leaders of the educational sector establishes enhanced and fastened career progress and productivity in the long run. Thus, overcoming the imbalanced possibility of networking between female and male leaders of academia can be promising in terms of triggering smoother career development for female leaders by simultaneously overcoming gender-based stereotypes in their workplaces.

In this regard, Heigaard and Mathisen (2009) claim that having a successful mentorship program in the early career stage of leaders plays a remarkably contributive role in the career development and efficacy of the leaders. Hereinto, they analyze mentorship and its role in female leaders' development, which underlines the importance of establishing comfortable communication with the mentor, who closely tracks the career progress and ambition of the leaders in their early career period. In this regard, female leaders can easily focus on developing their skills, working on their weaknesses, and expressing their needs in their profession. Indeed, fostering communication through mentorship can be a defining factor for overcoming the gender

stereotypes that impede the progress of female leaders in academia in comparison to males (Høigaard & Mathisen, 2009; Hill & Wheat, 2017).

Furthermore, promotion is another crucial element in fostering the career development of female leaders in schools. Promotion is considered a noteworthy incentive that encourages hard work and development of the employees, and hereinto leading to the objective success of the employees (Clarke, 2011). Even though the promotion is mainly dependent on factors such as qualifications, performance evaluations, and development of the skills of the employees, the gender factor also plays a defining role in this context, which to a certain extent, detains the possibilities from the female leaders due to ongoing glass ceiling in the workplaces. Especially, in the first stages of career building, valuing the successful initiatives and professional performance of the leaders is crucial in trust-building, ensuring confidence, and encouraging the professional development of the leaders. Clarke (2011) focuses on the role of networking and mentorship as foundational factors, that directly enable the higher possibility of being promoted to a higher status in the workplace. "Building social capital through networking and mentoring would thus appear to be one way of advancing women's careers to senior management positions" (Clarke, 2011, p. 510).

To sum up, through networking, mentorship, and promotion, young female employees in the education sector are more likely to be encouraged to take successful steps towards self-efficacy, professional development, and successful career building, in which high competitiveness with their male colleagues can be well-attained.

### **Gap in the literature**

Although there are sufficient studies that make an in-depth analysis of the female leaders' experiences in public schools with a special focus on the early career path, the existing

literature lacks sufficient focus on the case analysis in Azerbaijan, which leaves a literature gap in neighboring countries such as Turkiye, Iran, Islamic countries that this paper aims to focus on. More precisely, the studies mainly do not cover the challenges and opportunities as the main insights of the females' experiences in the Azerbaijani public schools.

### **CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

The purpose of this research is to find out about the experiences of female school leaders in Azerbaijan. The research method of this study is qualitative. The qualitative method is remarkably crucial to explore the experiences of female leaders. Cresswell (2012) suggested that qualitative research design seeks to deeply comprehend life experiences and provide fresh voices to the research literature by giving a voice to the individual experience. The researchers will conduct qualitative research because interviews help them explore data on the experiences of female school leaders. The qualitative research approach provides an overview of participants' opinions, perspectives, and situations. Through qualitative research, researchers can learn about participants' personal experiences as well as how interpretations are created by and in society.

Furthermore, our study's participants will feel secure while sharing their thoughts. Because our study focuses on the experiences of female school leaders, the use of open-ended questions during interviews enabled researchers to gain more information only through the inquiries of our respondents.

#### **Research Site and Population**

As research sites in which the study will be conducted are 3 public schools in Baku and 3 public schools located in regions. By using a purposeful sampling strategy, the principles of the schools that have been promoted recently are chosen. Female school principals should have a maximum of 5 years of experience working as public-school principals. The rationale is that

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they will have fresh memories and data about the beginning of their career paths as a school leader.

### Sample Size and Sampling Strategy

In qualitative research, the interview is conducted, and the sample size of the study is 6 participants. Purposeful sampling will be used in this study (Cohen et al., 2007). Purposive sampling, as defined by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), indicates that the researcher wants to learn, understand, and gain insight. Patton (2015) asserts that the rationale and effectiveness of purposeful qualitative sampling derive from an emphasis on a thorough understanding of specific examples: full of data situations. There is a reason why purposeful sampling is appropriate for this research since researchers seek to gain insight into the experiences of female leaders in their early professional years.

**Table 1**

Participants: 6				
Research Site: Public Schools in Baku/Region				
Participants Profile	Participants	Gender	Characteristics	Experiences
School Principals	6	Female	From urban and rural public school	Early year experiences

### Data Collection and Analysis

Since this is a qualitative study, we will collect data through interviews to provide a thorough understanding of the experiences of female school leaders. Semi-structured interviews will be done, with the interviewer having the opportunity to ask questions that appear throughout

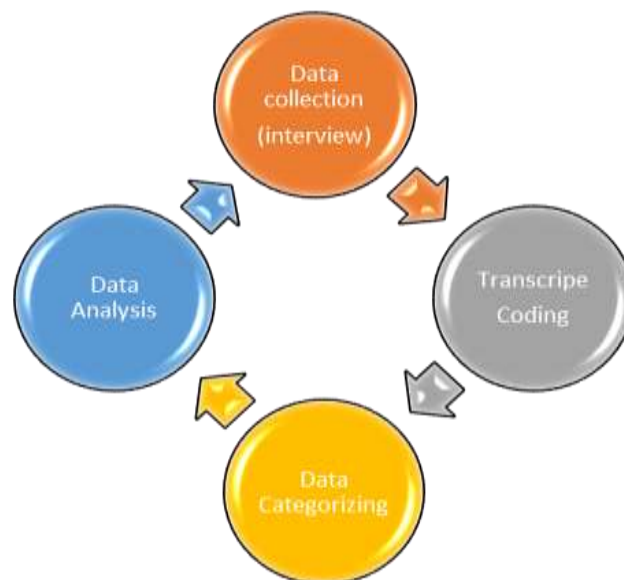
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the interviews. There are going to be 10 to 15 open-ended questions, which will take a maximum of 40 minutes.

After completing the interviews, we will examine the data to uncover common patterns of information categories and codes within interview transcripts. The codes will then be placed inside related categories. The researchers might utilize computing devices and statistical tools to keep our recordings organized in different folders, or we could manually produce a separate piece of paper for each category with codes. Finally, we should name our categories utilizing the step-by-step technique according to the collected data. Because of the limited scope of our research, the number of categories should be enough; too many categories may be confusing.

The researchers will also create a visual representation of the data using mapping symbols that fall into various groups, allowing our findings to be viewed and read graphically. The categories should explain to the reader the essence of the research. Making a table of categories with the question we are researching at the top would help us determine if our findings answered our research inquiries (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

**Figure 1**  
*Data collection and analysis*



### **Validity**

The validity of research increases the credibility of the study. If the study lacks validity this could lead to dubious or untrustworthy conclusions that are since the data may not be trustworthy or representative (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

In order to increase the validity and trustworthiness we will use member check. A member check is a qualitative procedure aimed at ensuring validity, wherein the researcher asks study participants to confirm the authenticity of the report (Creswell, 2012).

All our interviewees will be informed about the confidentiality of their personal data, sign the consent form, and will be asked permission to record their responses. After the recording and transcribing of the interviews, the member check technique will be used. Thus, the interview transcript will be sent to the interview participant for checking to ensure that the collected data is accurate and coincides with the interview's viewpoints. The rationale for doing that is to increase the validity and therefore the validity of the whole research study.

### **Study Limitations**

Identifying and understanding different limitations is necessary for an accurate and reliable research study. Conducting the research, we may face limitations such as lack of the literature, generalizability, and time constraints.

## **CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS**

The purpose of the study was to explore and understand the early career experiences of female leaders in Azerbaijan public schools, with a specific focus on identifying factors contributing to differences between urban and rural areas. By examining these experiences, the

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study aimed to shed light on the unique challenges, opportunities, and contextual factors shaping the career trajectories of female educational leaders in diverse settings within Azerbaijan.

1. What are the female leaders' early career experiences in the context of Azerbaijan public schools?

a. What factors contribute to the differences in the female leaders' early career experiences in urban and rural areas of Azerbaijan public schools?

To answer the above research questions: Semi-structured interviews were done at six public schools, three in urban and three in rural areas, with six principals chosen for this post in less than six years.

Research site and participants are as follows:

**Table 2. Participants and Research Sites**

Research Site	School Leaders	Years of Experience
Urban	School Principal 1	6
Urban	School Principal 2	3
Urban	School Principal 3	4
Rural	School Principal 4	5
Rural	School Principal 5	6
Rural	School Principal 6	5

We have identified the following themes and subthemes throughout the analysis (See the Table 3).

**Table 3: Major Findings**

Themes	Sub-themes
--------	------------

<b>Theme 1.</b> Cultural and Societal Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being a Role Model</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2.</b> Work-life Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Pressure</li> <li>• Personal Boundary Setting</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 3.</b> Gender Stereotypes and Biases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional Value</li> <li>• Access to Education and Resources</li> </ul>

### **Theme 1: Cultural and Social Expectations**

#### **Sub-theme: Being a Role Model**

In exploring the early career experiences of female leaders within Azerbaijan's public school system, one prominent theme that emerged was the significant influence of cultural and societal expectations, particularly concerning the role of women as role models. This sub-theme delves into the multifaceted nature of these expectations and their impact on the professional trajectories of female leaders, highlighting distinctions between urban and rural contexts.

#### **Urban Context:**

In urban areas of Azerbaijan, female leaders often found themselves navigating a complex interplay of traditional gender roles and modern aspirations. Despite the progressive policies implemented by the government to promote gender equality in education and the workforce, deeply ingrained societal norms continued to shape perceptions of women's roles. Within this context, being a role model as a female leader meant not only excelling in one's professional duties but also challenging conventional gender stereotypes. Urban School Principal

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I mentioned: [Şəhər ictimai məktəbində bir qadın lider olaraq, rolumu üstün tutmaq və qadının nail ola biləcəyi ənənəvi anlayışlara etiraz etmək üçün ikili məsuliyyət hiss etdim. Bu, təkcə mənim işimi etməklə bağlı deyildi, qadın liderlərin gələcək nəsillərinə yol açmaq idi], [As a female leader in an urban public school, I felt a dual responsibility—to excel in my role and to challenge the traditional notions of what a woman can achieve. It wasn't just about doing my job; it was about paving the way for future generations of female leaders].

Interviews with female leaders in urban public schools revealed a keen awareness of the importance of serving as role models for young girls aspiring to pursue leadership positions. Many recounted instances where they actively advocated for gender equality in their schools, organizing workshops and mentorship programs aimed at empowering female students. However, they also faced subtle forms of resistance from within the community, reflecting persistent attitudes regarding women's capabilities and leadership potential. Urban School Principal 2 shared: [Şəhər yerlərində gender bərabərliyi uğrunda mübarizə həmişə keçərli olmur. Bu mübarizə aparmalı olduğumuz bir anlayışdır. Lakin hər bir kiçik qələbə, hər bir qıza təlqin etdiyimiz bu maneələri qırmaq üçün bir addımdır], [In urban areas, the struggle for gender equality isn't always overt. It's the subtle resistance, the lingering stereotypes that we have to constantly combat. But every small victory, every girl we inspire, is a step towards breaking down those barriers].

Despite these challenges, female leaders in urban areas demonstrated resilience and determination in carving out their professional paths. Their early career experiences were characterized by a strong commitment to breaking barriers and setting precedents for future generations of female leaders. By embracing their roles as role models, they not only advanced

their own careers but also contributed to shifting societal perceptions of women's leadership in Azerbaijan.

**Rural Context:**

Conversely, the experiences of female leaders in rural areas of Azerbaijan's public schools presented a distinct set of challenges and opportunities. In these settings, cultural and societal expectations often exerted a more pronounced influence, with traditional gender roles playing a dominant role in shaping women's lives. The concept of being a role model as a female leader took on added significance within the context of close-knit communities, where individuals were subject to heightened scrutiny and social pressure. School Principal 4 (Rural) mentioned: [Kənd icmalarında qadın lider olmaq mənim rolumu mükəmməlləşdirmək və qadının idealizə edilmiş obrazını gösdərməkdir. Bu ənənə və yeniliklər arasında bir balansdır], [In rural communities, being a female leader means not only excelling in my role but also embodying the idealized image of a woman—nurturing, yet strong. It's a delicate balance that requires navigating between tradition and progress].

Female leaders in rural public schools described the weight of expectations placed upon them to embody idealized notions of femininity while simultaneously fulfilling their professional duties. This duality presented a delicate balancing act, requiring them to navigate between traditional values and progressive ideals. While they shared similar aspirations to empower young girls and challenge gender norms, they often encountered resistance from within their communities, where patriarchal norms remained deeply entrenched.

Nevertheless, female leaders in rural areas exhibited remarkable resilience and resourcefulness in navigating these challenges. Many recounted instances where they leveraged their positions to advocate for gender equality and promote educational opportunities for girls in

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their communities. By leading by example and demonstrating competence and dedication in their roles, they gradually earned the respect and admiration of their peers, paving the way for greater acceptance of women in leadership positions.

### **Cross-Contextual Dynamics:**

Across both urban and rural contexts, it became evident that the early career experiences of female leaders in Azerbaijan's public schools were profoundly shaped by cultural and societal expectations regarding their roles as role models. While urban settings offered greater opportunities for advocacy and advancement, they also posed unique challenges stemming from entrenched gender norms. In contrast, rural areas presented a more conservative environment where traditional values often clashed with aspirations for gender equality.

Despite these differences, female leaders in both contexts demonstrated a shared commitment to challenging stereotypes and empowering the next generation of female leaders. By navigating the complexities of cultural and societal expectations, they forged paths of resilience and determination, leaving a lasting impact on Azerbaijan's education system and society as a whole.

## **Theme 2: Work-Life Balance**

### **Sub-theme 1: Family Pressure**

In examining the early career experiences of female leaders in Azerbaijan's public school system, the theme of work-life balance emerged as the next central concern. Within this theme, the sub-theme of family pressure played a significant role in shaping the professional trajectories of female leaders, with distinct implications observed between urban and rural contexts.

### **Urban Context:**

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Urban female leaders encountered a delicate balance between their professional responsibilities and familial obligations. Despite the relatively progressive attitudes towards women's participation in the workforce, traditional expectations regarding women's roles within the family persisted. In urban areas, family pressure often manifested as subtle forms of guilt or expectation, with female leaders feeling the weight of balancing career aspirations with familial duties. Urban school principal 3 shared: [Şəhər mühitində ailə məsuliyyətlərimlə qadın lider kimi karyeramı balanslaşdırmaq çox vaxt labirint gəzmək kimi hiss olunur. Ailəmdə mənə qarşı olan gözləntiləri qarşılamağımı təmin edərkən işdə fərqlənməyim üçün bu daimi təzyiq var. Bu, ambisiya və öhdəliyin özünü birlikdə əks etdirməyidir], [Balancing my career as a female leader with my family responsibilities in the urban setting often feels like walking a labyrinth. There's this constant pressure to excel at work while ensuring I meet the expectations placed on me within my family. It's a delicate dance between ambition and obligation].

Spouses and extended family members in urban settings sometimes harbored expectations that female leaders prioritize the needs of the family over their own career advancement. This tension between professional aspirations and familial obligations contributed to feelings of imbalance and stress, necessitating the need for support networks and flexible work arrangements to navigate these competing demands effectively.

### **Rural Context:**

Conversely, female leaders in rural areas faced heightened levels of family pressure, stemming from deeply ingrained cultural norms and socioeconomic dynamics. Traditional gender roles were more rigidly defined in rural communities, placing greater emphasis on women's roles within the household. Female leaders often encountered resistance or skepticism

from spouses and relatives who viewed their professional pursuits as secondary to familial responsibilities.

Family pressure in rural contexts often presented as overt opposition or skepticism towards women's career aspirations, making it challenging for female leaders to prioritize their professional development. This external pressure, coupled with limited access to support networks and resources, exacerbated the challenges of achieving work-life balance in rural settings, contributing to heightened stress and burnout among female leaders. Rural school principal 6 mentioned: [Kənd yerlərində ailə təzyiqi sadəcə incə deyil; ötmə və amansızdır. Bu gözləntilər var ki, qadın olaraq əsas vəzifəm karyera qurmaq deyil, ev işlərinə və ailə ehtiyaclarına meyl etməkdir. İstəklərimin daim sarsıldığını hiss etmək narahatlıq doğurur], [Family pressure in rural areas isn't just subtle; it's overt and relentless. There's this expectation that as a woman, my primary role is to tend to household chores and family needs, not to pursue a career. It's disheartening to feel like my aspirations are constantly being undermined].

Another rural school principal 5 shared: [kənd şəraitində iş həyatı balansına nail olmaq ailənin böyük təzyiqini nəzərə alaraq mühüm bir problemdir. Tez-tez peşəkar hədəflərimi yerinə yetirmək və ailəm daxilində mənə verilən gözləntiləri qarşılamaq arasında yırğalanıram. Bu, məndə emosionallıq hissi oyadan daimi hoqqabazlıq hərəkətidir], [Achieving work-life balance in rural settings is a monumental challenge, given the overwhelming family pressure. It often feels like I'm torn between fulfilling my professional goals and meeting the expectations placed on me within my family. It's a constant juggling act that leaves me feeling emotionally drained].

### **Cross-Contextual Dynamics:**

While the manifestation of family pressure varied between urban and rural contexts, its impact on the early career experiences of female leaders in Azerbaijan's public schools was

significant. Urban female leaders contended with subtle forms of resistance and guilt, while their rural counterparts faced more overt challenges stemming from deeply entrenched cultural norms.

Nevertheless, female leaders in both settings demonstrated resilience and determination in navigating these obstacles, highlighting the importance of supportive environments and self-care strategies in achieving work-life balance amidst competing demands.

### **Sub-theme 2: Personal Boundary Setting**

Despite contextual differences between urban and rural settings, a common thread emerged among female principals regarding the importance of setting personal boundaries to achieve work-life balance. This sub-theme delves into the strategies employed by female leaders to manage their time and energy effectively, emphasizing the universality of boundary-setting tactics in navigating professional and personal responsibilities.

#### **Boundary Setting in Urban Context:**

Female principals from urban areas emphasized the significance of setting personal boundaries as a means of managing their dual roles effectively. By delineating clear boundaries between their professional and personal lives, urban female leaders reported a greater sense of control over their time and energy. Strategies such as establishing designated work hours, prioritizing tasks, and fulfilling their responsibilities as mothers/wives enabled them to strike a balance between their professional responsibilities and personal life. Urban school principal 2 shared: [Konkret iş saatlərini silməklə və onlara dini baxımdan riayət etməklə həm işdə, həm də evdə üstün olmağıma imkan verən vaxtım və enerjimə nəzarəti bərpa etdim], [By delineating specific work hours and sticking to them religiously, I've regained control over my time and energy, allowing me to excel both at work and at home].

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Participants in urban settings underscored the importance of assertiveness and self-advocacy in setting and maintaining personal boundaries. Many cited the need to communicate their needs and limitations effectively to colleagues, supervisors, and family members, fostering a supportive environment conducive to work-life balance. By adopting proactive boundary-setting tactics, urban female leaders were able to mitigate the impact of external pressures and demands, enhancing their overall satisfaction and effectiveness in their roles.

### **Boundary Setting in Rural Context:**

Similarly, female principals in rural areas recognized the value of setting personal boundaries as a means of managing competing demands and responsibilities. Despite facing unique challenges related to cultural expectations and socioeconomic dynamics, rural female leaders employed similar strategies to establish clear boundaries between their professional and personal lives. This often involved prioritizing tasks, delegating responsibilities, and carving out dedicated time for family members. Rural school principal 6 indicated: [Tapşırıqlara üstünlük verməklə və xüsusi ailə vaxtını oyatmaqla həm şəxsi, həm də peşəkar cəhətdən inkişaf etməyimə imkan verən balans tapdım], [By prioritizing tasks and carving out dedicated family time, I've found a balance that allows me to thrive both personally and professionally].

Participants in rural settings emphasized the importance of assertiveness and self-advocacy in asserting their needs and boundaries within their communities. Many recounted instances where they had to negotiate with family members and community stakeholders to uphold their boundaries and prioritize their family responsibilities. By asserting control over their time and energy, rural female leaders were able to navigate the complexities of work-life balance more effectively, fostering greater resilience and sustainability in their roles.

### **Cross-Contextual Dynamics:**

The experiences of female principals in both urban and rural settings underscored the universal importance of personal boundary setting in achieving work-life balance. Despite contextual differences, participants from both contexts agreed on the efficacy of boundary-setting tactics in managing competing demands and responsibilities.

### **Theme 3: Gender Stereotypes and Biases**

#### **Sub-theme 1: Traditional Values**

##### **Rural Context:**

In rural settings, entrenched gender norms exert a significant influence on attitudes towards leadership, perpetuating preconceptions that undermine women's qualifications for leadership roles. The data analysis reveals that conservative values prevalent in rural communities often prioritize women's roles in domestic spheres, relegating them to household tasks rather than leadership positions outside the home. This perpetuation of traditional gender roles contributes to a lack of visible examples of women pursuing leadership roles, reinforcing the assumption that women are inherently less qualified for leadership compared to men.

One participant from a rural area, school principal 4, succinctly expressed the prevailing sentiment: [Deyirlər ki, qadındır, otursun və şorbasını bişirsin, ona görə də hər ikisini eyni vaxtda etmək mənə ilham verdi], [They say she is a woman let her sit and cook her soup, so it inspired me to do both simultaneously].

This quote encapsulates the cultural expectations placed upon women to prioritize domestic duties over professional aspirations. The notion that women are better suited for domestic tasks than leadership positions become deeply ingrained in rural communities, posing substantial challenges for women aspiring to break into historically male-dominated occupations or leadership roles.

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Furthermore, the close-knit nature of rural communities exacerbates these challenges, as individuals are often subject to heightened scrutiny and resistance when challenging traditional gender norms. Participants recounted facing dissatisfaction and resistance from old-fashioned teachers, highlighting the reluctance of some members of the community to embrace innovation or alternative perspectives. The limited number of students and faculty in rural schools intensifies these difficulties, as the surrounding environment and societal factors play a pivotal role in shaping attitudes towards gender roles and leadership.

As one rural school principal 5 expressed, [Kənd məktəblərində tələbə və müəllim heyətinin sayı az olsa da, orada işləmək daha çətinidir. Ətraf mühit, icma amili mühüm rol oynayır. Fərqli fikirli insanlarla işləmək çox çətinliklər gətirir], [In rural schools, even though the number of students and faculty is small, working there is more challenging. The surrounding environment, the community factor, plays a crucial role. Working with different-minded people brings a lot of difficulties].

This sentiment underscores the formidable obstacles faced by women in rural areas as they navigate conservative values and societal expectations in their pursuit of leadership roles within Azerbaijan's public school system.

### **Urban Context:**

Contrary to rural settings, urban environments often exhibit more progressive attitudes towards gender roles and leadership, which can provide a more conducive atmosphere for women aspiring to leadership positions. Unlike their rural counterparts, urban school leaders may encounter fewer entrenched gender norms that prioritize traditional domestic roles for women.

In urban areas, the diversity of perspectives and experiences fosters a more inclusive environment where women are encouraged to pursue leadership roles both within and outside the

home. The prevalence of diverse cultural backgrounds and professional industries in urban settings contributes to a broader acceptance of women in leadership positions, challenging traditional stereotypes and biases.

One urban school principal 2 remarked, [Şəhər məktəbimiz qadınları liderlik rolundan üstün tutmağa təşviq edən inklüzivlik və müxtəliflik mədəniyyətinə malikdir. Gender stereotipləri aktiv şəkildə çətinləşdirilir və qadınlar ənənəvi gender rollarına qarışmadan peşəkar istəklərini həyata keçirmək səlahiyyətinə malikdirlər], [In our urban school, there's a culture of inclusivity and diversity that encourages women to excel in leadership roles. Gender stereotypes are actively challenged, and women are empowered to pursue their professional aspirations without being confined to traditional gender roles].

Furthermore, the dynamic nature of urban communities promotes innovation and forward-thinking, creating opportunities for women to thrive in leadership positions across various sectors. Urban school leaders benefit from networks and support systems that prioritize gender equality and diversity, enabling them to navigate potential biases and challenges more effectively. Urban school principal 1 mentioned: [Mühafizəkar dəyərlər hələ də şəhər ərazilərinin ciblərində mövcud ola bilsə də, ümumi mühit daha mütərəqqi və inklüziv olmağa çalışır], [While conservative values may still exist in pockets of urban areas, the overall environment tends to be more progressive and inclusive].

Another urban school principal 2 noted: [Gender bərabərliyini dəstəkləyən və ənənəvi normalara meydan oxuyan, qadınlara maneələri qırmağa və liderlik rolundan üstün olmağa imkan verən resurs və şəbəkələrə çıxışımız var], [We have access to resources and networks that support gender equality and challenge traditional norms, allowing women to break barriers and excel in leadership roles].

**Cross-Contextual Dynamics:**

Despite the differences between urban and rural settings in terms of attitudes towards gender roles and leadership, there are notable cross-contextual dynamics that impact women's experiences in leadership positions within the education sector.

One such dynamic is the influence of broader societal narratives and cultural norms that transcend urban and rural boundaries. While urban areas generally exhibit more progressive attitudes towards gender equality, deeply ingrained societal beliefs and biases can still persist and manifest in subtle ways within urban educational institutions.

Conversely, while rural communities adhere to more traditional gender norms, there are often pockets of progressive thinking and individuals challenging these norms, especially in more diverse or economically developed rural areas.

**Sub-theme 2: Access to Education and Resources**

**Urban Context:**

In urban settings, female leaders benefit from a more inclusive and progressive environment, characterized by greater access to education, resources, and support networks. This enhanced accessibility empowers women to pursue leadership roles and excel in their careers, challenging entrenched gender stereotypes and biases. Unlike their rural counterparts, urban female leaders find themselves situated within a diverse and dynamic social landscape where shifting norms and values encourage acceptance and support for women who defy traditional gender roles.

The urban context fosters an environment where female leaders have access to a wide range of educational opportunities and resources, enabling them to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for leadership positions. Additionally, the presence of robust support

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networks provides women with the encouragement and guidance needed to navigate the complexities of leadership roles successfully. As one participant, urban school principal 3 articulated, [Məsələn, müəllim olmayacağım təqdirdə məktəbdəki mühiti necə başa düşə və lider ola bilərəm?], [For example, how can I understand the environment in school and be a leader if I wouldn't be a teacher?].

This sentiment reflects the recognition of the pivotal role that education plays in preparing women for leadership roles within Azerbaijan's public school system.

Moreover, the diverse and cosmopolitan nature of urban settings exposes female leaders to a multitude of role models and mentors from various sectors, inspiring and validating their aspirations for leadership. The visibility of successful female leaders across different fields serves as a source of inspiration and encouragement, validating the achievements of women who are breaking down barriers and achieving success in their respective careers. In urban areas, the celebration of diversity and inclusion reinforces the idea that women are equally capable of assuming leadership positions and making meaningful contributions to society.

### **Rural Context:**

In rural settings, female leaders encounter distinct challenges related to access to education and resources, which can impact their ability to pursue and succeed in leadership roles within the education sector. Unlike their urban counterparts, rural female leaders face barriers such as limited educational opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of robust support networks.

Moreover, the scarcity of resources and funding in rural schools further exacerbate the challenges faced by female leaders. Inadequate infrastructure, outdated technology, and limited professional development opportunities hinder the professional growth and advancement of

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women in leadership roles, limiting their ability to effectively lead and innovate within their schools. Rural school principal 5 shared: [Kənd məktəblərində resursların və maliyyənin çatışmamazlığı qadın liderlər kimi yenilik etmək və fərqlənmək bacarığımızı artırır], [The scarcity of resources and funding in rural schools hampers our ability to innovate and excel as female leaders].

Additionally, the close-knit nature of rural communities results in a lack of diverse role models and mentors for aspiring female leaders. Limited exposure to successful women in leadership positions across different sectors contribute to a sense of isolation and discourage women from pursuing ambitious career goals.

### **Cross-Cultural Context Dynamics:**

Within Azerbaijan, the challenges, and opportunities for female leaders in accessing education and resources vary based on cultural dynamics and geographic location.

In urban areas of Azerbaijan, where progressive attitudes towards gender equality are more prevalent, female leaders benefit from greater access to resources compared to their rural counterparts. Urban environments often provide a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere for women pursuing leadership roles, with access to diverse support networks.

Conversely, in rural areas of Azerbaijan, entrenched gender norms and limited resources pose significant barriers to women's access to professional development opportunities. Cultural expectations regarding women's roles in traditional household duties limit their ability to pursue leadership roles within the education sector, contributing to disparities in access to resources and support networks.

## **Chapter Summary**

## Female Leaders' Experiences in Azerbaijan's Public Schools Within Early Career Experience

The below tables provide a concise visual summary of the differences and similarities in the early career experiences of urban and rural female school leaders within Azerbaijan's public school system.

**Table 4: Summary of Differences in Early Career Experiences of Urban and Rural Female School Leaders**

Aspect	Urban Female School Leaders	Rural Female School Leaders
Cultural and Societal Expectations	Navigating complex interplay of traditional gender roles and modern aspirations; keen awareness of serving as role models	Heavily influenced by rigid gender norms and traditional values; emphasis on embodying idealized notions of femininity
Work-Life Balance	Balancing career aspirations with familial obligations; subtle forms of resistance and guilt	Facing heightened levels of family pressure; overt opposition or skepticism towards career aspirations
Access to Education and Resources	Greater access to diverse educational opportunities and support networks	Limited access to resources and professional development opportunities; lack of diverse role models and mentors
Gender Stereotypes and Biases	Challenging traditional stereotypes and biases; navigating subtle forms of resistance	Confronting deeply entrenched gender norms; encountering overt opposition and skepticism

**Table 5: Summary of Similarities in Early Career Experiences of Urban and Rural Female School Leaders**

Aspect	Urban Female School Leaders	Rural Female School Leaders
Being a Role Model	Serving as role models for young girls; advocating for gender equality	Embodying idealized notions of femininity; advocating for gender equality
Personal Boundary Setting	Emphasizing the importance of setting personal boundaries for work-life balance	Recognizing the importance of setting personal boundaries for work-life balance
Conservative Values	Facing subtle resistance from within the community; challenging traditional norms	Confronting overt resistance from within the community; navigating patriarchal norms

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **Interview Questions:**

#### **Müsahibə ilə bağlı suallar:**

#### **RQ 1:**

1. What are the female leaders' early career experiences in the context of Azerbaijan public schools?

1. Azərbaycan dövlət məktəbləri kontekstində qadın liderlərin erkən karyera təcrübələri hansılardır?

#### **Introductory questions:**

#### **Giriş Suallar:**

1. Please introduce yourself.

- Özünüzü təqdim edin.

2. How long have you been leading this school?

- Bu məktəbə nə qədər müddət rəhbərlik edirsiniz?

3. Could you please give me a brief description of your professional career?

- Peşəkar karyeranız haqqında qısa məlumat verə bilərsiniz?

4. What motivated or inspired you to take a position of leadership in the public school system?
- Sizi dövlət məktəb sistemində liderlik mövqeyi tutmağa nə həvəsləndirdi və ya ruhlandırdı?

**Main Questions:**

**Əsas suallar:**

1. Can you share insights into your early career experiences within the public school system in Azerbaijan? What were the first steps as a leader when you just started as a school leader? Please share some specific cases or examples.
  - Azərbaycanca dövlət məktəbi sistemindəki erkən karyera təcrübələrinizi paylaşa bilərsiniz? Məktəb rəhbəri kimi fəaliyyətə yeni başladığınız zaman lider kimi ilk addımlar hansılar idi? Bəzi xüsusi halları və ya nümunələri paylaşın.
2. Have you faced any challenges when you just started? How did you navigate challenges and opportunities in the initial stages of your career?
  - Yeni başladığınız zaman hər hansı çətinliklə üzləşmişiniz? Karyeranızın ilkin mərhələlərində çətinlik və fürsətləri necə dəyərləndirdiniz?
3. Reflecting on your early career, were there specific factors or events that significantly influenced your professional development as a female leader in an Azerbaijani public school?

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- İlk karyeranızı əks etdirən, Azərbaycan dövlət məktəbində qadın lider kimi peşəkar inkişafınıza əhəmiyyətli dərəcədə təsir edən xüsusi amillər və ya hadisələr olubmu? Zəhmət olmazsa nümunələr paylaşın.
4. In what ways did the public school environment in Azerbaijan impact your career trajectory as a female leader? Were there any unique experiences or challenges you faced that shaped your leadership journey?
- Azərbaycanda dövlət məktəb mühiti bir qadın lider kimi karyera trayektoriyınıza hansı yollarla təsir etdi? Liderlik səyahətinizi formalaşdıran üzləşdiyiniz hər hansı unikal təcrübə və ya çətinlik var idi?
5. How did your educational background and early teaching experiences contribute to your path towards leadership in the context of Azerbaijan's public school system?
- Erkən tədris təcrübələriniz Azərbaycanın dövlət məktəb sistemi kontekstində liderliyə aparan yolunuza nə dərəcədə töhfə verdi?
6. Were there mentors or role models who played a pivotal role in shaping your early career experiences as a female leader in Azerbaijani public schools?
- Azərbaycan dövlət məktəblərində qadın lider kimi erkən karyera təcrübələrinizin formalaşmasında önəmli rol oynayan mentorlar və ya rol oynayan modellər var idimi?

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7. Can you share any opportunities or advantages that female leaders may have in the early career path?
  - Qadın liderlərin erkən karyera yolunda əldə edə biləcəyi hər hansı fürsət və ya üstünlükləri paylaşa bilərsiniz?
  
8. How do cultural and gender dynamics influence your leadership experiences in Azerbaijan's public schools?
  - Mədəni və gender dinamikası Azərbaycanın dövlət məktəblərindəki liderlik təcrübələrinizə necə təsir edir?
  
9. In your opinion, what challenges do female leaders face in the public school system in Azerbaijan, particularly within the early career stages?
  - Fikrinizcə, Azərbaycanda dövlət məktəb sistemində, xüsusən də erkən karyera mərhələlərində qadın liderlər hansı çətinliklərlə üzləşirlər?
  
10. What policies or initiatives, if any, do you think would contribute to a more supportive environment for female leaders in Azerbaijan's public schools?
  - Sizcə, əgər varsa, Azərbaycanın dövlət məktəblərində qadın liderlər üçün daha çox dəstəkləyici mühitə hansı siyasət və ya təşəbbüslər töhfə verə bilər?
  
11. Are there existing policies that you believe have positively impacted the experiences of female leaders.

## Female Leaders' Experiences in Azerbaijan's Public Schools Within Early Career Experience

- Qadın liderlərin təcrübələrinə müsbət təsir etdiyinə inandığınız mövcud siyasətlər varmı?

**RQ 2:** What factors contribute to the differences in the female leaders' early career experiences in urban and rural areas of Azerbaijan public schools?

**RQ 2:** Azərbaycan dövlət məktəblərinin şəhər və kənd yerlərində qadın liderlərin erkən karyera təcrübələrinin fərqlərinə hansı amillər kömək edir?

### **Interview questions for school leaders working in an urban area**

#### **Şəhər ərazisində işləyən məktəb rəhbərləri üçün müsahibə sualları**

1. Considering your leadership roles in one of the urban areas of Azerbaijan, how do you perceive the challenges and opportunities for female leaders? Can you discuss any distinct experiences or challenges you faced as a female leader in an urban public school?
- Azərbaycanın şəhər bölgələrindən birində rəhbər vəzifələrinizi nəzərə alaraq, qadın liderlər üçün çətinlikləri və fürsətləri necə qəbul edirsiniz? Şəhər dövlət məktəbində qadın lider kimi qarşılaşdığınız hər hansı fərqli təcrübəni və ya problemləri müzakirə edə bilərsiniz?

2. In your opinion, what are the key factors that contribute to the variations in early career experiences for female leaders in urban setting within Azerbaijan's public school system?
  - Fikrinizcə, Azərbaycanın dövlət məktəb sistemi çərçivəsində şəhər mühitində qadın liderlər üçün erkən karyera təcrübələrinin dəyişməsinə səbəb olan əsas amillər hansılardır?
3. How do community dynamics and expectations influenced your leadership approach and career progression?
  - İcma dinamikası və gözləntiləriniz liderlik yanaşmanıza və karyera irəliləyişinizə necə təsir etdi?
4. Have you noticed any specific support systems or resources that are more readily available in an urban area, impacting your early career experiences as a female leader?
  - Şəhər ərazisində daha hazır olan və qadın lider kimi erkən karyera təcrübələrinizə təsir edən hər hansı xüsusi dəstək sistemi və ya resursu müşahidə etmişiniz?

**Interview questions for school leaders working in a rural area**

**Kənd yerində işləyən məktəb rəhbərləri üçün müsahibə sualları**

1. Considering your leadership roles in one of the rural areas of Azerbaijan, how do you perceive the challenges and opportunities for female leaders? Can you discuss

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any distinct experiences or challenges you faced as a female leader in a rural public school?

- Azərbaycanın kənd yerlərindən birində rəhbər vəzifələrinizi nəzərə alaraq qadın liderlər üçün çətinlikləri və fürsətləri necə qəbul edirsiniz? Kənd dövlətməktəbində qadın lider kimi qarşılaşdığınız hər hansı fərqli təcrübəni və ya problemləri müzakirə edə bilərsiniz?
2. In your opinion, what are the key factors that contribute to the variations in early career experiences for female leaders in urban setting within Azerbaijan's public school system?
    - Fikrinizcə, Azərbaycanın dövlət məktəb sistemi çərçivəsində şəhər mühitində qadın liderlər üçün erkən karyera təcrübələrinin dəyişməsinə səbəb olan əsas amillər hansılardır?
  3. How do community dynamics and expectations influenced your leadership approach and career progression?
    - İcma dinamikası və gözləntiləriniz liderlik yanaşmanıza və karyera irəliləyişinizə necə təsir etdi?
  4. Have you noticed any specific support systems or resources that are more readily available in a rural area, impacting your early career experiences as a female leader?

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- Kənd yerində daha hazırlıqlı, qadın lider kimi erkən karyera təcrübələrinizə təsir edən hər hansı xüsusi dəstək sistemi və ya resurs müşahidə etmişiniz?

## APPENDIX B

### Raziliq Formasi

Tədqiqat iştirakçısı:

Tədqiqat mövzusu: Erkən Karyera Təcrübəsi Yolunda Azərbaycanın Dövlət Məktəblərində

Qadın Liderlik Təcrübələri

Tədqiqatçıların adları: Zabita Qurbanbəyli, Narmin Orucəliyeva, Fatimə Cəfərova, Xəyalə

Musazadə

Tədqiqatçılarla əlaqə:

zgurbanbayli14549@ada.edu.az , Fjafarova16715@ada.edu.az, norujaliyeva16754@ada.edu.az,

kmusazada14878@ada.edu.az

Tədqiqatın məqsədi: Bu tədqiqatın məqsədi qadın liderlərin liderlikdə olduqları ilk üç ildəki imkanlarını və maneələrini (təcrübələrini) və bütün bu amillərin onların mövqeyinə necə təsir etdiyini araşdırmaq və Bakıda və regional ictimaiyyətdə qadın liderlərin perspektivlərini daha əhatəli şəkildə başa düşməkdir. məktəblərin öyrənilməsi və nəticələrimiz məktəb icmaları arasında məlumatlılığın təşviqinə xidmət edəcəkdir

#### İştirakçı

1. Müsahibə haqqında məlumat vərəqəsi ilə tanış oldum. Bu barədə sual vermək şansım oldu və bütün suallara qənaətbəxş cavablar verildi.
2. İştirakımın könüllü olduğunu və müsahibədən 2 həftə sonra iştirakımdan imtina etməkdə və ya bəzi müraciətlərimi geri götürməkdə sərbəst olduğumu başa düşürəm.

## Female Leaders' Experiences in Azerbaijan's Public Schools Within Early Career Experience

3. Tədqiqatla əlaqəli tezislərdə, hesabatlarda, nəşrlərdə və təqdimatlarda müsahibələrimdən anonim sitatların istifadəsinə razıyam.
4. Mənə razılıq formasının surəti və müsahibə üçün məlumat vərəqi verildi.
5. Məlumatların ADA Universitetinin qaydalarına uyğun olaraq etibarlı şəkildə saxlanılacağını başa düşürəm
6. Müsahibənin səs yazısına razıyam.
7. E-poçt adresimə göndəriləcək bu tədqiqat hesabatının xülasəsinin bir nüsxəsini almaq istərdim:

\_\_\_\_\_

İştirakçının Adı

İmza

Tarix

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\_\_\_\_\_

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Tədqiqatçının Adı

İmza

Tarix

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