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**Novice Teachers in Private and Public Primary Schools in Azerbaijan: Exploring the  
Experiences**

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Hereby, I declare that this master thesis, my original investigation, and achievement, submitted for the master's degree at ADA University has not been submitted for any degree or examination

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of novice teachers and analyze how they might affect their career in primary public/private schools in Azerbaijan. This study focused on experiences of novice teachers related to school culture, relationship with colleagues and administration, professional development programs, and challenges and how these experiences affect their career. Semi structured interviews were conducted with four novice teachers (2 private and 2 public schools) from both private and public schools for this study. Results of the study demonstrated that how school culture, relationship with colleagues and administrations, and professional development programs impact on novice teachers' growth and development as professionals. The supportive school culture and positive relationship withing the school greatly influence novice teachers' commitment to their workplace. The implementation of professional development programs made novice teachers more qualified, equipped, and confident in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Novice Teachers, Professional Development, Mentoring, Collegial Support, School Culture, Challenges of Novice Teachers.

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Table 1: General Profile of Respondents

## Chapter 1: Introduction

Every student should have the support of knowledgeable teachers who can accommodate each student's needs in a variety of learning scenarios (Calams, 2015). Novice teachers shape their teaching styles as professionals during the beginning stages of their careers in order to meet needs of students. According to Bin-Hady (2018), those who are just starting their teaching careers and have recently acquired theoretical knowledge are known as novice teachers. For novice teachers, the first five years of their teaching careers are often a period of learning through failure (Kasim & Abdurajak, 2018). According to Teacher Development theory (Brown and Fuller, 1975) the first five years of a teacher's career are considered a survival period due to the many challenges they have in the classroom regarding student behavior and instruction, lack of subject-matter expertise, and meeting the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. After five years, teachers feel more confident and learn how to meet each student's academic and emotional needs.

### 1.1. Research Problem and Setting

Hullin- Austin et al. (1989) estimates that merely 50% of newly recruited teachers' careers continue longer than five years. Kutsyuruba et al. (2017) states that teachers' choices to stay in an educational institution and their position as educators are influenced by an encouraging working atmosphere. In collaborative and cooperative learning environments, educators can contribute ideas and effective ways to promote student learning (Kutsyuruba et al., 2017). Since the initial years of teaching are sometimes the most challenging for new graduates, both academic and emotional support should be provided by school administration and coworkers (Cakmak et al., 2019). Recognizing the experiences of novice teachers makes it easier to create tailored professional development programs. In order to boost the effectiveness and satisfaction of novice

teachers and to guarantee that teachers are equipped to deal with the various needs of children, novice teachers need time, assistance, and guidance (Calams, 2015; Senom et al., 2013).

A prerequisite for cultivating collaboration between employees is the recruitment of productive staff. Implementing a successful recruitment strategy is essential for recruiting effective school staff (Schaefer & Terhart, 2006). In Azerbaijan, the first induction program was launched for newly recruited novice educators by Azerbaijan Young Teachers Association and Ministry of Science and Education Republic of Azerbaijan in 2021 (Azerbaijan Young Teachers Association, n.d.). From the perspective of adaptation, it involves assisting newly hired employees to settle in smoothly to their workplace and the learning process.

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of novice teachers and analyze how they might affect their career in primary public/private schools in Azerbaijan. In the following sections, I will outline the background of the issue, clarify and associate important terms with the problem and highlight the importance of the issue.

## 1.2. Definition of Important Terms

**Teacher mentoring:** Building supportive and reciprocal connections while concentrating on achievement and offering emotional support by experienced teachers is the learning process that is known as mentoring (Premkumar & Wong, 2010). Premkumar and Wong (2010) stated that experienced teachers who provide structured knowledge and emotional support assists teachers to improve and adapt to the new environment.

**Novice teacher:** According to Kim and Roth (2011), a novice teacher is one who has less than five years of experience in the classroom.

**School culture:** Each member of the school community should take equal responsibility for the friendly and supportive school culture in which individuals are working together to accomplish a shared goal (Raban & Dhurumraj, 2023). Raban and Dhurumraj (2023) stated that schools should encourage collaborative teacher learning opportunities by offering assistance as well as encouragement to establish such a culture.

### 1.3. Significance of the Problem

Novice teachers' experiences, especially in their first years of career related to school culture, interaction/relation with colleagues and administration, and school support affect their career retention and satisfaction. Although past studies on novice teachers' experiences have addressed teachers who work in primary public/private schools in other countries, we have not heard much the voices of Azerbaijani primary private/public school novice teachers on this topic. There is scarce literature about experiences of novice teachers across primary schools in context of public/private schools in Azerbaijan. In my first year of teaching, I was struggling to fit in the existing culture of the school which was one of the main reasons I felt isolated and disconnected. The absence of assistance and guidance frequently made me feel anxious and nervous. These experiences have affected my interest in finding out more about the personal experiences of novice educators, especially in the public and private primary schools in Azerbaijan. The successful integration of novice teachers into the educational environment will be impeded if the cultures of the educational institutions do not foster professional growth, collaboration, and support (Joiner and Edwards, 2008). Due to insufficient socialization systems which include support programs, environment of school, guidance from experienced teachers, novice teachers are still quitting their professions (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Another significant obstacle creates challenges for novice teachers is the interactions of inexperienced teachers with parents (Sözen, 2018). Such

experiences may impact young educators' passion to their profession and work satisfaction which eventually result in dissatisfaction and demotivation (Lam, 2014). When faced with obstacles, novice teachers could find it challenging to foster a supportive and effective learning environment. If their problems are not resolved, they could give up or feel overburdened. The ability to recognize the experiences of novice teachers enables policymakers, stakeholders, including schools' administrators to determine what kind of support that novice teachers need in order to be satisfied and retained. In order to support novice teachers' career retaining and professional growth, which will eventually influence students' overall performance and the success of the school system, it is essential that the experiences of novice teachers should be explored.

#### 1.4. Research questions:

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the novice teachers' perceptions of their experiences in early stages of careers in public/private primary schools in Azerbaijan?
2. How do novice teachers perceive the influence of school culture and interaction with colleagues and administration on their experiences?

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

For novice educators, the first few years of teaching are crucial as they encounter a range of challenges and circumstances which might assist them to gain new skills (Cakmak, 2019). This literature review aims to explore experiences of novice teachers in public and private schools in Azerbaijan. The review is based on a systematic search of scholarly research published between 2010 and 2022, using the keywords "novice (new, beginning) teachers", "school culture", "primary schools", "collegial interaction", "mentoring and support programs", "challenges of novice teachers" and "Azerbaijan". The search yielded 15 articles, which were analyzed and synthesized according to the following themes: (1) challenges of novice teachers (2) school culture (3) professional learning opportunities

After the mid-1970s, the theory of social support has become widely recognized. Gerald Caplan, Sidney Cobb, and John Cassel contributed significantly to its growth and popularity (Song et al., 2014). According to the social support theory, by assisting people in coping with difficult circumstances, social support from family, friends, and colleagues may decrease the detrimental effects of stress on their well-being and assist individuals in dealing with stressors more successfully. Song et al. (2014) stated that numerous advantages of social support include the development of self-control, reduced levels of frustration, strong social relationships, and a decrease in mental health issues. It is also mentioned that the availability or lack of social support influences how effectively people adjust psychologically and emotionally to a new work setting (Song et al., 2014).

My study and this theory are closely related with each other. In my research, I will explore the experiences of novice teachers in primary schools through social support theory as a theoretical framework. During the initial stage of their career, novice teachers often encounter situations which can be solved with the help of social support. The social support theory indicates that the support and assistance received from colleagues and administration greatly influence novice teachers' performance and adaptation to the classroom and make them motivated, confident, and focused.

## 2.1. Challenges of novice teachers

Oztürk & Yıldırım (2013) explored the challenges experienced by novice teachers in the induction period. A questionnaire was used to gather data from 465 inexperienced teachers employed in eight randomly assigned regions in Turkey. The findings demonstrated that novice teachers experienced social as well as professional difficulties. Out of all the challenges, workload issues were rated highest. It is frequently challenging for novice teachers to manage all of the responsibilities associated with preparing teaching materials, grading student work, and participating in extracurricular activities. One of the teachers mentioned that "I have difficulty in getting everything all done because of overwhelming workload" (p. 298). Another issue is related to the culture of the school, which is unsupportive and makes novice teachers feel isolated. Classroom management was regarded as the most problematic aspect of teaching by nearly half (47%) of novice teachers (Oztürk & Yıldırım, 2013). Teachers reported that it was difficult to deal with unruly children and to establish effective classroom rules.

Five graduate students from Ontario, Canada, were chosen for case studies to highlight the difficulties faced by new educators and provide solutions for supporting them (Fantilli &

McDougall, 2009). One of the novice teachers, Daniel, faces several difficulties in his first year of teaching, including poor management, an unwelcoming and unsupportive school climate, and a negative relationship with his mentor. His mentor did not support him, and their relationship lacked trust, which demotivated him. In dealing with students who had special needs, he was also not given adequate resources or management support. In the second year, Daniel reported that he experienced an improvement in his well-being because of switching administrative responsibilities, which also led to a more structured, organized, and welcoming school atmosphere. Cathy, another novice educator, faced numerous obstacles during her first year of instruction. Her pre-service program did not adequately prepare her for teaching, consequently, she did not feel prepared to teach special needs students. Her lack of motivation was also caused by the administration's and mentors' lack of support. She decided to leave her position at this workplace and started to work in a different school as a result of all these negative experiences.

In the study conducted by Koca (2016), a questionnaire has been used to investigate the issues and difficulties that novice teachers face in Turkish private and public schools in 2016. 49 first-year teachers from 18 state and private schools were selected randomly from public as well as private schools. According to the survey results, educators face difficulties with job-related responsibilities like managing the classroom, creating lessons, putting the curriculum into practice, assisting students with special needs, and conducting tests and evaluations. Problems in relationships with parents, students, and administrators as well as an unfriendly environment encompass another group of issues.

This literature review has explored the experiences of novice teachers in various schools. The review has revealed that due to the limited amount of mentorship, unsupportive school cultures, challenges related to classroom management, student behaviors and challenges in

forming strong relationships with peers, novice teachers sometimes find it difficult to adjust to their new environment. The review explored experiences of novice teachers in the context of various countries (Australia, New Zealand, United States, South Africa, Turkey, Canada etc.) and suggest that there is a need for research and development on experiences of novice teachers in Azerbaijan, including in terms of public and private primary school context.

The majority of these challenges also seem to be connected to the pre service education, school culture, relationship with colleagues and administration, and professional development opportunities. The next paragraphs will delve into each in-depth.

## 2.2. School Culture

When things become difficult, novices are reluctant to seek assistance as they don't want to admit their inexperience and frequently struggle with problems on their own (Smith et al., 2019). So, the workplace, interactions with coworkers, administration, and school leadership have a significant impact on the process of experience.

Stories of novice teachers from a variety of contexts, including Australia, England, Finland, Israel, and Norway, were shared by Smith and his colleagues (Smith et al., 2019). A semi-structured interview guide was used to interview the teachers, and these interviews were used to create a story for each teacher. In Eric's case who is from Australia, he's been deeply affected by the way he's been treated at the school. He mentioned that "I am so satisfied with the way the staff at this school has made me feel welcome and not heaped any pressure on me as a newly qualified teacher" (p. 27). It is essential that they provided him time and support to fully understand and complete all of the duties assigned to him. He did not hesitate to clarify expectations by raising as

many questions as he could. Their ability to function as a team and complete tasks has truly amazed him.

Naturally novice teachers have similar challenges, many of which arise from the school environment in which they are employed (Brown, 2012). Research by Brown (2012) indicates that about 50% of educators quit their jobs because of a lack of novice teachers' trust to the management and poor working conditions. Brown (2012) stated that school atmosphere has a significant impact on novice teacher dedication and enthusiasm during organizational socialization, which focuses on the teacher's first exposure to the school's culture.

Ju (2017) revealed that novice teachers experienced challenges based on personal and social factors. Two novices are included in this study: Mark, a male Korean non-native English-speaking teacher, and Kathy, a novice female Canadian native English-speaking teacher. Observations, interviews, and questionnaires were used to gain necessary data in 13 months. In an interview, Kathy stated that unfriendly approach from school side had a detrimental effect on her capacity to teach in the classroom. She stated that "I think assistance in adjusting to the classroom and the type of materials I would need was not attended to (p. 1645)". She proposes that the school should take a more systematic approach and give professional support more of a focus. Mark also complained about lack of cooperation in the school culture. His job fulfillment was greatly affected by feeling unsupported and alone due to a lack of cooperation and communication with colleagues.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted among 14 newly hired teachers in Northern Portugal over two years to investigate how school culture and management affect their educational experiences in the workplace (Flores, 2004). Rather than experiencing a welcoming and supportive environment, the majority of the teachers involved in this study described feelings of dissatisfaction, a lack of dedication, and "criticisms" from more experienced colleagues at school.

Each of the 14 novice educators highlighted the essential function that leadership plays in creating a feeling sense of belonging at school. Additionally, new teachers pointed out that insufficient knowledge and an inadequate level of leadership abilities were the main causes of the unsuccessful school leadership (Flores, 2004). The presence of inspiring, motivating, and supportive leadership was essential in ensuring their satisfaction at school (Flores, 2004).

Pogodzinski (2015) found that the way novices view administrative responsibilities (developing effective mentoring and professional development) is essential because it highlights the fundamental aspects of teachers' roles. In total, 184 inexperienced teachers from 99 different schools in 11 districts (2 Midwestern states; States A and B) completed the fall and spring surveys during the 2007–2008 academic year. Findings demonstrate that teachers who experience negative relationships with administrators are probably less eager to work with the administration to achieve organizational goals. Inexperienced teachers who reported conflicts between administrators and teachers at their school also expressed a lower level of commitment to stay in their teaching positions. To effectively support new teachers school administrators and educators must collaborate. Pogodzinski (2015) stated that teachers' relationships with one another are affected by their views of the administration (principal, vice principal) of the school. Effective teacher-teacher relationships may be impeded by negative administrator-teacher connections. It causes teachers to become less committed and less engaged in their profession and avoid meeting with mentors to make valuable impact on school.

Azorin et al. (2022) used purposive sampling for choosing participants and semi-structured individual in-depth interviews for gathering data in Spain. The researchers carried out videoconference interviews with the participants from April to December 2021 due to the potential risks associated with the pandemic. According to the research, to guarantee a smooth transition to

the school, newly hired teachers require the assistance of their experienced coworkers. While it is true that they integrate ideas, updates, and pedagogical innovations that strengthen educational settings, the primary concerns and challenges for newcomers to the field are disorientation and uncertainty resulting from an absence of experience (Azorin et al., 2022). They also believed that greater levels of affiliation and cooperation are the result of closer interactions between colleagues. According to Azorin et al. (2022), it's obvious that teachers' sense of connection to the educational institution where they work is greatly influenced by their relationship with their surroundings. To successfully integrate novice teachers into the school's system, the support of experienced teachers is necessary (Azorin et al., 2022). Experienced teachers have a greater awareness of the school's culture which assists them in deciding what to do in specific situations.

Overall, the satisfaction and overall performance of novice teachers are significantly impacted by a supportive school culture. New educators can flourish and have a significant impact on the school and students with the help of a supportive school culture.

### 2.3. Professional Learning Opportunities

Induction programs that incorporate supportive mentors during the initial stages of the profession have beneficial effects on the performance of educators and students, fulfillment and dedication of novice teachers (Kutsyuruba et al., 2017). Additionally, the novice teachers emphasized that for professional development to be more valuable and appropriate, it needs to fulfill the particular requirements of teachers.

Mentorship plays a crucial role to establish a supportive learning environment and encourage new or inexperienced teachers to be part of this environment (Kutsyuruba et al., 2017).

Effective mentoring programs improve and deepen the professionalism of novice teachers, work satisfaction, and decrease teacher attrition. (Spooner-Lane, 2017). Spooner-Lane (2017) stated that various novice teachers from Australia, New Zealand, and United States miss opportunities to master the elements of successful teaching because of a lack of mentorship support. So, mentors need to be able to offer insightful observations and constructive feedback to advance the abilities and practices of new teachers. These findings also emphasize how crucial it is for mentors to pursue education and training to fully comprehend their roles and responsibilities and feel comfortable offering novice teachers emotional and educational support during the early stages of primary teaching (Spooner-Lane, 2017).

Altayli and Dagli (2018) interviewed 19 participants (four administrators, five experienced teachers, and 10 novice teachers) to explore their experiences related to mentoring and administrative support. All participants expressed concern about the absence of professional support services for novice teachers who experience challenges related to their instructional skills. 73% of participants agreed that improvements needed in the implementation of an induction program, and professional support services. Although experienced educators and school administrators claimed to make an effort to mentor and guide novice teachers, the authors were unable to figure out whether or not they were capable of carrying out these responsibilities effectively.

In the research by Makoa & Segalo (2021), nineteen female and fifteen male novice teachers whose average age was twenty-five and approximate teaching experience was three years were interviewed using semi-structured interviews in order to explore the challenges related to participating in professional development programs. Participants of interviews are from five different school which were located in South Africa. Everyone who participated in the research

stated that attending professional development programs increased their ability to teach. However, the participants additionally highlighted certain limitations that restrict teachers' access to professional development opportunities such as relevance between professional development program and the needs of the teacher and high training expense.

The sense of belonging and socializing within the school community could be improved by collegial relations and cooperation (Smith et al., 2019). In Carol's case, who is from Australia, by implementing a specific mentorship program, Carol's school appears to have an excellent method for assisting recently trained educators. To reduce attrition, the idea is to provide novice teachers with assistance and support throughout their initial years of teaching. She was mentored by Henny, a fifth-year teacher, during the first six months of her teaching career. Having classrooms next to each other allows them to observe each other's teaching methods and strategies and spend time to share about lesson planning, student behaviors and to provide constructive feedback based on observations.

Fox and her colleagues (2010) investigated the relationship people have with their workplaces, concentrating on how new teachers perceive their workplaces and themselves in terms of their ability to promote the growth of learners. The majority of the evidence came from a review of 37 semi-structured interviews with 17 educators from 18 different schools in the South and East of England, who were either in training (23 interviews), or in their first year of teaching (11 interviews), or in their third year of teaching (3 interviews). The majority of teachers expressed satisfaction with the training environments they were allocated to or the jobs they actually employed. One of the participants, Claire who was satisfied with her mentor, stated that "she's super organized, very efficient, willing to answer your questions and she always knew what needed

to do” (p. 223). In this study, schools are considered generally enormous learning environments with possibilities for informal interaction or support built into their induction or training.

A survey was conducted among 142 novice primary school teachers district had less than five years of experience in education (Burkman, 2012). The study focused on novice teachers’ experiences of professional development. Most teachers believed that they found it challenging to give sufficient learning opportunities in the classroom for mentally and physically disabled children and students who displayed ADD (Attention-Deficit Disorder) /ADHD (Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) characteristics. Teachers may establish a foundation of knowledge through professional development to assist mentally and physically students in approaching emotionally disturbed students (Burkman, 2012).

## Chapter 3: Research Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

Since the purpose of my study is to explore the experiences of novice teachers in primary schools, this study will utilize qualitative research which will enable me to investigate and delve deeply into the everyday experiences of novice teachers in public and private schools. Participants express their experiences using qualitative research which is less organized, more flexible, and open-ended (Azungah, 2018). Azungah (2018) states that in qualitative research, individuals are given the chance to express their viewpoints on the topic free from the researcher's preconceived notions, ideas, and biases. In qualitative research, we rely on interviews to avoid limiting participants' viewpoints, thoughts, and experiences. Data was collected with 15 open-ended questions that I constructed. By implementing qualitative research, I was interested in discovering how individuals make sense of their experiences and how they reflect them (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). This approach assisted me to comprehensively investigate the experiences of novice teachers and understand how these experiences affect their career.

I also conducted this research applying exploratory research design. Choosing exploratory research design for the topic "Novice Teachers in Private and Public Primary Schools in Baku: Exploring the Experiences" is quite worthwhile and appropriate. The exploratory research design is a suitable method for obtaining ideas that might guide current and future educational practices and policies (Boru, 2018), as there is a lack of research in Azerbaijan related to the experiences of novice teachers. Whenever there is a lack of adequate data on a phenomenon or an unclear topic, exploratory research is carried out (Boru, 2018).

### 3.2. Research Paradigm

This study was conducted utilizing the interpretivist approach. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that researchers who focus on qualitative methods are intrigued by how individuals make sense of their experiences and how they perceive them. Interpretivism focuses more on intricate details and context-related variables; it views humans as distinct from physical things since they may be investigated in more depth and cannot be studied like physical phenomena (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Rather than being undermined by the positivist research theory, interpretivism is more tolerant of individual meanings and perspectives (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016; Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020).

### 3.3. Sampling/Participants

This study solely focused on 4 novice teachers who have less than five years of experience in teaching. These novice teachers come from a variety of backgrounds who can offer deep and broad insights. Throughout my research, in order to systematically collect data for an in-depth analysis, I have chosen convenience and purposive sampling techniques (Creswell, 2012). Since I'm a teacher, I selected the teachers for my research by using my network of connections. Considering purposive sampling, I particularly focus on certain characteristics while selecting study participants, such as their occupations and years of experience. Following that, I employed convenience sampling to select participants for interviews based on their desire to participate and geographic location. Purposive sampling utilized in the research to find the novice teachers who will be key participants of the data collection and investigate the experiences of new teachers to guarantee an in-depth understanding experience encountered by novice teachers in both public and private school settings. Purposive sampling aims to assist in answering research questions by

concentrating on certain aspects of a target population (Ames et al., 2019). To gather a wide variety of experiences, participants were chosen from both public and private educational institutions. Within convenience sampling, individuals within the target population were chosen for the research based on factors like desire to participate, accessibility, availability, and location (Creswell, 2012).

### 3.4. Data Collection Tool

In-depth face to face semi structured interviews were the main method used to gather data, giving participants the chance to share their own teaching journey stories and experiences. Whenever direct observation is not possible, interviews offer valuable data and enable participants to reveal specific details related to experiences. The interviewer also has great authority over the data by asking probing questions (Creswell, 2012). Probes and impromptu questions are valuable instruments in semi-structured interviews for inquiry, comprehension, and clarification of responses. To enable individuals to reflect on their experiences on their professional growth, a comprehensive interview protocol was established that includes open-ended questions. With individuals' permission, the interviews were audio recorded.

I conducted semi structured interviews with four novice teachers from both private and public schools for my study. The next phase includes analysis of collected data novice teachers in public and private schools. To guarantee that the data, analysis, and results of my study are as detailed and precise as possible triangulation was utilized. Employing multiple triangulation techniques is one way to increase credibility. In order to get various viewpoints and ideas, triangulation enables gathering data from a variety of people such as individuals, groups, families, and communities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Collaborating with participants, in my case with novice

teachers, to support my interpretations is a further strategy for achieving credibility is called member checking (Stahl & King, 2020). To ensure the accuracy of my interpretations, I discussed and analyzed findings with participants. My initial action was to summarize the results of interviews and demonstrate interpretations by adding key details. I employed member checking to ensure the data was accurate and credible and to reduce the misinterpretation of data (Creswell, 2012). I met one-on-one with the novice teachers and asked them to check if my interpretations match what they experienced or not.

### 3.5. Data Analysis

The process of determining, analyzing, and decoding meaningful patterns in qualitative data is known as thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I created codes and themes based on qualitative data in a flexible and organized manner. The smallest units or codes indicate significant elements of the data. Codes served as the basic elements of ideas. Using the 2 research questions as a guide, codes will be used identifying and analyzing key components of the data.

### 3.6. Ethical Considerations

Those who participated in research had the opportunity to be fully informed of the benefits and possible risks by providing a consent form (Gajjar, 2013). In consent form, participants are informed about the purpose of research, use of their data and the processing of audio and video recordings (Laryeafio & Omoruyi, 2023).

Guaranteeing interviewee anonymity ensures that no personal information, including name, address, email, or other crucial facts that may be used to identify the interviewee. To guarantee that nobody else gets access to the unprocessed data, I made sure that all data

gathered from participants is kept private (Laryeafio & Omoruyi, 2023). Private information will be preserved in a secured, safe spot with restricted access (Gajjar, 2013).

### 3.7. Limitations

*Generalizability:* The findings of the research could vary significantly depending on circumstances such as location and individuals. The views on education, relations between colleagues, and resources of public and private schools can differ greatly from one another. Consequently, novice teachers' experiences in public or private schools might not be representative of novice teachers' experiences in all primary schools in Azerbaijan. Furthermore, the study's focus was limited to female English language novice teachers, which means that it is difficult to depict the experiences of male and other subject novice teachers across all of Azerbaijan. So, the experiences of male and subject novice teachers in urban and rural setting will not be represented in my study.

*Response bias:* Since I sampled participants using my connections, instead of expressing sincere thoughts, responses provided by participants might be socially acceptable and desirable. Concerns about the possible effects of interviews could make teachers reluctant to share freely about challenges or experiences. As a result, their genuine experiences could not be properly or accurately represented.

*Sample size:* Small sample size is considered as one of the limitations of my study. To obtain data, I conducted interviews with four inexperienced teachers from two private and two public schools. Despite the limited sample size, the participants' detailed and relevant responses to my interview questions made the data valuable in my research.

*Language of the interviews:* One of the limitations is related to the language of conducted interviews. Instead of conducting interviews in Azerbaijani, we conducted them in English as all of the participants are fluent in this language and have expressed confidence in answering questions in it.

### 3.8. Positionality

By developing a positionality statement, researchers can reflect on their personal identities and how they impact their beliefs, relationships with the participants, and the entire research process (Milner, 2007).

I acknowledge that my background and experiences have shaped my perspective for my current research, which explores the experiences of novice educators in primary public and private schools. The subjects of my study are novice educators with less than five years of teaching experience. I have personally witnessed many difficulties encountered by novice teachers in primary public and private school in Azerbaijan since I was also new in this profession. I sampled participants for this study by using my professional and personal relationships. Because of our (participants and mine) common experiences, the interviewees felt more comfortable and open, which led to deep and educational discussions. Although this made it easier to find interested participants, it also made it crucial to carefully analyze biases that might emerge from earlier relationships with participants. The interview structure and given answers might have been affected by my existing relationship with these people. Nevertheless, I've been also conscious of the need to strike a balance between professional and personal relationships.

## Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

The main purpose of this research to explore the experiences of novice teachers and analyze how these experiences might affect their career in primary public/private schools in Azerbaijan. This thesis is based on the data collected from semi structured interviews from various public and private school teacher in Azerbaijan. All interviews are conducted in English.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the novice teachers' perceptions of their experiences in early stages of careers in public/private primary schools in Azerbaijan?
2. How do novice teachers perceive the influence of school culture and interaction with colleagues and administration on their experience?

### 4.1. Study Participants

For study, semi structured interviews were conducted among four female teachers who are employed in public and private educational institutions in Azerbaijan. Two educators are working at renowned private schools in the city center which implement international curriculum, while one teacher works at public school in one of regions located in the south of the country. The fourth participant is employed in a public school located in the city center (Baku). All the interviewed teachers graduated from the Azerbaijan University of Languages with a bachelor's degree in education. Interviewees' teaching experiences varied between one to four years and the research was centered around novice teachers having no more than five years of experience. So, their teaching experience met the criterion of no more than 5 years of teaching experience which means

all participants met the novice teacher sampling requirement. I coded the names of the participants as TP1 (public school teacher1), TP2 (public school teacher2), TPR1 (private school teacher1), TPR2 (private school teacher2) to preserve their identities.

**Table 1: General profile of respondents**

| <i>Participant profile</i> | <i>Interviewee 1</i><br><i>Teacher 1 in private school 1</i><br><i>TPR1</i> | <i>Interviewee 2</i><br><i>Teacher 2 in private school 2</i><br><i>TPR2</i>          | <i>Interviewee 3</i><br><i>Teacher 1 in public school 1</i><br><i>TP1</i> | <i>Interviewee 4</i><br><i>Teacher 2 in rural public school 2</i><br><i>TP2</i> |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| <i>Gender</i>              | Female  | Female   | Female  | Female  |
| <i>Education</i>           | University of Languages   | University of Languages  | University of Languages   | University of Languages   |
| <i>Workplace</i>           | Private school 1 in Baku  | Private school 2 in Baku   | Public school 1 in Baku   | Public school 2 in rural area in the South                                      |
| <i>Years of experience</i> | 2 years   | 3 years  | 1 year  | 4 years   |
| <i>Subject</i>             | English Support   | Reading, Global Perspective, PSCHÉ (Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education) | English as a second language  | English as a second language  |

## 4.2. Motivation for a choice of profession

Throughout the interviews, four teachers described their motivations for choosing this profession. Three of the educators (1 private, 2 public school teachers) stated that their decision to pursue a teaching was mainly influenced by a childhood dream of being a teacher. TPR1 stated that she hoped that by teaching she would make a positive difference in students' lives and assist them in reaching their potentials:

*“From my childhood, I enjoyed teaching since it was my inner desire to support others, to give what I know, to share my knowledge with them. I always wanted to become a teacher so I can make a real difference in children's lives”.*

A similar motivation was shared by TP2. She valued having a chance to learn from different students. She saw teaching as an opportunity for exposing to a range of beliefs and experiences, and she appreciated the various viewpoints that each student brings the classroom:

*“I love children and I think that by working with children I can learn lots of things as children have a very great world view”*

TPR2 claimed that working in a primary school was not a deliberate decision made by her. She was seeking a job after graduation, so it was by accident that she got the chance work as a primary school teacher:

*“To be honest, I didn't choose being primary teacher. When I graduated from the university, I was looking for job and by chance I get accepted to school”.*

## 4.3. Challenges of novice teachers

With regards to relationship between their challenges about their job in the beginning and current situation, participants' answers varied. TPR1 talked about the main barriers she had to overcome in the early years of her career as a teacher, especially in the areas of teaching, managing the classroom, and assessment. She also mentioned that those challenges are typical for most of the novice teachers in the beginning of their careers:

*“When you ask any teacher, they all have some bad stories related to their first teaching year. Time management, assessment, providing resources are things that really difficult for novices”*

TPR2 struggled to figure out what and how to teach which made her job challenging in her first workplace. Nevertheless, she had a totally different experience at her current school; her expectations were met at this school because she got assistance from the management and staff. The second school established an encouraging environment for growth by organizing regular meetings and teachers shared any issues:

*“In the beginning of my experience I didn't have any support from management and staff. We didn't have regular meetings within our department. Actually, my expectations were not met in my previous workplace, however in my current workplace there are regular meetings with our management team and with grade leader”*

TP1 also shared similar ideas about challenges:

*“Actually, teaching turned out to be more challenging than I expected. As a teacher I faced several challenges on a day-to-day basis. One of the most significant challenges was meeting the diverse learning needs of students who comes from a different background. Another challenge I encountered when students lost interest while learning process. One more challenge was*

*maintaining a positive classroom environment while teaching. Sometimes I could face distracted behaviors from students and they could get aggressive”*

While sharing frequent problematic situations in which they needed more assistance, TPR2 pointed out a huge gap in her pre-service education when she talked about problems related to managing the class. It is especially challenging when there were pupils who needed special assistance, such as autism. She added that she hadn't been given any tips about how to communicate and control these pupils during pre-service education:

*“Especially in classroom management I needed the assistance because nobody teaches you in the university how to manage class and work with special needs students. I had an autistic student and I was trying to involve him in the lesson but it was really difficult”.*

Similarly, TP 1 admitted that she found it difficult to work with pupils who had gone through tragedy such as lost someone close to them. This emphasizes the importance of providing educators with the proper assistance and resources they need to assist kids who are experiencing trauma and loss. These challenges can have a serious negative influence on their mental health and success in school:

*“There were situations I needed specialized assistance dealing with high-risk children who have experienced trauma or loss. This was something I was unprepared as a new teacher”*

#### 4.4. School based support

The interviewed teachers were asked about school support and the significance of this support during the early stages of their careers.

The first question centered on the professional and emotional support and mentoring that the participants were provided by their school and coworkers. In terms of the assistance they received from their coworkers, the participants' experiences varied widely. Two teachers (1 public in Baku and 1 private) showed gratitude for the assistance they got from coworkers, expressing they felt accepted and encouraged by others.

TP1 (urban) stated that in the first year of her teaching profession, her coworkers provided her with invaluable support. She said that teachers were welcoming and always willing to help any time. This assistance made easier for her to adapt to her new position as a teacher and also allowed her to know the strengths and weaknesses and special needs of all students. Through these discussions about students' needs, she was able to predict possible issues and modify her teaching strategy to better fulfill her student's needs:

*“Class teachers provided me with essential information about those students’ behaviors and problems they face which was crucial for understanding needs, their strengths and weaknesses, and learning styles. This also helped me to understand the potential problems I might face in the classroom”*

Building on this point, TPR 1 also mentioned that the resources and access to of all the applications were shared by other teachers, which was extremely useful, so, she could utilize those for her classes:

*“As a school, they're trying to give me all the access to all resources, for example Twinkle or Quizlet”*

In contrast, other two novice teachers claimed that they weren't given enough support by their school. They found it difficult to adjust to their new positions as a result of the lack of

assistance, which also had an impact on their job satisfaction. TPR2 stated that during her initial period of teaching, she felt unprepared and unqualified since her bachelor's program did not cover classroom management and teaching techniques. Although she experienced challenges due to lack of pre service training, her coworkers were extremely helpful in supporting her through those difficulties by providing advice, listening to her concerns, and finding solutions.

*“Actually, in my first year it was really difficult for me to teach without any assistance from the management team. When I started to teach, I didn't know how I was supposed to teach because I just graduated from bachelor degree and we were not taught how to teach subject. However, my colleagues helped me a lot in managing misbehaving students or teaching reading and writing”.*

Supporting this view, TP2 also stated that...

*“Unfortunately, I didn't get any support from school. The head of the school was an English teacher and I was English teacher as well. Over the years the director was teaching English and when I went there, he wasn't pleasant about my presence”.*

With regards to a degree of usefulness of support of colleagues and assistance of novice teachers, all participants agree that it is extremely valuable to motivate and assist novice teachers. They emphasize that learning is a constant process for novice teachers and that guidance from experienced teachers facilitates this process. They claim that by getting assistance, novice teachers can prepare their lessons more successfully and get more details of the psychology of the students in their classes:

*“Novice teachers need some help when designing their lesson. Experienced teachers know students' psychology better than novice teachers, so, they can give some advice”*

TPR2 stated the feedback sessions and mentoring she obtained at her current and second workplace affected positively her professional growth as an educator:

*“I started working at current workplace and in my first week management came to observe my lessons and provide constructive feedback. After this feedback, I knew what I need to improve and I observe other teachers’ classes and teaching style”*

#### 4.5. Professional Development

The next set of questions centered on the mentorship or professional development programs provided by school and their effects on teachers’ professional life. Three teachers emphasized the beneficial effects of the trainings offered by their educational institutions, whereas one teacher from rural public school stated that she hadn't received these kinds of programs. These programs include essential teaching elements, such as lesson planning, interaction with parents, classroom management, providing feedback and so on. TPR 2 reported that these programs organized by school improved ability to control the classroom.

*“In the beginning of each term, we have these informative and beneficial trainings about giving feedback, assessing the students, dealing with difficult students, and contacting with the parents. After these sessions I learned techniques such as how to catch attention of the students or how to deal with difficult parents”.*

A similar idea was shared by TP 1 (urban) who stated that with the help of professional development programs she had connections with educators around the world. She was exposed to a variety of different ideas and got new teaching techniques. She has also gained access to various resources as part of this program.

*“I attended in training program about classroom management and lesson planning designed by British Council which was provided by my school. This experience has had a significant impact on my professional life. This training helped me to learn new techniques, gave me access to the lots of helpful resources and helped me to meet teachers from all over the world.”*

On the other hand, TP 2 (rural) mentioned that her school did not organize any professional training sessions or mentoring programs. She further stated that head of the school observed her classroom, but unfortunately, she was not given any constructive comments on her the lesson:

*“I have never attended in any professional development program organized by school. The head of the school was observing some of my classes but at the end he didn't give any feedback to me.”*

#### 4.5. School culture/climate

The general atmosphere of their workplaces was commonly defined by my research participants as welcoming, encouraging, and supportive place. By highlighting the positive connections among coworkers, nearly all emphasized the feeling of cooperation and collaboration:

TP1 (urban) stated that...

*“I would say the overall environment and staff are quite positive and supportive and the welcoming atmosphere makes it feel like home. The staff members are not just colleagues, also friends. I feel quite comfortable and it's a wonderful feeling to have a workplace like that”*

Participants admitted that based on the workload, their feelings towards their job changed costantly. TPR 2 described experiencing happiness and satisfaction when she managed her duties

and responsibilities successfully. However, she also admitted that she frequently felt overburdened and worried she was unable to handle all of the requirements of her job:

*“I feel overwhelmed from time to time because there are lots of things to do and sometimes, I don't feel like I accomplish all of them and I am not doing enough. Generally, I feel good because I feel productive by the end of the day”*

TPR 2 mentioned that...

*“Generally, I feel positive because the head of the school and other teachers are supporting me. So, the environment is supportive and I have inner motivation to work there”*

The participants emphasized strong professional and personal connections with their coworkers. (TP2) pointed out that there was mutual respect between them.

*“Generally, yes. I respect them and they always support me as novice teacher.”*

Positive interactions with their coworkers were expressed by other teachers (TPR1, TP1) as well:

*“Actually, colleagues are the main reason why we keep doing it because when we have teacher burnout, we go to the staff room and just discuss problems. (TPR1)”*

*“We have quite good relationship with my colleagues. We are discussing problems and there's a mutual respect and appreciation for each other's contribution. Outside of the work we sometimes organize meetings (TP1).”*

The significance of teamwork within their educational institutions was pointed out by all novice teachers. It was reported that they frequently gathered together to do lesson plans and share

their knowledge and ideas. Furthermore, they highlighted that as part of their regular meeting, they share the struggles and obstacles faced by kids for providing support to their students:

TP 1 shared that:

*“Everyone is approachable and willing to help. We collaborate regularly, share ideas, and support each other”*

Building on this point, TPR 2 also shared same ideas:

*“We work as a team especially as an English department and plan the lessons. Lesson plans are divided among staff members and every week one teacher has to write the whole plan. So, we have this collaboration in our department”*

In contrast, TP 2(rural) reported that there isn't any collaboration among educators within the institution:

*“At school, we have only two English teachers, so, we don't have any collaboration. We don't discuss any professional things.”*

In terms of the administrator's assistance for novice teachers, participants emphasized the administrators' contributions to their professional experience. It seems that administrators supported teachers by providing resources which is essential for teaching process. Additionally, they helped regulate controversial parent-teacher interactions, which reduced huge amount of stress:

*“Administrators support teachers in some areas such as providing resources. They also support teachers to create effective learning environment” (TP 1)*

Administrators provide novices with flexibility for lesson plans or any documents if documents were delayed because of workload of teachers. TP2 who is simultaneously pursuing a master's degree stated that the administrator assisted in fixing timetable issues and striking a balance between their work and personal responsibilities:

*“Administrators support my education; I have a lot of problems with this schedule as I'm studying my master. The head of the school always consider my schedule while creating timetable.”*

TPR 2 also stated that in her current workplace management continuously offered teachers assistance when issues occurred. Instead of advocating for the parents right away, they first ask teachers to discuss the problem for identifying the reason, and work together to come up with a solution. Teachers who felt appreciated were able to work in a productive and positive environment:

*“What I mostly like about my management that first they talk to us about any incident or problem before talking to the parent. So, they hear actual story from our side, instead of saying our teacher is wrong.”*

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The main purpose of this research is to explore the experiences of novice teachers, to identify their perceptions related to these experiences, and analyze how these experiences might affect their career in primary public/private schools in Azerbaijan. Most of the study findings are reasonably compatible with the conducted literature review.

### 5.4. Challenges of novice teachers

Interview results revealed that new teachers faced a variety of challenges with lesson planning, managing disruptive students, assessing students, and maintaining supportive and peaceful atmosphere in the classroom. The results of Zhukova's study also (2018) revealed that novice teachers encounter an array of challenges and barriers through the first years of their careers. These challenges are generally connected to discipline and control of the classroom, preparing lesson plans, and addressing every student's unique needs. Teachers claimed that they hadn't been prepared for real classes through their bachelor's degree program. They felt uncomfortable, insecure and unqualified when they first started teaching as they had no idea what to teach or how to teach it. Handling children with special needs presented another difficulty. A few inexperienced educators were unaware of how to interact with and teach students with special needs. These educators became unprepared and demotivated as a result of all these difficulties. These findings aligned with the study conducted by Senom et al. (2013) who stated that novice

teachers deal with several issues regarding resources, preparation and planning for teaching, classroom management, parent teacher relationships, and evaluation and assessments of students. Due to insufficient training during their pre-service education, these novice educators frequently feel nervous about managing the classroom, especially when it comes to dealing with unmotivated as well as disruptive students (O'Connor & Taylor, 1992). Due to a lack of communication and collaboration among coworkers, teachers were unable to discuss issues concerning the school and students. Ewing (2021) also support this finding, indicating that through assistance freshly graduated individuals can get the assistance, confidence, as well as abilities they need to advance in their profession. Through providing direction, mentoring helps novice educators handle these challenges in the classroom. This supports new educators in overcoming obstacles, thinking critically about their lesson plan, and acquiring the abilities necessary for effective teaching in the classroom. By providing them with useful skills and knowledge, novice teachers are more likely to continue teaching once they start their careers. O'Connor & Taylor (1992) stated that to handle and overcome these challenges in the classroom, novice educators require assistance and practical solutions.

### 5.1. School culture

The significance of school culture and environment in promoting teacher efficiency and satisfaction was highlighted in the interviews among novice educators. A minority of teachers stated they felt overburdened by their hectic schedules regularly, whereas most of the teachers indicated they were satisfied with the general atmosphere at their schools. As evidence of a supportive culture in their schools, teachers collaborate with peers to design lesson plans and discuss the demands of students. Nonetheless, one of the teachers (rural public-school teacher)

pointed out the lack of cooperation in her school, indicating that different educational institutions have various levels of collaboration.

Current research emphasizes the significance of school culture and environment in promoting teachers' well-being and productivity. If relationships with colleagues are established based on collaborative school culture principles, novice educators develop as critical thinkers (Kutsyuruba et al., 2017). Teachers' decisions to stay in their profession are influenced by a supportive working atmosphere. For novice teachers, they needed to believe their pedagogical philosophy matched the school environment (Kutsyuruba et al., 2017). School support serves as a crucial element that assists an inexperienced educator cope with any difficulties in the classroom. Beginning teachers can benefit from mentorship that supplies them with the assistance they need to participate actively in collaborative learning (Sasser, 2018).

Throughout the interviews, novice teachers emphasized the importance of peer support for their development as professionals. The support given by experienced teachers regarding the needs and psychology of the children was very significant. With this guidance, inexperienced teachers were able to organize their classes more successfully, anticipating problems and considering each student's unique needs. These findings were also supported by Clark (2012) who stated that continuous collaboration between novice and experienced teachers is essential while novices go from full-time students to full-time teachers. Novice teachers acquire essential skills to enhance their teaching abilities by communicating with and cooperating with experienced teachers about the difficulties associated with teaching (Clark, 2012).

The respondents also indicated that assistance regarding administrative duties such as paperwork was a valuable source of support. The amount of required paperwork frequently made novice educators feel exhausted. Administrators assist novices easily performing their job

responsibilities. In addition to assisting with setting up classes, they supplied relevant resources and organized meetings with teachers and parents on concerns within the classroom. The assistance provided by administrators was necessary to assist educators manage the difficulties they encountered in their current roles. The assistance of experienced professionals in their educational institutions was also crucial in overcoming these challenges. Furthermore, several novice educators stated they got specialized help in specific areas such as, teaching vocabulary or writing and reading. With this support, they were able to improve their teaching techniques and more fully meet the various educational demands of their students.

However, it is essential to take into account that assistance from their colleagues or institutions offered varies from school to school to novice educators. A couple of these teachers (TP2 rural and TPR2 in her previous school) expressed feeling unsupported, emphasizing the need for more organized and effective support in schools. Additionally, the current studies have demonstrated the significance of leadership in increasing the effectiveness of teachers. Whalen et al, (2019) stated that stress is a common occurrence for novice teachers as they struggle to fulfill the expectations of administration, planning lessons, and paying attention to the demands of specific students. Sasser (2018) supported the previous idea that due to the number of difficulties that novice teachers have to tackle and the absence of assistance offered by schools, many novice educators decide to quit the profession. He stated that teachers need to be supported by their school administrators through self-directed, contextualized professional development and learning opportunities. Whalen et al. (2019) indicated that the job of the school principal and administrators is crucial in the successful implementation of professional development programs. This task includes organizing the mentoring programs as well as offering plenty of opportunities for growth as professionals.

According to recent studies, collegial support is vital for beginner teachers' professional growth. The findings of the interviews are supported with the study by Whalen et al. (2019) mentioned that to assist novice educators in comprehending the material and concepts as opportunities for learning in the classroom, experienced teachers should give constructive feedback regarding how to implement different techniques or teaching practices that would be more successful. Experienced teachers need to realize that inexperienced teachers can't possess the same level of expertise and knowledge as experienced teachers, and they also need additional resources and support from their school.

The findings are consistent with the social support theory, which indicates establishing and sustaining supportive relationships both inside and outside of the workplace is frequently impacted by the structure of an organization (House, 1987). Individuals who receive assistance from colleagues and managers are more fulfilled and confident in their professions.

## 5.2. Professional learning opportunities

The significance of mentorship programs and professional development for novice educators was highlighted by the research participants. Participants emphasized how these programs assisted them in planning lessons, controlling the student's behavior, providing feedback, gaining access to resources, and creating effective parent-teacher communication. Those who took part in these programs highlighted positive effects on their current positions and expressed a positive influence on their career. These positive comments from participants are consistent with literature that highlights the value of professional development programs in boosting student achievement and productivity of educators. Nitalinawati (2020) stated that participating regularly in professional development programs guarantees that educators maintain a high level of

competency and achievement, while updating their skills and expertise following recent developments in the field of education. These findings aligned with the research conducted by Burkman, (2012) who also shared same ideas that the majority of novice teachers struggle with lesson planning, control of the classroom, and parent teacher relationship which are challenging to handle without any mentorship and professional development programs. In these situations, novice teachers may benefit from professional development programs assisting in retaining educators as well as helping them develop as professionals. Acquiring expertise and self-confidence are essential for being successful in the classroom. Zhukova (2018) also found similar findings highlighting the significance of offering novices enough assistance through their initial years of teaching. Supporting novices with structured personalized professional development programs based on their unique needs and preferences is one of the effective ways of assisting them to succeed in their professional life.

Although they all knew the advantages of professional development programs for their growth as individuals, not all novices had the chance to take advantage of these programs. The analysis of data demonstrates a gap in novice teachers' awareness and accessibility to these programs. Prior studies have also emphasized the limitations that educators have getting chances for effective professional development programs (Makoa & Segalo, 2021). They shared that the gap may be caused by lack of opportunities, resources, and time. Struggling to strike a balance between job responsibilities and continuous growth is one of the most frequent issues teachers encounter.

The social support theory (House, 1987) states that there are various forms of assistance for individuals. Informational support is one of them and it stresses the value of professional development programs for novice educators (House, 1987). The professional development of

novice teachers can be facilitated by giving them access to support and knowledge on designing curricula, successful teaching techniques, and learning materials (House, 1987). Workshops, training, and mentorship sessions represent some of the ways that professional development programs serve to contribute to the sharing of knowledge and expertise between teachers.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

In conclusion, by exploring the experiences of novice educators in public and private primary schools, the research has focused on the essential function of training and assistance in helping beginning teachers become successful. The importance of mentoring and teamwork for novice educators have been highlighted during interviews and data analysis.

One of the research's main findings demonstrates that the crucial assistance of administrators and peers greatly enhances novice teachers' professional development. Those who received support in managing class, interacting with parents, and lesson planning frequently expressed appreciation. This emphasizes the significance of creating a positive atmosphere for learning in the classroom in which experienced teachers are eager to impart their expertise to their novice teachers.

This research also demonstrated how professional development programs boost the self-esteem and teaching techniques of inexperienced educators. Accessibility to these programs enabled teachers to be better prepared and ready to deal with every aspect of the classroom. Nevertheless, it is worrying that several inexperienced teachers were not able to take advantage of these programs. This suggests that schools should put greater emphasis on offering chances to every educator for continuous professional growth.

### 6.1. Future Research Perspectives

Since my sample size was small (4 teachers), future researchers may consider using a greater and more varied sample size to obtain more valuable and pertinent data about the experiences of novice teachers. Larger sample size research contributes to the high validity of early

findings from interviews. As all of my participants are female, future researchers might involve male novice teachers to the study to learn more about their early-career experiences. By comparing male novice teachers' experiences with female teachers, future researchers will be able to identify both similarities and differences in their experiences. In this instance, the data will be more balanced and accurate, involving a large number of participants.

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## Appendix 1

### Interview Consent Form

Research project title: *Novice Teachers in Private and Public Primary Schools in Baku: Exploring the Experiences*

Dear Participant

This is an invitation to participate in an in-depth interview focus on exploration of novice teachers' experiences in educational institutions. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of novice teachers and analyze how they might affect in their career in primary public/private schools in Azerbaijan.

Only the person conducting the research will have access to any information gathered throughout the interviews, and it will all be kept private. Neither your identity nor the details of your responses (name/surname, workplace etc.) will be shared with other parties. Pseudonyms will be created to preserve participants' confidentiality, and participants are kindly asked to disclose only the information they feel relevant and safe. However, the experiences you share will contribute to a deeper understanding of the experiences associated with elementary school education and could enable policymakers, stakeholders, including schools' administrators to determine what kind of support that novice teachers need in their professional life. By taking part in the interview process, you will also give yourself the chance to reflect on yourself while describing what you have experienced.

The interview will last approximately 45-50 minutes. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason. You have the freedom to respond to questions that you are comfortable. The interview will be audio recorded and the gathered data will be utilized only for study.

If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at [anajafova16568@ada.edu.az](mailto:anajafova16568@ada.edu.az) at any time you want.

Thank you for participating!

I voluntarily provided my consent to take part in this study after having read and understood the information that was provided.

Name of participant \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

### Interview Questions

| <b>The respondent's general profile</b>  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Could you please introduce yourself?  | 1.1. Please give an information about your workplace and your responsibilities.<br>1.2. How long have you been working there?  |
| <b>Choice of profession</b>  |  |
| 2. Could you please tell me about why you decided to become a primary school teacher?  | 2.1. How do your current experiences meet/fulfill your expectations from the beginning of your career as a teacher?  |
| <b>School-based support</b>  |  |
| 3. What kind of assistance and support were provided during your first years of teaching?  | 3.1. Do you think these assistance and support are most useful for novice teachers? If yes, how? If no, why?<br>3.2. In which situations did you need more assistance??  |
| <b>Professional development</b>  |  |
| 4. After you began your career, have you had the chance to participate in professional development or mentoring programs provided by school? | 4.1. If yes, what effects have these experiences had on your professional life?  |
| <b>School culture/climate</b>  |  |
| 5. What would you say about overall environment of your school?  | 5.1. How do you feel in this school?<br>5.2. How is your relationship with your colleagues?<br>5.3. Could you talk about how effectively staff members collaborate and function as a team?<br>5.4. What kind of assistance do administrators and teachers provide for one another? |