



THE ROLE OF THE LEADER IN THE ADAPTATION OF NOVICE TEACHERS IN THE TEACHING PROCESS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The research "The role of the leader in the adaptation of novice teachers in the teaching process in primary schools" is a study with a mixed approach. The purpose of this research is to highlight the adaptation of teachers in the teaching process in the first years of work, to identify the challenges they have and the most common form of support from the leader in order to adapt more easily. The research is mixed, we are dealing with quantitative and qualitative data. Qualitative data were collected through interviews with principals, while quantitative data through a questionnaire with teachers. The population of this research includes all novice teachers of primary school in the Municipality of Vushtrri. Statistical data on the number of schools and teachers were borrowed from the Municipal Directorate of Education in Vushtrri. From the schools with novice teachers, 12 schools were selected with a non-random sample, more specifically with the quota sampling based on the largest number of novice teachers hired. From them 12 leaders and 30 teachers were elected. The data were analyzed through the SPSS statistical package, mainly descriptive analyzes (frequency, percentage, average and standard deviation) and inferential analysis (t-test) and for qualitative analysis thematic analysis was performed. The results of this research show the challenges and activities that the principal undertakes to support novice teachers to overcome the challenges, which are mainly related to time and classroom management, parent meetings and pedagogical planning. From the results obtained we can say that there is little principal support for novice teachers. Novice teachers after two years of work experience feel more relaxed, more confident and have more confidence in their professionalism.

Keywords: Leader, teacher adaptation, novice teacher, support, challenge.

INTRODUCTION

The qualities of teachers are undoubtedly the most important factors in the learning process of students. Policymakers have shown that the quality of a school depends on the quality of our teachers. Furthermore, together with educators, they have started to accept that students' learning in higher education is directly linked to how teachers learn. What and how teachers learn depends on the knowledge, skills, and commitments they bring to their teaching, as well as the opportunities they have to continue learning from their own practice (McCann & Johannessen, 2004). The reason that led me to study this topic is related to my experience as a novice teacher and the challenges I faced in the teaching process. At the end of the first teaching period, the head of my school asked for a meeting with all the novice teachers to reflect on our challenges. Most of the novice teachers stated that they were experiencing several challenges, such as time management and managing students in the classroom.

Being a novice teacher is a challenging position and difficult to adapt to. The first year of teaching was an emotional catalyst, filled with nerves, excitement, and uncertainty. There were many challenges to overcome, and every day they became harder. The demands were high, and support was limited. The experiences of novice teachers are considered to be the most difficult time in a teacher's career and have



been described in the research literature as the "trial of experiences" (Lawson, 1992). One scholar suggested that "novice teachers are leaving the teaching profession after one or two years because they have been exposed to the more negative aspects of schools without having the chance to work with positivity." The thoughts of a novice teacher captured in McCann and Johannessen's (2004) study are as follows:

"We are still learning and trying to figure out how teaching works for us, our styles, and I think it's just ongoing, you know. I don't feel good about myself as a teacher in all areas. I don't think I should develop that teacher side of me more than I needed to for myself... and I think I really struggled when I was a student, just getting through the middle (being) a person working with children to being a teacher" (p. 140).

As a result of these types of experiences, it is not uncommon for novice teachers to leave the profession. Ingersoll's (2002) study demonstrated that 20-25 percent of general education teachers leave the profession within the first three years of teaching. Ingersoll also states that 39% of all novice teachers leave the profession within a few years.

The findings of this study can help inform the work of teacher education leaders and those who support novice teachers. "We need to transform the way we select teachers for our schools. This is critical for the success of our schools, for the development of teaching as a learning profession, and for the achievement of our students" (Goldrick, Osta, Barlin, & Burn, 2012). In order to "transform" the way novice teachers adapt to the profession, we need to better understand their individual needs, experiences, and perspectives. This study is important because it shares the unique experiences of novice teachers during the first two to five years of teaching.

Providing novice teachers with the necessary support leads to their successful adaptation. The adaptation of teachers to the profession is an important component of student achievement. Improving teacher adaptation should be a goal for everyone in the education community. When teachers leave, schools struggle to maintain improvement, and students are harmed by the turnover of new teachers, as they will have a different teacher each year. Between 30% and 50% of teachers leave the profession within the first five years of their careers, a statistic that some consider to be a "global crisis" (Ingersoll, 2002, 2003).

Teacher learning does not begin when they enter the profession; their teacher education programs play a critical role in their learning. The strengths and weaknesses of this program have influenced their needs and experiences as new teachers, which is why this research study touches on the perspectives of teachers and examines their experiences from their first year through their fifth year of teaching. After reviewing the relevant literature, it has been noted that there is a gap in our knowledge regarding the adaptation of novice teachers. Subjective experiences as a teacher have made me realize that most novice teachers face many challenges, and of course, to overcome these, the support of the leader-principal is needed both in solving problems and in the initial decisions we make.

One of the main responsibilities of a principal is to provide continuous support and collaboration with novice teachers. Principals can promote high levels of classroom practice and ensure the academic success of all students by understanding the challenges that novice teachers face in schools. Through their readiness, leaders contribute to overcoming the challenges of teachers (Roberson and Roberson, 2009).

Novice Teacher Training is recognized as one of the primary objectives in the ET 2020 Strategy Framework (European Council, 2009). The education system of Kosovo needs to begin the process of ensuring that the best teachers will ultimately become career teachers. The education system should



develop an entry system to support novice teachers, as well as ensure quality control of teaching (MASHT, 2017).

In accordance with Article 65(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, a person of any age who possesses approved professional and educational qualifications and holds the position of a full-time teacher for the first time must undergo an induction training lasting 2 academic years. Their performance will be regularly assessed during this period, according to the specific criteria set by the Teacher Professional Development Center (KSHLM), by a mentor teacher appointed by the institution's principal. Upon completion of the induction period, based on the positive assessment from the mentor, confirmed by the principal and the municipality, the teacher will obtain the qualified teacher status license (MASHT, 2014).

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to determine whether teachers have adapted easily to the teaching process. To identify the challenges they have faced and the most frequent support from leadership in terms of facilitating easier adaptation. To provide an overview of the differences in experiencing challenges based on years of work experience.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Through this research, I will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common challenges that novice teachers face during the adaptation phase?
2. What are the most frequent supportive measures for novice teachers from principals as assistance in the adaptation of novice teachers to their work?
3. What is the difference between the challenges faced at the beginning of the teaching process and the challenges faced after 3-5 years of work experience?

The research is based on two hypotheses:

H1: One of the main challenges faced by novice teachers is classroom management, pedagogical planning, and the successful implementation of all its components, especially in terms of time management.

H2: In most cases, there is a difference in the experience of challenges between teachers with 1 to 3 years of experience and those with 3 to 5 years of work experience.

Research Questions 1 and 3, as well as the hypotheses, will be analyzed using quantitative data. Meanwhile, Question 2 will be studied using qualitative data.

Literature Review

Novice Teacher

A novice teacher is typically referred to a teacher who is in their first year of teaching with little or no prior teaching experience (Kim & Roth, 2011). A novice teacher can be considered a graduate of the Faculty of Education who has just been employed in a school for the first time. For the purposes of this study, the term novice teacher is defined as a teacher with less than five years of teaching experience.

Novice teachers meet weekly with their mentor regarding lesson plans, classroom management, instruction, etc. They designate parts of their teaching for their mentors to observe and provide confidential feedback. They also take a few days to visit other classrooms in order to observe experienced



teachers. Novice teachers apply lifelong learning, which is a continuous search for knowledge and understanding (Kim & Roth, 2011).

When they experience the practical reality of classrooms, recent graduates of teacher preparation programs encounter difficulties. Theoretically or practically, teacher preparation systems tend to primarily focus on pre-service teachers, and this form of orientation will affect the success of novice teachers (Nottis, Feuerstein, Murray, & Adams, 2000). Factors such as job attraction and a sense of self-esteem are linked to the happiness teachers feel when performing their daily work routines. The daily work in schools is rooted in contexts, and novice teachers encounter unpredictable incidents and circumstances in school life every day. In a study (Kim & Roth, 2011), novice teachers were described as having difficulties in handling their tasks at work.

Novice teachers need support from their colleagues in their professional development plan for achievement, development of interpersonal skills, relationship-building, and balancing their work and life responsibilities in teaching (Ngang, 2013). One less recognized form of collaborative work is distributed collaboration, where each teacher's short-term goals may differ, but they contribute to a common goal. Collaborative work among teachers is a framework for improving the skills of novice teachers in ways that understand the established and collaborative aspects of competence, which are important for transitioning to learning practices (Fullan, 2007).

Novice teachers should observe other teachers who are teaching and receive support from colleagues when they encounter obstacles. Furthermore, novice teachers need their colleagues to help them learn more about classroom and school expectations, policies, and informal guidelines that are part of the school culture, important cultural teaching strategies, best practices in teaching and learning processes, students' families, and the school community. Additionally, colleagues are able to help them become more reflective, capable, problem-solvers, and better decision-makers.

Colleagues are able to help novice teachers become effective instructors in several ways, such as diagnosing their needs, providing meaningful feedback, and setting collaborative goals. Furthermore, colleagues can assist them in developing effective planning, teaching, and assessment strategies for student learning. In their early years of teaching, novice teachers will spend a lot of energy on work and will almost have no energy left for their personal lives (Ngang, 2013). In this study, information related to work helps in the formation of knowledge based on challenges, which teachers will need to perform their tasks.

Adaptation (Adjustment)

Adaptation is the ability of a person to face various challenges and problems that are unexpected and unorganized for them (Mursi, 2013). On the other hand, adaptation is also viewed as an action in which parts of the body or behaviors help a living species survive in an environment (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

Teacher adaptation is not about the first day of teachers in their jobs but about creating experiences that have a positive impact on student achievements. These novice teachers need to be more active in their professional development and in managing personal demands related to the title of "teacher." Novice teachers are always energetic and filled with creativity. For novice teachers, adaptation to the teaching process is quite important because it impacts their professional skills and is directly linked to student success (Gavish & Friedman, 2010).

When we mention adaptation in education, we are also dealing with the term induction. Induction refers to the help and guidance given in the early stages of a career to new teachers and school administrators. Induction includes organizational orientation, socialization, mentoring, and guidance through initial



practice. Induction is used to refer to a time during which all support and evaluation are provided to a newly qualified teacher to ensure that regulatory requirements are met (Lawson, 1992).

The role of leaders in the adaptation of novice teachers is to create the conditions for the implementation of theories learned in practice, as well as to advance their knowledge and experiences. These are achieved with support and guidance from the leader. A good adaptation of novice teachers can influence the practices they use in teaching, their professional and emotional identity, as well as their career orientation. Adaptation involves learning and adapting to cultures and collaborative relationships (Kim & Roth, 2011).

Novice teachers are the future of our profession, and that is why their start on the right path is so important. Ensuring quality adaptation and support is essential for the development of a teacher's skills and practices from the very beginning of their career, with the aim of improving student outcomes. Effective adaptation brings out the best in novice teachers by ensuring that they have the opportunity and support they need to make a positive change (Gavish & Friedman, 2010).

According to Gavish and Friedman (2010), adaptation is most effective when:

- It is extended over two years
- It contributes to daily practice
- It involves focused practices

Challenges of Novice Teachers

Every teacher faces challenges during their adaptation to the teaching process (Kim & Roth, 2011). Brickmore and Brickmore (2010) emphasized that some of the most common challenges are:

- Relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and supervisors;
- Workload;
- Time management and fatigue;
- Knowledge of subjects and curriculum;
- Authority and control;
- Identity;
- Classroom management;
- Preparation and planning;
- Effective teaching;
- Self-confidence;
- Motivating and encouraging students;
- Number of students in the classroom;
- Lack of materials;
- Children with learning difficulties;
- Shift-based system.

In the adaptation of novice teachers, leadership from the teacher's side is challenging, as they are not always ready for collaboration, or the expectations are not always favorable. However, leadership is the main pillar of the connection between teachers (Brickmore & Brickmore, 2010).

The collaboration of the leader with novice teachers

Having a supportive principal can change everything in the work of a novice teacher. Teachers want to know that their principal has their best interests at heart. One of the primary responsibilities of a principal is to provide continuous, collaborative support to teachers. The relationship between a teacher and a principal should be built on a foundation of trust. This type of collaboration takes time to develop.



Principals must slowly cultivate these relationships while taking time to understand each teacher's strengths and weaknesses (Roberson & Roberson, 2009).

The key expectations for novice teachers include professional attitudes, content knowledge, classroom management, communication skills, and a commitment to student learning and success (Brock & Grady, 1998). Novice teachers expect the principal to be a leader and primary point of contact, as well as an authority figure. S. Roberson and R. Roberson (2009) expand on these expectations to include an open line of communication, conducting meetings, classroom visits, providing feedback, and offering affirmation.

Quinn and Andrews (2004) concluded that support from principals was perceived as helpful for novice teachers. Meaningful interactions with novice teachers, principals, and other administrators provide opportunities to exchange problems and issues that reflect the experiences of novice teachers (Roberson & Roberson, 2009). This creates a space for sharing educational feedback to support the adaptation of novice teachers. From the perspective of novice teachers, the principal was expected to initiate regular meetings where teachers could make requests for support in specific areas. Teachers often seek support in areas of greatest need, such as classroom management, discipline, parent conferences, and student conflicts (Roberson & Roberson, 2009).

As the literature suggests (Brickmore & Brickmore, 2010; Gavish & Friedman, 2010; Roberson & Roberson, 2009), school leaders have a significant impact on the lives of novice teachers. Some teachers valued having supportive and competent leaders to whom they could turn with issues ranging from teaching to classroom management. In contrast, the experiences of others with a perceived weak leader were marked by important critical feedback. Part of the role of a leader in supporting novice teachers is to provide them with feedback on their teaching. Support from principals also contributes to the overall development of the school and student achievement through both collective and individual improvements in teaching. Principals can promote high levels of classroom practice and ensure academic success for all students by understanding the challenges novice teachers face in the school (Roberson & Roberson, 2009).

Roberson and Roberson (2009) describe school leaders as those with the ability "to empower others to act." A school administrator has the resources and the broader perspective to create school structures that encourage the support of novice teachers. School leaders understand that their investment will pay dividends in the form of teacher adaptation and high student achievement.

It should now be entirely clear that learning to teach effectively takes a great deal of time, and the way people begin their work has a profound impact on their future career (Fullan, 2007).

Educational Policies Regarding Novice Teachers

Despite the reform of teacher preparation programs at universities, alignment of curricula for initial teacher training has not been achieved due to the different approaches chosen by higher education institutions. These institutions are responsible for designing the curriculum for teacher training across all levels of study (Instituti i Zhvillimit të Arsimit, 2016).

Initial Teacher Training (ITT) is the first and crucial phase in the professional journey of teachers. By clearly defining the knowledge and skills for future teachers, the foundation is laid for their proper professional capacity, which leads to the successful learning of students. Teaching should be viewed as a continuous lifelong learning process, starting with initial teacher training, followed by a phase of professional integration in the early years of teaching, and continuing with a comprehensive process of professional development throughout the teacher's career. The design and implementation of this ongoing



process requires coherent policies and new approaches to support both the conceptualization and alignment of the phases of teachers' professional development (OECD, 2011).

Ensuring Quality and Attractiveness of Teaching, Initial Teacher Training (ITT), and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) are recognized as primary objectives in the *ET 2020 Strategy Framework* (European Council, 2009), which forms the basis for EU cooperation in education and training, as well as in the 2015 Joint Report on its implementation. In the *Conclusions of the EU Council 2014* on effective teacher training, EU ministers agreed that "Initial teacher training should equip future teachers with the core competencies necessary to develop high-quality teaching, as well as foster motivation to acquire and update competencies throughout their careers" (European Union Council, 2014).

In "*Rethinking Education*" (European Commission, 2012a), among the key policies aimed at increasing efficiency, sustainability, and coordination in education systems, the Commission emphasized actions to support teachers, school leaders, and teacher educators.

The "*International Surveys on Teaching and Learning*" (TALIS) for teachers in initial training considers the integration of three core components:

- The academic knowledge of the subject(s) to be acquired;
- Teaching theories, including teaching skills and support for students and learning; and
- Classroom practice experience.

After completing a teacher preparation program, a higher percentage of teachers in EU countries feel very well-prepared for their work in all three areas. However, the same study also highlighted urgent needs for professional development in a range of topics (identified by teachers) and relatively low levels of collaboration among teachers. Initial teacher training in Albanian higher education institutions includes 14 phases of training, which are designed to further adapt to changing circumstances (Instituti i Zhvillimit të Arsimit, 2016).

The education system in Kosovo needs to begin the process of identifying modalities to assess the personal dimension of candidates, as well as their potential to handle teaching tasks. Additionally, to ensure that the best teachers transition into long-term teaching careers, the system must develop an entry mechanism to support novice teachers and ensure quality control before teachers are permanently employed. Such an entry mechanism should be firmly embedded within the professional development system to ensure coherence between pre-service teacher education, entry, and in-service development (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology - MASHT, 2017).

Legislation and Teacher Standards

The development of teacher professional standards aims to professionalize teaching, meaning that teaching should be considered a profession that needs to be standardized, just like other professions, in order to be in harmony with other social partners and interest groups.

The standards describe the professional characteristics that must be met by every teacher who has completed the initial phase and is licensed as such. These standards must be maintained throughout the teacher's ongoing career. However, if a teacher aims to attain a higher qualification level, such as specialist teacher, master, etc., they must also meet the additional standards for each of these career stages (Institute for Educational Development, 2010).

The standards will help teachers identify their professional development needs. When a teacher aims to progress to the next stage of their career, the standards for that stage will serve as a reference point for



their further professional development. However, if some teachers do not wish to advance in their careers, in such cases, the standards help them seek and find opportunities to expand and deepen their experiences within the career stage they are currently at.

The *Framework for the Standards for Professional Practice of Teachers in Kosovo* (2017) outlines the fundamental competencies in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for teachers. The skills that a teacher is expected to possess, according to the Standards, include key abilities essential for transforming the school culture toward being more democratic and fully inclusive. The standards are grouped into four areas of teaching:

1. **Professional values** (attitudes and behaviors),
2. **Professional knowledge and understanding**,
3. **Professional practice**, and
4. **Teaching and professional engagement**.

According to the standard "*Professional Values, Attitudes, and Behaviors*", teachers demonstrate positive attitudes by promoting values and excluding negative attitudes stemming from prejudice. They understand that the contexts in which they work are constantly evolving and changing, so they recognize the need to adapt and respond to these changes. While in the "*Professional Knowledge and Understanding*" standard, it is emphasized that teachers know and understand the core ideas, principles, and structure of the disciplines they teach. They also understand the connections between different content areas and are able to integrate learning across and between subject fields. Teachers offer a student-centered approach in their teaching and know how to deliver content effectively.

The standard "*Professional Skills and Practices*" presents the teacher as someone who creates safe, inclusive, and challenging learning environments. They possess a repertoire of teaching techniques and strategies, and know how to use these techniques, activities, and resources to engage their students in learning. Additionally, they regularly assess all aspects of their teaching practice. "*Teaching and Professional Engagement*" is another key standard. In this standard, teachers are dedicated to their continuous professional development. They are able to reflect on their professional practice to identify their learning needs, analyze, evaluate, and expand both their individual and collegial teaching practices (MASHT, 2014).

In accordance with Article 65(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo, a person of any age who possesses the approved professional and educational qualifications specified in paragraph (2) and, if applicable, in paragraph (3) of this article, and who holds the position of a full-time teacher for the first time, must undergo an induction training lasting two academic years. During this period, their performance will be regularly evaluated based on the criteria set by the *Kosovo Education Standards and Licensing Board (KSHLM)*, by a mentor teacher appointed by the school director. Upon completion of the induction period, based on a positive evaluation from the mentor, confirmed by the director and municipality, the teacher will receive the *qualified teacher* status license (SMK), which is granted in writing by the Ministry according to procedures specified in a secondary legislative act.

Zey's Social Exchange Theory

The theory behind induction holds that teaching is a complex profession, and that university-level teacher preparation is rarely sufficient to equip teachers with all the knowledge and skills necessary for successful teaching. A large part of the skills required can only be gained through on-the-job experience. For this reason, this perspective emphasizes the essential role of schools in providing an environment where novice teachers can learn the "craft," adapt, and succeed as teachers (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).



A key element of the theory of induction is Zey's (1984) model of mutual benefits, which is derived from social exchange theory. This model is based on the premise that individuals enter and remain in relationships to fulfill specific needs, as long as the parties continue to benefit. Zey extended this model by adding that the entire organization (in this case, the school), which includes leadership, also benefits from the interaction.

Pre-service refers to the education and training provided by an authorized institution with the aim of preparing individuals for the role of teachers before they begin practicing the profession. In-service development refers to the periodic improvement and ongoing professional development that occurs during employment. Teacher development during the entry phase into the profession starts with the employment of the teacher and includes the first 1-2 years of teaching, which are defined by a special program of supervision and mentoring for this phase. This phase is focused on adapting to the work culture within the school, further developing teaching competencies, and caring for personal development. Theoretically, induction is intended for teachers who have already completed their preliminary education and training (Fullan, 2007).

Although the general goal of these teacher development programs is to improve the performance of novice teachers, alongside the processes of adaptation, both strengthen and prevent the loss of novice teachers or the reduction in the number of teachers (MASHT, 2017). Induction theorists have identified multiple objectives. Among these are socialization, adaptation, development, and evaluation of teachers. For example, some programs are primarily developmental and designed to promote achievement by beginners, while others are also designed to evaluate and perhaps remove from the profession those considered to be weak. Mentoring by experienced teachers is the best way to facilitate the adaptation of novice teachers. Each school leader should have a support and professional development plan for novice teachers. Furthermore, these leaders should also have a plan for mentoring novice teachers during the teaching process (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011).

In California, the state has introduced a Program for the support and evaluation of novice teachers to assist teachers during the first two years of their careers. A formative assessment program has been developed as a framework, based on which the novice teacher must work with a mentor-teacher during the first two years. This framework includes mechanisms such as classroom observations, portfolios, and self-assessment. It also includes an evaluation process throughout the two-year period of employment as a novice teacher, alongside the state's evaluation system (Fullan, 2007).

METHOD

The research "The Role of Leadership in the Adaptation of Novice Teachers in the Teaching Process in Primary Schools" is a mixed-methods study, meaning it includes both qualitative and quantitative elements, while the strategy used is a descriptive strategy.

Research Population

The population of this research includes all novice teachers in the primary schools of the Municipality of Vushtrri. The term "novice teacher" is defined as a teacher with less than five years of teaching experience. The statistical data regarding the number of schools and teachers were obtained from official sources, specifically from the Municipal Directorate of Education in Vushtrri. The data used reflect numerical information for teachers from the period 2016-2020.

The Municipality of Vushtrri has a total of 35 primary schools. In the urban area, there are 8 schools, while in the rural area, there are 27 schools. Between 2016 and 2018, 64 classroom teachers were



employed in the Municipality of Vushtrri (DKA, 2018). This research focused on these 64 teachers employed during these years. A total of 20 primary schools in the Municipality of Vushtrri had novice teachers.

Sample

The sample for this research was selected from schools that employ novice teachers. A total of 12 schools were chosen using a non-random sampling method, specifically quota sampling, based on the largest number of novice teachers employed. The sample includes 12 primary school principals and 30 lower-cycle teachers. The teachers in the sample have teaching experience ranging from 0 to 5 years. The participants were selected non-randomly, by including all the teachers in each school who met the criteria for inclusion in the study.

Characteristics of the Sample

Out of the total 30 respondents, 16 are female, and 14 are male. This indicates a slightly higher participation of females compared to males.

Table 1. The data on the gender of participants

Gender	Number of Participants	Percentage
Female	16	53.3
Male	14	46.7
Total	30	100.0

Table 1 presents the gender distribution of the participants in the study

Table 2. The data on the location

Location	Number of Participants	Percentage
Rural	21	70.0
Urban	9	30.0
Total	30	100.0

Table 2 presents the location distribution of the participants in the study

Table 3. Data on the qualification of teachers

Qualification	Number of Participants	Percentage
University Education (Bachelor's level)	19	63.3
Master's Degree	11	36.7
Total	30	100.0

In *Table 3*, data is presented regarding the qualifications of the teachers participating in the research. It shows that 19 of them have a Bachelor's degree, while the remaining 11 have a Master's degree.

Table 4. Data on work experience

Work Experience:	Number of Participants	Percentage
6 months - 1 year	3	10.0
1 year - 2 years	15	50.0
3 years - 5 years	12	40.0
Total	30	100.0



Instrument and Analysis

Qualitative data will be collected through interviews with school directors. The interview is semi-structured and includes 8 main questions with several sub-questions. Meanwhile, quantitative data will be gathered through a questionnaire for teachers. The questionnaire will be anonymous to ensure that participants feel safe and confident in expressing their opinions. The questionnaire is divided into three sections, containing 23 questions related to the topic and 5 demographic questions. The first section addresses what teachers believe is important for directors to do in order to ease their adaptation. The second section focuses on the challenges faced by novice teachers. The third section examines the frequency of support provided by the director to novice teachers.

The data will primarily provide descriptive and thematic analyses. Additionally, a T-test will be conducted to examine the differences in the experiences of challenges between two groups of teachers: one group consisting of teachers with up to 2 years of experience, and the second group consisting of teachers with 3 to 5 years of work experience.

Research Design

The research methodology is of a mixed nature, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative elements, while the strategy employed is descriptive.

The first question, "What are the most common challenges faced by novice teachers during the adaptation phase?" and the third question, "What is the difference between the challenges faced at the beginning of the teaching process and those faced after 3-5 years of work experience?" will be analyzed using quantitative data.

Meanwhile, the second question, "What are the most frequent supportive measures provided to novice teachers by directors to assist in their adaptation to the role?" will be studied through qualitative data.

Procedure and Circumstances of Data Collection and Analysis

From various studies with similar topics to the theme of this research, a sufficient amount of material has been gathered during the literature review to continue the research process further. In this study, statistical data on the number of schools and novice teachers were collected from the Municipal Education Directorate. To carry out the fieldwork, it is necessary to obtain permission from the Directorate of Education, which grants the right to conduct the research in schools. Once the permission is secured, preparations for the fieldwork will be made. The data will be collected over a period of 15-20 days.

Data Analysis and Results

The data were analyzed using the SPSS statistical package, with descriptive analyses (frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential analysis (T-test). For qualitative analysis, thematic analysis was also conducted. The T-test was performed to examine the differences in the experiences of challenges between two groups of teachers: the first group includes teachers with up to 2 years of experience, while the second group includes teachers with 3 to 5 years of work experience.

In total, 30 teachers and 12 school leaders participated in the study, engaging in both interviews and surveys. As confirmed by these data, all participants considered the support from school leaders to be very important in the adaptation of novice teachers.



Findings from the quantitative data (questionnaire):

Table 5. Themes related to the support of the director for novice teachers

Themes	Not Necessary at All	Unnecessary	Neutral	Necessary	Very Necessary	Average	Standard Deviation
1. The director should communicate frequently with novice teachers.	0	0	3.3%	13.3%	83.3%	4.80	.484
2 The director should encourage novice teachers to learn from their colleagues.	0	0	6.7%	3.3%	90%	4.83	.531
3 The director should ask other teachers to share their experiences with novice teachers.	0	0	10%	13.3%	76.7%	4.67	.661
4 The director should show understanding towards novice teachers.	0	0	3.3%	23.3%	73.3%	4.70	.535
5 The director should provide novice teachers with additional materials.	0	3.3%	10%	40%	46.7%	4.30	.794
6 The director should encourage and enable novice teachers to attend training sessions.	0	0	0	23.3%	76.7%	4.77	.430

In *Table 5*, in the first section of the questionnaire regarding the support provided by the director to novice teachers, based on the percentages obtained, we can conclude that the majority of teachers believe they should receive support from the director. A significant portion stated that the director's support for novice teachers is extremely necessary, as it increases work productivity and provides substantial encouragement for them to continue their work in the best possible way.

Over 80% believe that communication should be a key point for supporting novice teachers. Additionally, the majority agree that there should be collaboration among colleagues, as their experience can be a great help to them.

One form of support, even technical, that greatly helps novice teachers is providing them with additional materials, as demonstrated by the majority of these teachers. Therefore, the collaboration and communication between the director and novice teachers is an important and indispensable part of their



development. Furthermore, 76.7% of the teachers stated that it is absolutely essential to encourage and enable the participation in training sessions.

Table 6. Themes by frequency related to the challenges experienced in work

Themes	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Always	Average	D.s
1. I find it difficult to manage some of the administrative tasks.	6.7%	10 %	26.7%	43.3%	13.3%	3.27	1.01
2. I feel like no one at the school wants to listen to me.	30%	26.7%	40%	3.3%	0	2.17	.913
3. My colleagues plan together with me.	3.3%	0	36.7%	43.3%	16.7%	3.70	.877
4. Parent meetings are stressful for me.	10%	16.7%	23.3%	36.7%	13.3%	3.27	1.20
5. Time management is challenging for me.	13.3%	23.3%	23.3%	20%	20%	3.10	1.34
6. Resolving conflicts is very stressful.	13.3%	6.6%	33.3%	40%	6.6%	3.20	1.28
7. Checking students' assignments takes up a lot of time during class.	6.7%	10%	33.3%	36.7%	13.3%	3.40	1.070
8. Overcoming difficult situations causes me pressure.	13.3%	46.7%	33.3%	6.7%	0	2.33	.802
9. Lesson planning takes up a lot of my time.	6.7%	6.7%	20%	50%	16.7%	3.63	1.066
10. I find it difficult to control the noise.	13.3%	33.3%	16.7%	30%	6.7%	2.83	1.206
11. The large number of students is a challenge for good management.	3.3%	13.3%	36.7%	33.3%	13.3%	3.40	1.003
12. Difficulty in planning for students with special needs	36.7%	3.3%	40.0%	13.3%	6.7%	2.50	1.306
13. Disagreements with some parents on certain situations.	23.3%	26.7%	46.7%	3.3%	0	2.30	.877
14. The lack of teaching materials makes my work more difficult.	3.3%	3.3%	33.3%	36.7%	23.3%	3.73	.980
15. I feel insecure about the results of my work.	16.7%	26.7%	20 %	33.3%	3.3%	2.80	1.186
16. The first year of teaching was emotionally stimulating, filled with nerves, excitement, and uncertainty.	3.3%	16.7%	26.7%	33.3%	20%	3.50	1.106

In Table 6, in the second section of the questionnaire regarding the frequency of challenges faced by teachers at work, the results show that performing administrative tasks is difficult to manage for novice teachers, with over 50% sharing this opinion. This suggests that administrative tasks may be tiring and time-consuming, as indicated by these data. Regarding collegial collaboration, it can be said that the majority believe there is support from more experienced teachers for novice teachers, and this is a positive factor that helps overcome initial challenges more easily.

Parent meetings are a challenge in themselves, especially for these teachers. The data show a variety of opinions, and it's difficult to specify whether this process is perceived as highly stressful or not. However, the majority view it as stressful and awkward, while a smaller portion (though not large) believes that managing parent meetings is not difficult. Stressful situations and various conflicts remain a challenge for novice teachers, as these are harder to manage. The lack of experience and familiarity with these issues makes it more difficult to handle them well. This is also evidenced by the percentages obtained for some of these questions, where the majority indicate that managing and overcoming such situations is often difficult.



The large number of students presents another challenge for these teachers, both in terms of grading assignments, as it takes more time, and in keeping the noise under control, as demonstrated by the percentages in these questions where these teachers agree that the large number of students is challenging for them in these aspects.

In general, the first few years of teaching bring intense emotions and significant stress for novice teachers.

Table 7. The topics according to their frequency related to the support provided by the principal at work.

Themes	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Always	Average	D.s
1. The principal has provided me with materials that have helped me.	20%	26.7%	30%	23.3%	/	2.57	1.07
2. The principal has allowed me to observe colleagues during a lesson.	60%	16.7%	16.7%	6.7%	/	1.70	1.08
3. The principal has collaborated with me to resolve conflicts.	6.7%	13.3%	36.7%	26.7%	16.7%	3.43	1.262
4. The principal has encouraged me to discuss my issues with colleagues.	10%	40%	13.3%	30%	6.7%	2.83	1.262
5. The principal has been open to discussions about matters related to my class.	3.3%	23.3%	20%	20%	33.3%	3.57	1.09
6. The principal has assisted me in managing student-to-student conflicts.	10%	20%	40%	20%	10%	3.00	1.114

In *Table 7*, in the third section regarding the support provided by the principal to novice teachers at work, the principal's support is not satisfactory based on the responses from this part of the questionnaire. Although initially, the teachers indicated that support and collaboration were the most important aspects for them, the percentages gathered from this section suggest that there is little support from the principal for these teachers, with over 60% indicating that they feel the principal's support is lacking. Similarly, other opportunities that could have facilitated their adaptation, such as the chance to observe lessons from more experienced colleagues or encouragement to discuss issues with other teachers, are also lacking according to the responses. The percentages show that such support is rarely offered, and when it is, it is not sufficient. This leaves much to be desired. Overall, novice teachers understand that the principal should provide substantial support, but based on the third part of the survey, it is clear that this support is very limited and needs to be improved for their benefit.

Table 8. Differences in the challenges faced by teachers based on work experience

Themes	Work Experience	N	Avg.	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Average
I find it difficult to manage some of the administrative tasks	1-2 years	15	3.87	1.056	.273
	3-5 years	12	2.58	1.165	.336
Parent meetings are stressful for me	1-2 years	15	3.67	.900	.232
	3-5 years	12	2.58	.793	.229
Time management is a challenge for me	1-2 years	15	3.40	1.056	.273
	3-5 years	12	3.08	.900	.260
Planning lessons takes me a lot of time	1-2 years	15	4.07	.799	.206
	3-5 years	12	2.92	1.505	.434
The large number of students is a challenge for effective management	1-2 years	15	3.47	.915	.236
	3-5 years	12	3.00	.953	.275

According to the results of the T-test analysis (the independent t-test measures the difference between the means of the groups) in *Table 8*, in the first field, the average for 15 teachers with 1 to 2 years of work experience is 3.87, while the average for 12 teachers with 3 to 5 years of experience is 2.57. Therefore,



there is a decline in handling challenges between teachers with up to 2 years of experience and those with 3 to 5 years of experience. Teachers with 3 to 5 years of experience have reported facing fewer difficulties in managing administrative tasks.

The statement "Parent meetings are stressful for me" shows differences between the two groups of respondents. Teachers with up to 2 years of work experience have an average of 3.67, while 12 teachers with 3 to 5 years of work experience have an average of 2.58. In the survey, the options were presented as 2=rarely, 3=sometimes, and 4=often. The values shown in the table indicate that teachers with up to 2 years of work experience frequently experience difficulties with parent meetings, whereas teachers with 3 to 5 years of experience report a reduction in difficulties during these meetings, with an average of 2.58 (which is between "rarely" and "sometimes"). The result of the Sig(2-tailed) test ($p=.003$) in *Table 9* indicates a statistically significant difference between the group means (the significance value is less than .05 within the 95% confidence interval).

Table 9. T-test - Differences in Challenges Faced by Teachers Based on Work Experience

Themes		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Dif.	Std. Error Dif.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
- I find it difficult to manage some of the administrative tasks	Equal variances assumed	.016	.900	.740	25	.466	.317	.428	-.565	1.198
	Equal variances not assumed			.732	22.557	.472	.317	.433	-.580	1.213
- Parent meetings are stressful for me	Equal variances assumed	.102	.752	3.274	25	.003	1.083	.331	.402	1.765
	Equal variances not assumed			3.322	24.722	.003	1.083	.326	.411	1.755
- Time management is a challenge for me	Equal variances assumed	.090	.766	.826	25	.417	.317	.384	-.473	1.107
	Equal variances not assumed			.841	24.867	.408	.317	.377	-.459	1.093
- Planning lessons takes me a lot of time	Equal variances assumed	7.733	.010	2.552	25	.017	1.150	.451	.222	2.078
	Equal variances not assumed			2.391	15.883	.030	1.150	.481	.130	2.170
- The large number of students is a challenge for effective management.	Equal variances assumed	.209	.652	1.292	25	.208	.467	.361	-.277	1.210
	Equal variances not assumed			1.286	23.266	.211	.467	.363	-.283	1.217

The results in row four show that the 15 teachers with 1 to 2 years of work experience have an average of 4.07, while teachers with 3 to 5 years of experience have an average of 2.92. From this, we can conclude that teachers with less work experience need more time to plan their lessons (average of 4.04 = often), while with time, they will be able to work on these plans more quickly. This is because teachers with 3 to 5 years of experience reported that lesson planning rarely or sometimes takes them a lot of time. The result of the Sig (2-tailed) test ($p=.017$) indicates that there is a significant difference between the group means."

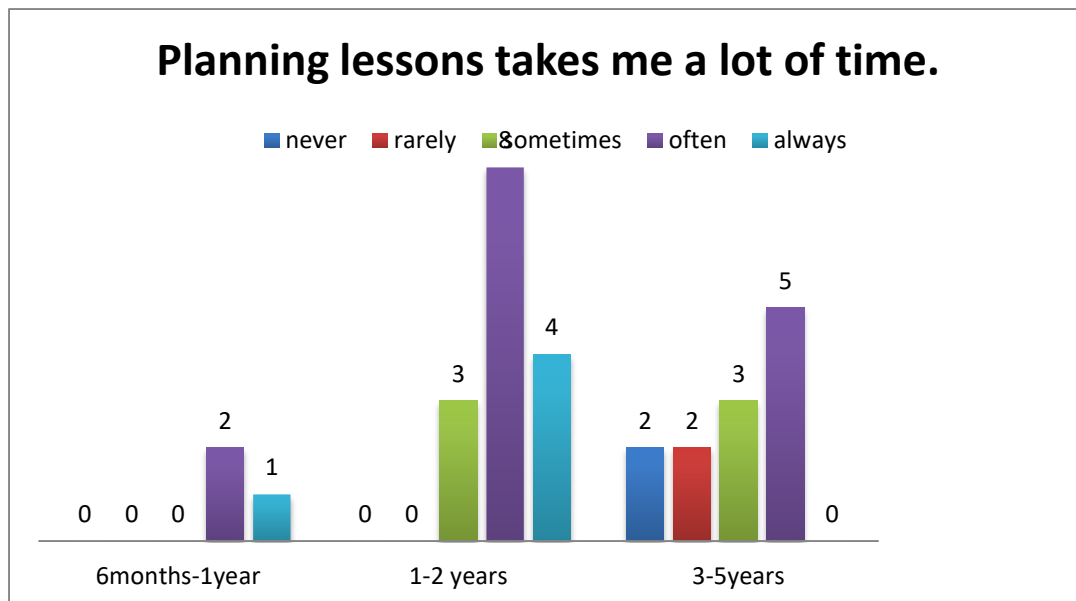


Figure 1. Lesson planning from the perspective of teachers based on their work experience.

The statement "The large number of students is a challenge for effective management" shows a slight difference between the two groups, or almost no difference at all. The group of teachers with 1 to 2 years of work experience has an average of 3.47, while teachers with 3 to 5 years of work experience have an average of 3.00. Both groups generally reported that sometimes the large number of students can be a challenge for effective classroom management.

The large number of students is a challenge for effective management

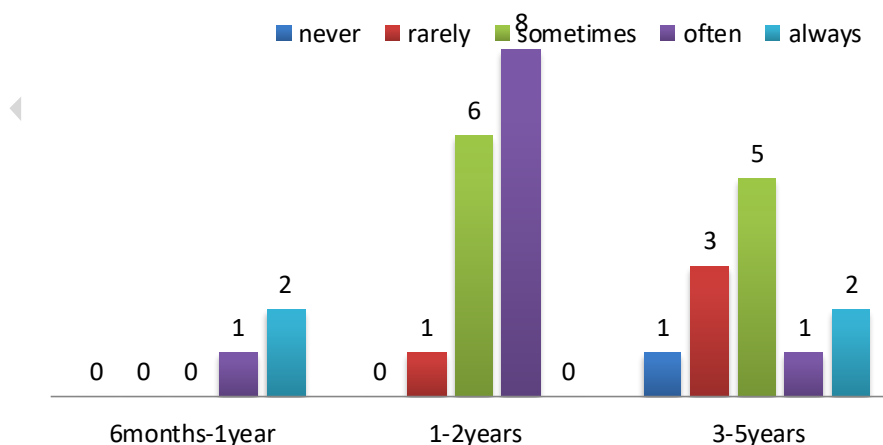


Figure 2. The large number of students as a challenge for effective management based on teachers' work experience.



Findings from qualitative data (Interviews):

Challenges and adaptation

In the question 'Have the teachers adapted quickly at the beginning of their work?' the respondent K.L emphasized that they have adapted well and easily. Similarly, the respondent S.H stated: 'Some have, others have not. I have more than 15 years of work experience, so I hold the position of principal. As such, most of the teachers currently working have started their careers here. Overall, they adapt easily.' Furthermore, the respondent F.H highlighted: 'Beginner teachers have generally adapted well and quickly. Fortunately, the staff is cooperative and ready to assist every new teacher, and certainly, as a principal, I am also ready for any aspect that has a positive impact.' The respondent M.S declared: 'Teachers manage to adapt to the teaching process within two years and start feeling more comfortable in the school.'

Regarding the question 'What are the factors that influence the adaptation of novice teachers?', certainly, each person expressed their opinion depending on their experiences. Almost all of the interviewees had similar views. One of the principals emphasized that, according to him, extremely important factors are cooperation and motivation among the staff, the positive climate created in the school, and the numerous trainings that further reinforce knowledge. Another principal stated that there are many factors that make this phase easier and influence the adaptation process. Genuine collaboration between them, the leaders, and the entire staff, greatly facilitates adaptation, followed by the provision of opportunities, their strong support, and significant assistance by helping them with the difficulties they face at the beginning, etc. Another interviewee stated: 'Adaptation depends on the person themselves. That is, how cooperative the teacher is, how open they are to discussion, how approachable they are with students, colleagues, and the entire school staff. However, he also mentions that other factors are also important.'

In the question 'What are the challenges that you have noticed that beginner teachers have faced in the school you lead?' the leaders who were selected for the interview, in general, gave answers that were approximately similar. Effective classroom management, specifically noise in the classroom, has been one of the most frequent challenges for beginner teachers, as expressed by almost all the principals who participated in the interview. Completing administrative tasks is still seen as a challenge for beginner teachers, according to M.S. Unlike the other principals, Principal R.K., in addition to the challenge of successfully managing the class, stated that beginner teachers also face the challenge of preparing tests and has noticed that their stress is noticeably higher during meetings organized by the school with the staff. Overall, the principals emphasized the fact that the lack of self-confidence and the management of conflict situations remain, even to this day, the main challenges faced by beginner teachers.

Support from the principal

In response to the question 'Do our schools offer support to novice teachers?' respondent F.H answered as follows: 'Beginner teachers receive sufficient support from the staff and the school as a whole. It depends a lot on the principal, the staff, and the school, but I still think that the majority of our institutions offer the necessary support. Whereas respondent A.H expressed that 'Our schools, in general, do not offer the proper support to beginner teachers, because they need much more than what is provided to them.' Respondent A.S links the support to the school's position, saying 'It depends on the school. Some schools offer more support, while others less, depending on whether the school is located in the city or in the countryside, the number of students, and the staff. In general, little support is offered to these teachers.'

In the sub-question 'What support have you provided as a school principal?', one of the respondents answered by saying: 'Beginner teachers need more advice and suggestions as they are at the beginning of their professional careers, so for them, this has been the greatest support I have offered.' Meanwhile, respondent F.H emphasized: 'I try to be cooperative, open to discussions, to clarify all uncertainties, to be tolerant, in order to create a positive climate that also reflects on my work staff.' Respondent A.H



expressed: 'From the first day, I have tried to offer them enough comfort by trying to remove stress and fear, I have introduced them to the staff and the administrative tasks, as well as the school rules, and other aspects have been addressed continuously during the work process.'

The role of leaders in the adaptation of novice teachers is to create the conditions for applying the theories learned in practice, as well as to advance their knowledge and experiences. These are achieved through support and guidance from the leader.

Almost all of the respondents, in response to the question 'What measures have you taken as a principal to help teachers overcome these challenges?', emphasized in one way or another that support, guidance, and counseling were some of the main measures they took to help teachers overcome the challenges they face. All of the respondents gave similar answers, highlighting collaboration, a positive climate, and tolerance as supporting measures.

One of the respondents emphasized: 'I have tried to maintain continuous contact with these teachers, offer them different models of lesson plans or classes for them to use as examples, I have tried to involve them in various activities the school has organized, and I have also asked more experienced teachers to support them and provide continuous assistance.' Based on the responses from the respondents, a generalization of the measures can be observed, with emphasis on support and guidance. However, no specific or more concrete measures are mentioned, which creates a negative impression regarding the actions taken by the principals in this case.

In response to the question 'What have been the most effective strategies for overcoming the challenges faced by novice teachers?', two of the respondents mentioned that the best strategies are calm discussions, conversations, and collaboration with teachers. One respondent explained that when it comes to these issues, they deal with them in a broader manner and remain close to the teaching staff and the entire school, where advice is a great help, and collaboration is the best way to support these teachers. Similarly, another respondent stated that simply being present and showing that you are there to help them is enough. According to him, creating a warm and non-authoritarian environment further facilitates the process. In other words, it is enough to collaborate and be open with them so that they feel free to express their thoughts and difficulties.

Support Plan for Novice Teachers

In the question, "Do you think a principal should have a support plan for the adaptation of novice teachers?", the principals we interviewed expressed varying opinions. Two principals agreed that having support plans is necessary for an appropriate and effective approach to the issue at hand. One of the principals was not very familiar with the existence of a support plan but agreed that having such a plan would be beneficial. The final participant stated that even in the absence of a support plan, solutions could be found for the adaptation of beginning teachers, implying that the existence of such a plan is not essential.

In the follow-up question, "If you think there should or should not be a support plan, please explain why?", the interviewed principals stated that having a support plan provides relief and an appropriate approach to the adaptation of beginning teachers in the school. Although the principals did not have support plans in place, they declared that every school leader should have a support plan and a professional development plan for beginning teachers.

The interviewees stated that after two years of experience, beginning teachers gained more confidence in themselves, were more self-assured, had acquired more knowledge in managing unexpected situations in school, and felt more involved in activities taking place in the school. It is worth mentioning that one of



the interviewees emphasized that, for some teachers, after completing two years of work, there is a noticeable decrease in enthusiasm for the job compared to the first year, although their performance is significantly better as they gain more years of experience.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and SUGGESTIONS

This research explored the topic "The Role of Leader in the Adaptation of Novice Teachers in the Teaching Process in Primary Schools," based on various literatures as well as questionnaires and interviews conducted with participants. The aim of this research was to highlight the adaptation of teachers to the teaching process during their first years of work, identify the challenges they face, and examine the most common forms of support from leadership to facilitate their adaptation. The results show that one of the main challenges faced by new teachers on a daily basis is classroom management. Other challenges include lesson planning and successfully implementing all its components, especially in terms of time management. Communication with parents is another significant challenge. Generally, new teachers adapt easily and within two years, they have successfully adapted to the teaching process and started feeling more comfortable in school. The most frequent support from school leaders in the adaptation of new teachers is monitoring and mentoring. However, other types of support expected are cooperation on both small and large issues, as well as the organization of additional lectures and discussions within the school staff.

The views of new teachers highlighted in the study by McCann and Johannessen (2004) are almost identical to those of the teachers who participated in our research. Both groups agree that classroom management, particularly in relation to the number of students in the classroom, is a significant challenge. Additionally, motivating and encouraging students is considered a common challenge faced by every new teacher. Quinn and Andrews (2004), in their study, concluded that the support provided by principals was perceived as beneficial for new teachers, which aligns with the findings of our research. Roberson and Roberson (2009) expand the expectations of new teachers to include maintaining an open line of communication, holding meetings, conducting classroom visits, providing feedback, and offering affirmation. Similarly, the expectations expressed by the teachers who participated in our survey align with these findings, with the importance of training sessions led by school leadership also being mentioned as a key form of support.

Based on the collected data, we are able to answer the research questions. The first question was: "What are the most common adaptation challenges faced by new teachers?" The data show that carrying out administrative tasks is difficult for new teachers to manage (over 70% of the participants). Additionally, meetings with parents are considered a challenge, especially for these teachers. While a larger percentage found this process stressful and uncomfortable, a smaller portion, though not insignificant, believe that managing meetings with parents is not particularly difficult. Stressful situations and various conflicts remain a challenge for new teachers, as they are harder to manage due to the lack of experience and familiarity with these issues. This is evident from the percentages collected for some of these types of questions, where the majority report that it is often difficult to manage and overcome these situations.

The large number of students presents another challenge for these teachers, in various aspects such as checking assignments, as it takes more time, as well as in controlling or keeping the noise in check. This is supported by the high percentages in these questions, with over 30% reporting that they often face this type of challenge. Based on the findings of the research, we conclude that the first hypothesis is confirmed: "Among the main challenges faced by new teachers are classroom management, pedagogical planning, and successfully implementing all its components, especially in terms of time management."



The lack of experience and familiarity with these issues makes it difficult to manage them effectively, as evidenced by the percentages in the responses to some of these questions, where the majority (over 50%) report that classroom management and pedagogical planning are often or always difficult to manage.

The second research question was: "What are the most common support measures for new teachers provided by principals to help them adjust to their work?" Based on this question, we can distinguish between the expectations of teachers regarding the support from their leaders, which primarily include communication, conducting meetings, classroom visits, providing feedback, offering affirmation, trainings, and additional materials. Over 80% believe that communication should be a key point for supporting new teachers. Additionally, the majority agree that there should be collaboration among colleagues, as their experience could be a great help to them. However, from the responses received, it appears that only a small percentage of support was actually provided to these teachers. On the other hand, from the responses of the principals, we understand that they generally do offer support to new teachers, although some reported that adequate and necessary support is not always provided. The support offered includes *advice, suggestions, open discussions, clarification of uncertainties, tolerance, opportunities to reduce stress and fear, introducing them to the staff and administrative tasks, ongoing communication, encouragement, motivation regarding work, and providing necessary materials.*

Experience naturally has a positive impact on the professional improvement of individuals, although sometimes it can also have a negative effect. From the responses of the interviewees, we understood that new teachers, after two years of work experience, feel more at ease, more confident, and have greater trust in their professionalism. This, of course, depends on many factors—some teachers feel more motivated, some receive greater support from colleagues and school staff, and so on. The adaptation of new teachers and their performance after two years of work experience should clearly be addressed within the framework for the professional development of teachers. In addition to the documents that need to address this issue, a very important factor is the approach of the school leader, which undoubtedly has a significant influence, whether positive or negative, on the adaptation of new teachers within the school. Depending on the support and collaboration between leaders and new teachers, either ease or difficulties arise for the teachers in adapting to the teaching profession.

In response to the final question, "What is the difference between the challenges faced at the beginning of the teaching process and those faced after 3-5 years of work experience?", we can clearly state that there are differences between these two groups. The majority of teachers have overcome several challenges, such as meetings with parents, where it is evident that teachers with 3 to 5 years of experience rarely, if ever, face difficulties. According to the results of the T-test analysis, there is a noticeable decline in the challenges faced by teachers with up to 2 years of experience compared to those with 3 to 5 years of experience. Teachers with 3 to 5 years of experience reported facing fewer difficulties in managing administrative tasks, handling stressful situations, lesson planning, grading assignments, and managing time. However, the large number of students in the classroom remains a challenge for both groups. Based on the results of the T-test from the research, we conclude that the second hypothesis is confirmed: "In most cases, there is a difference in the perception of challenges between teachers with 1 to 3 years of experience and those with 3 to 5 years of work experience." Therefore, the T-test shows that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the two groups.

The statements made by the interviewees regarding the possession of a support plan in schools for the adaptation of new teachers are highly accurate and effective in helping novice teachers adjust more easily to the work process. In Kosovo, most schools lack such plans and a proper approach to address this issue. In our educational system, the entry phase into the teaching profession is addressed through the new



teacher licensing system. This phase of teacher development is intended to be regulated by a separate document. According to the descriptions in the Strategic Framework for Teacher Development, this phase includes the early years of teaching, which are defined by a special program of supervision and mentoring. It is a phase of adaptation to the school's work culture, further development of teaching competencies, and personal development care. The document that should regulate this phase began to be drafted in early 2018 with support from the ESIP project; however, it has not yet been approved, which causes new teachers to experience insecurity and difficulties in integrating into the profession, depending on the support they receive from the school. The possession of support plans leading to easing the transition was also stated by the interviewees, and this is further confirmed by research conducted in this field, validating the "Social Exchange Theory" as discussed in our research by Zey (1984). The directors agreed that every school leader should have a support plan for the professional development of novice teachers and a mentoring plan for new teachers in the teaching process.

Depending on the character or nature of the teachers, some are more open and sociable, not hesitating at all, which makes them adapt more quickly to their work. However, there are also those for whom the adaptation process takes longer, as mentioned by the respondents. Overall, though, teachers tend to adapt quickly to their work, and this is influenced not only by the support of the principal but also by the support of the staff, as they emphasized.

Based on the responses received from principals of different schools, we have concluded that nearly all of them agree that *collaboration, motivation, training, providing opportunities, support, encouragement, positive climate*, etc., are factors that are indeed very important in the adaptation of novice teachers. There was also a small number of principals who believe that it also depends on the beginner teachers themselves, such as their behavior and what kind of character or personality they have, but without overlooking the other factors, which undoubtedly have a significant impact.

Regardless of the fact that we are talking about novice teachers, the responses from the principals clearly show that collaboration is one of the key factors in this process. Similarly, creating a good collaborative, supportive, and advisory climate not only helps but also makes the adaptation of these teachers easier. Therefore, from the perspective of these respondents, these are seen as the best strategies, demonstrating that collaboration is a powerful tool to achieve any desired success. Additionally, it is considered an effective strategy for overcoming the challenges faced by beginner teachers. Challenges are always present, and they are more pronounced among beginner teachers, making their work more difficult. Therefore, we, as principals, must keep these difficulties and their feelings in mind, not overlook them, but engage with them and offer help and support in all aspects.

Limitations of the Study

Normally, the current situation with the Covid-19 pandemic has also limited the proper execution of the research. One of the impacts has been the inability to research a larger sample size, from which more sustainable conclusions and recommendations could be drawn.

Future research

In the future, it would be beneficial to use more support plans in schools for the adaptation of novice teachers, in order to be more accurate and effective in helping them adapt more easily to the work process. Therefore, this would provide future researchers with the opportunity to analyze a larger sample regarding the use of the support plan, its role, and the effect it has created, as well as the impact it has had on the adaptation process of teachers.



Practical Implications of the Study

The results of this research will practically contribute to raising the quality of teaching in our schools by helping novice teachers adapt more easily, leading to higher outcomes in the teaching process. These results will assist school principals, teachers, as well as other stakeholders involved in enhancing the educational process.

Based on the results of the research regarding the role of leadership (the principal) in the adaptation of novice teachers in the teaching process, and also supported by the literature and studies of various researchers worldwide, I am providing the following proposals (recommendations):

- There should be greater attention from principals towards novice teachers.
- Support and assistance in all forms, especially during the initial stages, should be provided to these teachers.
- Principals should explore as many ways as possible to help teachers overcome this phase with greater ease.
- The research also shows that collegial collaboration and support from leaders is one of the strongest factors for success and overcoming challenges, so there should be as many collaborative forms between these parties as possible, with the collaboration being as strong and supportive as possible.
- Leader should offer opportunities for novice teachers to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained in practice, thus facilitating their easier adaptation.
- In order for novice teachers to have an overview of their work, principals should ensure that feedback is provided regarding their lessons, as this is essential for interaction and easing the process for them.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

I declare and confirm that we have acted in accordance with ethical rules throughout the entire research.

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