Turkish Novice Teachers' Struggles for Teaching and Learning to Teaching[1]

Las luchas de los profesores novatos turcos por la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de la enseñanza

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Abstract

This research aims to determine teachers' problems in the early stages of their careers and to offer solutions. In this context, the research is a phenomenological study of 21 teachers selected by maximum variety sampling. The study's data were obtained through semi-structured interview questions prepared by the researchers with the opinions of six experts. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the teachers who participated in the study. The content analysis method was preferred in analyzing the obtained data, and NVivo 11 software was used. The findings of the study revealed that the problems faced by teachers include the learning-teaching process, educational structure and opportunities, individual and environmental factors, and education stakeholders. The research ends with various research and application suggestions by drawing attention to some points in preventing the problems that teachers encounter in the early stages of their careers.

Keywords: Early Career Teachers, Problems Encountered by Teachers, Novice Teachers, Phenomenological Study, Struggles for Teaching, Teaching Profession.

Resumen

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo determinar los problemas de los docentes en las primeras etapas de sus carreras y ofrecer soluciones. En este contexto, la investigación es un estudio fenomenológico de 21 profesores seleccionados mediante muestreo de máxima variedad. Los datos del estudio se obtuvieron a través de preguntas de entrevistas semiestructuradas preparadas por los investigadores con las opiniones de seis expertos. Se realizaron entrevistas cara a cara con los profesores que participaron en el estudio. Se prefirió el método de análisis de contenido para analizar los datos obtenidos y se utilizó el software NVivo 11. Los hallazgos del estudio revelaron que los problemas enfrentados por los docentes incluyen el proceso de aprendizaje-enseñanza, la estructura y oportunidades educativas, los factores individuales y ambientales, y los actores educativos. La investigación concluye con varias sugerencias de investigación y aplicación al llamar la atención sobre algunos puntos para prevenir los problemas que los docentes encuentran en las primeras etapas de sus carreras.

Palabras clave: Docentes Principiantes, Problemas Enfrentados por los Docentes, Profesores Noveles, Profesión Docente.

Resumo:

Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo determinar os problemas enfrentados por professores nos estágios iniciais de suas carreiras e oferecer soluções. Nesse contexto, a pesquisa é um estudo fenomenológico com 21 professores selecionados por amostragem de máxima variedade. Os dados do estudo foram obtidos por meio de perguntas de entrevistas semiestruturadas preparadas pelos pesquisadores com as opiniões de seis especialistas. Entrevistas presenciais foram conduzidas com os professores que participaram do estudo. O método de análise de conteúdo foi preferido na análise dos dados obtidos, e o software NVivo 11 foi utilizado. Os resultados do estudo revelaram que os problemas enfrentados pelos professores incluem o processo de ensino-aprendizagem, estrutura educacional e oportunidades, fatores individuais e ambientais, e partes interessadas na educação. A pesquisa conclui com várias sugestões de pesquisa e aplicação, chamando a atenção para alguns pontos na prevenção dos problemas que os professores enfrentam nos estágios iniciais de suas carreiras.

Palavras-chave: Professores Iniciantes, Problemas Enfrentados por Professores, Professores Novatos, Estudo Fenomenológico, Desafios no Ensino, Profissão Docente.

Introduction

The performance of teachers in educational institutions significantly affects the quality of education and educational outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010; Rivkin et al., 2005). In this regard, it can be stated that it is important for teachers to determine their own competencies, take into account their interests, needs, and expectations, establish their vision, identify their forward-looking goals, make plans and programs to achieve these goals, and make efforts. Striving to achieve these goals in the context of teachers' careers contributes to increasing their motivation, strengthening the psychological contract between them and their organizations, developing themselves professionally, and gaining social status (Altunışık, 2010; Chirichello & Bailey, 2014; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

There are theories and studies in the relevant literature that acknowledge the common developmental stages observed during teachers' professional careers, where teachers exhibit different attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviors at various points in their careers (Day, 2004; Fullan, 2001; Huberman, 1989; Lynn, 2002; Sikes, 1985). Huberman (1989, p.41) identifies three career stages that form a teacher's life cycle. The first of these, and also the focus of research, is the novice career stage, where an individual is struggling to adapt and cope in an unfamiliar environment. Additionally, novice teachers in this stage are known to be less aware of the demands and expectations of the community and students, and they carry the burden of proving their competency in the teaching profession. The career entry stage is defined as the first few years when a teacher is integrated into the system. During this period, new teachers try to gain acceptance from students, colleagues, and other educational stakeholders while attempting to find solutions to problems and striving to achieve a level of comfort and security (Burke, 1984, p. 14-15). Teachers' career entry stages encompass professional skills, behaviors, attitudes, teaching methods, discipline strategies, curriculum, planning, rules and procedures, professional confidence and safety, values, and beliefs. Knowledge of this developmental process sheds light on teaching and teacher development, serving as a foundation for teachers (Burden, 1982; Thompson, 2018; Wong & Wong, 2018). Moreover, the first years of the profession hold the potential to influence the teacher's career journey, effectiveness, and job satisfaction (Paula & Grinfelde, 2018).

During the entry-level stage of their career, teachers must cope with numerous crisis situations. Novice teachers experience various difficulties due to the diversity of student characteristics and the challenging nature of the teaching profession (Bakioğlu & Korumaz, 2014; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Santoro, 2015). They struggle to assess both their students and the requirements of their job accurately (Durmaz, 2014) while also spending their time and energy to understand the classroom environment and develop teaching strategies. In this context, research conducted in

different contexts has revealed the problems that novice teachers encounter, including classroom management and discipline issues (Melekhina & Ivleva, 2020; Paula & Grinfelde, 2018; Sali & Kecik, 2018; Sikes, 1985; Wolf, Jarodzka, & Boshuizen, 2021), insufficient teaching materials (Sali & Kecik, 2018), lesson planning (Karacaoğlu & Acar, 2010; Paula & Grinfelde, 2018), exam preparation and student assessment (Paula & Grinfelde, 2018), and communication with parents (Meister & Melnick, 2003; Paula & Grinfelde, 2018).

In the context of Türkiye, existing research has identified the problems experienced by novice teachers as classroom management and discipline issues (Doğan, 2016; Ergünay, 2018; Çiğil, 2014; Kozikoğlu, 2016; Öztürk, 2008), low salaries (Çiğil, 2014), lack of professional respect (Çiğil, 2014; Öztürk, 2008), frequently changing teaching programs and regulations (Bekdemir, 2018; Ergünay, 2018; Çiğil, 2014), problems in planning and implementing teaching (Bekdemir, 2018; Doğan, 2016), inadequate physical infrastructure and facilities in schools (Ergünay, 2018; Çiğil, 2014; Kozikoğlu, 2016), inability to find opportunities for professional development (Doğan, 2016; Ergünay, 2018), excessive workload (Bekdemir, 2018; Öztürk, 2008), housing (Çiğil, 2014), social and cultural adaptation issues (Doğan, 2016), inability to establish healthy communication with students (Bekdemir, 2018), and lack of support from administrators and colleagues (Bekdemir, 2018; Doğan, 2016; Çiğil, 2014; Öztürk, 2008).

While these findings provide valuable insights into the problems faced by novice teachers, it is noteworthy that the increasing number of private schools and the proportion of teachers working in private schools (~15%) in Türkiye, particularly since 2016 with government incentives (MoNE, 2016), needs attention (MoNE, 2022). Therefore, the exclusion of teachers working in private schools from these studies is a significant limitation. Additionally, the diversity of the teaching levels and professional fields of the teachers in these studies (e.g., special education, vocational and technical education teachers) was not adequately rich. At this point, there is a need for more comprehensive research on the problems encountered by novice teachers in the Turkish context. This study addresses the problems encountered by novice teachers working at various teaching levels and different branches in both public and private schools. The results of this research are expected to provide awareness and insight into potential problems that new teachers may encounter and their solutions. Moreover, the obtained results are evaluated as guiding education managers and policymakers in preventing or reducing the impact of problems that teachers face in the early stages of their careers.

Understanding the Teaching Profession in Türkiye

Teacher training in Türkiye is a topic that can be traced back to the final years of the Ottoman Empire. In the late 19th century, the Teacher Education Institute (Darülmuallimin-i Aliye) was established as an institution for training teachers who would primarily work at the high school level, and it was designed to be completed four years after secondary education. This school, later renamed as the Higher Teachers' School, expanded its scope by adding new departments. These schools, which continued to train teachers until about forty years ago, then passed the responsibility of teacher education to the Education Institutes. In 1982, with Law Decree No. 41 dated July 20, 1982, the task of training teachers was transferred from the ministry to universities, and some of the education institutes were transformed into education faculties (Aydın, 1998; Argün, 2008; Kavcar, 2002). However, this transformation did not put an end to the debates regarding the overall education system in Türkiye and the quality of teachers, in particular (Kavak, 1999).

The Post-Service Teacher Training Project, which was carried out in collaboration between the Higher Education Council and the World Bank between 1994-1998, led to the restructuring process of Education Faculties (Argün, 2008). In 1994, the "HEC/World Bank Post-Service Teacher Training Project" was initiated by the Ministry of National Education, the Higher Education Council, and the World Bank using the loans provided by the World Bank. The project, which benefited from the contributions of participating experts, was concluded in 1998. The education model developed for teacher candidates aimed to increase teacher qualifications by providing participation in various certificate programs, and it also aimed to make the delivery of science and literature courses in faculties more effective. According to the model, some teachers in certain teaching fields started to receive undergraduate-level education, while some started to receive graduate-level education (Okçabol, 2004). However, since the implementation of the model developed at the end of the project until today, there have been ongoing issues related to the quality of teacher training due to various reasons such as excess enrollment, shortage of teaching staff, insufficient infrastructure, and the continuation of opening new education faculties despite these challenges, which have had negative effects on the quality of teacher training (Ayas, 2009). In the 1990s, the Ministry of National Education assigned a large number of graduates to schools as class teachers regardless of their fields of study in order to meet the existing teacher needs. For example, in 1998, 41,000 graduate teachers from non-education faculties were employed. These types of assignments, which have negative impacts on the teaching profession and reputation, have also brought along quality issues (Albayrak, 2018; Baskan, 2001; Özdemir, 2017).

After the 2000s, it appears that the operation of institutions that train teachers has been determined by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) and the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The General Directorate of Teacher Training, which is

part of MoNE, is the unit that determines policies and regulations related to teacher training. Currently, Education Faculties are the leading institutions that train teachers in Türkiye (Şendağ, 2015). According to statistics from CoHE, as of 2022, there are 103 Education Faculties (Faculties of Education, Faculties of Education Sciences, Faculties of Vocational Education, Faculties of Vocational and Technical Education, Faculties of Music and Fine Arts Education, and Faculties of Technical Education) in Türkiye (CoHE, 2023, p.1).

The "Regulation on Teacher Candidate and Teacher Career Steps" accepted by the MoNE in 2022 and published in the Official Gazette has structured the teaching career in three steps to be valid after the teacher candidacy. These steps are determined as teacher, specialist teacher, and head teacher in the relevant regulation. According to the regulation, the teacher candidacy period is at least one year and a maximum of two years. During this process, teacher candidates are subjected to a Training Program consisting of educational and practical tasks. The program provides teacher candidates with information about the management and operations of their institution under the supervision of the school principals. Under the supervision of appointed mentor teachers, teacher candidates are expected to complete classroom teaching and in-service training. In addition, it is expected that they participate in observations and practices in educational institutions outside their own institution and other institutions under the coordination of Provincial/District National Education Directorates (Official Gazette, 2022).

Method

Research design

This research has been designed with a phenomenological research pattern, which is one of the qualitative research designs. Phenomenology studies focus on phenomena that are perceived but require in-depth knowledge (Creswell, 2012). In this study, the phenomenological design was chosen to deeply examine the problems encountered by novice teachers.

Research context

Some important factors make this research conducted in Istanbul a significant context to achieve the goals of the study. Istanbul is not only the most populous city in Türkiye but also has a highly cosmopolitan structure. Therefore, Istanbul reflects many factors of Türkiye's socio-cultural and economic structure. Accordingly, the standards of both public and private schools, as well as the profile of parents and students, can significantly diverge from each other in Istanbul. Thus, this situation provides a unique opportunity for novice teachers to gain experience.

Participants

The participants of the research consist of 21 teachers who work in public and private schools in Istanbul. The participants were selected using the maximum diversity sampling method, considering that it would provide richer data. In order to ensure maximum diversity, participants were included in the study based on their gender, the type of institution they work in, professional experience, the level of education they teach, their teaching subject, and educational background. Table 1 presents the list of participants coded as P1...P21 to ensure anonymity.

Table 1. Personal characteristics of novice teachers.

Code	Gender	Institution type	Experience	Teaching Level	Branch
P1	Female	Public	2	High School	English
P2	Female	Public	4	High School	Theology
P3	Female	Public	2	High School	English
P4	Female	Public	5	High School	Math
P5	Female	Private	3	Pre-school	Pre-school
P6	Female	Public	3	Special Education	Agricultural Technologies
P7	Male	Public	4	Special Education	Furniture and Interior Design
P8	Male	Public	1	Middle School	Turkish
P9	Male	Public	3	Special Education	Special Education
P10	Male	Public	5	Middle School	Social Studies
P11	Male	Public	4	Middle School	Science
P12	Female	Public	4	Middle School	Music
P13	Female	Private	2	High School	Music
P14	Female	Private	1	Primary School	Music
P15	Female	Private	2	Primary School	Classroom
P16	Male	Private	5	Primary School	Physical Education
P17	Male	Private	4	Primary School	Primary
P18	Female	Public	3	Middle School	Technology and Design
P19	Male	Public	4	Middle School	Technology and Design
P20	Female	Public	4	Primary School	Classroom
P21	Male	Public	4	Primary School	Classroom

When Table 1 is examined, it can be observed that the personal characteristics of the participants have been diversified as much as possible. Accordingly, 10 of the participants are male and 11 are female, with 12 working in public schools and 9 in private schools. The professional experience of the participants ranges from 1 to 5 years, with an average of approximately three years of experience. Finally, one participant works in a preschool, six in primary schools, seven in middle schools, five in high schools, and three in vocational education schools.

Data collection

The data of the research was obtained through semi-structured interview questions prepared by the researchers. The semi-structured interview form consists of 10 main questions and six follow-up questions prepared in light of relevant literature (e.g., Bekdemir, 2018; Doğan, 2016; Ergünay, 2018; Melekhina & Ivleva, 2020; Sali & Kecik, 2018; Paula & Grinfelde, 2018). In the process of creating the interview form, the opinions of six experts were taken into account, and three main questions and two follow-up questions were revised based on the feedback received. Then, pilot interviews were conducted with two teachers. After the pilot interviews, it was decided that all the questions were understandable and did not need any repetition.

The prepared interview form includes questions such as "How do you evaluate the education you received in your undergraduate studies, considering your current experience?", "What difficulties do you face as a new teacher? What are you doing to overcome these difficulties?", "What would you like to say about your orientation period as a new teacher?", "What do school administrators and colleagues mean to you in professional terms as a new teacher?" and "How would you describe the effects of the region you work in on you as a new teacher?".

The face-to-face interviews with participants lasted an average of 45 minutes. During this process, participants were given detailed information about the research topic before each interview, and they were committed to keeping their personal information confidential. After the interviews were conducted, the transcripts of the obtained data were made and sent to the participants for their confirmation.

Data analysis

The content analysis method was preferred for the analysis of the data obtained within the scope of the research, and NVivo 11 software was used for data analysis. Before both researchers coded the data, the interview transcripts were read once. Then, the collected data was uploaded to NVivo 11. The data were analyzed by both researchers using open and axial coding methods at different times. Initially, free-coding processes were followed in NVivo 11; then, the tree-coding process

was completed. During the coding process, the context of the text and the possible causes and effects of this context was taken into account. At the end of the process, both researchers created a common code, category, and theme list by checking the similarities and differences of the code lists they prepared. A deductive approach was followed during the category and theme-creation process. Additionally, in this process, the appropriateness of categories and themes was confirmed by conducting a deductive analysis. Accordingly, the themes within the scope of the research were determined as (i) the Learning-teaching process, (ii) Education structure and opportunities, (iii) Individual and environmental factors, and (iv) Education stakeholders.

Direct quotations have been occasionally used in presenting the themes in order to better reflect the participants' experiences. During the research process, the reliability, transferability, credibility, and confirmability stages emphasized by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were followed meticulously. In this context, the research data has been stored for possible requests.

Researcher's positionality and role

The idea that the problems encountered by newly appointed teachers in government or private schools directly affect the quality of education has been influential in choosing the topic of this research. Additionally, the researchers' past teaching experiences and observations, as well as the situations they encountered during this period, have guided the in-depth investigation of this topic. Furthermore, the researchers' experiences related to the research topic have been used as supportive instruments during the data analysis and interpretation stages.

Results

In this section of the research, four themes identified based on the data analysis are presented. Each theme is supported, where necessary, with direct participant quotes to strengthen the narrative.

Theme 1. Learning-teaching process

In this theme, the opinions of novice teachers regarding the teaching and learning process are presented. Table 2 includes the two categories and resulting codes that make up the teaching and learning process theme.

Table 2. Challenges experienced by novice teachers in the teaching and learning process.

Problems Caused by the Curriculum and Content	Course contents and incompatibility of course hours
	The incompatibility of a student ready-made and content and gains in the curriculum
	Frequent changes in the content and gains in the curriculum
	The curriculum is disconnected from daily life
Problems Caused by Planning and Practical Teaching	Inability to prepare enough for the lesson
	Inability to dominate the course content
	Lack of experience
	Inadequacies in using teaching methods and techniques
	Inability to connect in practice with theoretical education received
	Problems with Classroom Management

The findings indicate that the teaching and learning process theme consists of two categories, problems arising from the curriculum and content, and problems arising from lesson planning and implementation. Firstly, in the category of problems arising from the curriculum and content, participants highlighted the inconsistency between course content and class hours. In particular, they emphasized that the same curriculum was being taught in different types of high schools at different hours (between 4-10 hours), leading to missing important points while trying to cover the curriculum in less time. Another important issue is the inconsistency between student readiness and the content and achievements in the curriculum. P12 provided a concrete example on this matter, stating the following:

(...) For example, the book includes heavier topics. In the sixth and seventh grades, there is a learning outcome to sing simple polyphonic songs. Although I studied at a fine arts high school, I started singing polyphonic songs in the second semester of my first year of high school. You cannot expect a sixth-grader to do that. None of the students in the class can do it because it requires a special skill…

According to participants' views, frequent changes in the content and learning outcomes of the curriculum have a negative impact on students' learning and teachers' performance. Participant P19 stated, *"For example, the program changed recently, and they changed the program according to their own minds without giving sufficient training to any teacher. A lot of topics we didn't know about emerged. That's why we feel inadequate."* Similarly, P11 expressed, *"The science curriculum changes every year. They add the topics they took in the eighth grade to the fifth grade and the topics they took in the eighth grade to the seventh. This causes confusion. Both students and we are*

experiencing the difficulty." According to the participants, the curriculum's detachment from daily life is another significant problem. Participants generally emphasized that the curriculum for their subjects is heavily focused on theory. As a reflection of this, some participants stated that although they try to connect the topic they teach with daily life through their individual efforts, they sometimes cannot succeed in doing so.

Secondly, in the category of problems arising from lesson planning and implementation, participants stated that they were not adequately prepared for the lesson due to various reasons. However, some participants emphasized feeling inadequate about the content of the lessons or how to convey that content. P15 concretized this situation by saying, *"I realize that I have some deficiencies in the curriculum. Especially in Science or Social Studies, there are some things that could be called tips and tricks, and I'm not very familiar with them. I struggle to explain something to children that I am not familiar with."* On the other hand, participants pointed out that the lack of experience had various reflections on many different topics. Some participants especially stated that they understood the importance better after discovering new situations or solving problems. P12 explained this situation with the sentence, *"As we gain experience, it's different. An activity that we do with one child doesn't work with another child. So, when necessary, we can gain them with different activities."*

The participants have stated that they could not connect the theoretical education they received during their undergraduate or teaching certificate programs with practice, and that this situation caused difficulties in their profession. P21 expressed their views on this topic by stating, *"I couldn't see the practical application of most of what I learned because either the conditions weren't suitable to try or I couldn't use them. I don't remember most of the methods I learned now."* Similarly, regarding the inadequacy in using teaching methods and techniques, the participants stated that they were more motivated to apply new methods and techniques when they first started their profession, but they lost this motivation later on. Some participants have attributed this to losing control of the classroom for various reasons (e.g., overcrowding, lack of experience) while applying different methods and techniques. More generally, the participants emphasized the difficulties they experienced in achieving lesson mastery and attracting students' attention. P14 expressed this challenging situation they faced with the following words:

Organizing and getting their attention is very difficult. They talk too much and definitely influence each other a lot. This causes problems with classroom management. I usually have to warn them because they talk too much. Because I have to constantly warn them, we waste time.

Theme 2. Education structure and facilities

In this theme covers the problems caused by the education policies and practices of inexperienced teachers as well as the physical infrastructure and facilities of the school. The teacher's views regarding the sub-themes that constitute the education structure and facilities theme are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Problems of novice teachers' educational structure and opportunities.

Problems Caused by Educational Policies and Practices at School	Orientation deficiency
	Some courses are being pushed to the behind
	Excessive paperwork burden
	Lack of knowledge in document preparation
	Lack of suitable environment and encouragement for professional development
	Inadequate salaries
Problems Caused by the School's Physical Infrastructure and Facilities	Inadequate physical infrastructure and teaching materials of the school
	Difficulty in accessing the school
	Budget insufficiency
	Excessive class sizes
	Inadequate guidance services

The findings indicate that the theme of education structure and facilities consists of two categories: problems arising from education policies and practices in schools and problems arising from the physical infrastructure and facilities of the school. Firstly, under the category of problems arising from education policies and practices, the participants reported feeling a lack of orientation. Additionally, from the participant's views, it is understood that teachers are required to start teaching immediately upon starting their job without any prior orientation process. Participant P18 summarized a similar experience as follows:

> When I first arrived at the school and sat down, they told me to find a place to live. Then they immediately told me to start teaching. Later on, they questioned me in a judgmental manner about why I was assigned to this school with such a low score, and how many points I received. I did not receive any orientation during the process and started teaching immediately.

Participants have pointed out that some courses are not given enough value by the school administration, students, and parents, either because they do not have exams such as level advancement exams or because they are elective courses. P19's statement that "children sometimes underestimate or not give importance to the course, saying that it doesn't come out in exams anyway, or facing problems such as insufficient support from the school administration" supports this argument. Regarding the excess paperwork, participants have emphasized that there is generally a heavy paperwork burden in the school, and they spend a lot of time completing these documents. Some participants have argued that the paperwork burden should be on the school administration and administrative staff. In addition, some participants have stated that they face various difficulties because they do not have enough knowledge and experience about the documents they are required to prepare or submit as standard. On the other hand, participants generally consider the lack of a suitable environment and encouragement for professional development as a significant problem. P2 expressed that teachers' good work should be rewarded by the school administration, even verbally. As a different emphasis, participants have expressed that they do not think they receive a good salary for the effort they put in, and they expect an improvement in this regard.

Secondly, in the category of problems arising from the physical infrastructure and facilities of the school, participants have argued that the inadequacy of the school's physical infrastructure and teaching materials limits them significantly. Participants have shown transportation to the school as one of the difficulties they face at different points. P8 evaluated this situation with the sentence, "The school is located in a forested area. It is a place that can only be reached by vehicle. I cannot come here without a private vehicle." On the other hand, some participants stated that they could not carry out some activities they wanted to do due to budget shortages at the school. P1 emphasized that this situation has a negative effect on gaining students and meeting the expectations of parents. Participants point out the inadequacy of the guidance service at the school, believing that it should play a more active role, especially in dealing with problems with students or preventing various issues. According to participants' views, another problem is the excess number of students in the classrooms. P10 expressed their difficulty in teaching in overcrowded classes with the following sentences:

> (…) The class size is affecting the lesson significantly. Being able to control 20 students is not the same as being able to control 40 students. When the class size is 42, you can only manage to focus on 12 students at most; you cannot fully attend to all of them. There is not enough time or energy for this. Also, the children cannot participate in the lesson as much as they would like to because of time constraints.

Theme 3. Individual and environmental factors

In this theme, the problems of novice teachers arising from individual characteristics and those arising from socioeconomic and environmental factors are addressed. The opinions of teachers regarding these sub-themes, which constitute the individual and environmental factors theme, are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Problems of novice teachers related to individual and environmental factors.

Problems Caused by Individual Factors	Inability to adapt to the profession
	Negative attitude towards the profession
	Health problems
	Fear of failure
Problems Caused by Environmental Factors	Inability to adapt to the environment
	Access to basic living necessities (water, electricity, shelter, etc.)

The findings indicate that the theme of individual and environmental factors consists of two categories of problems arising from individual factors and problems arising from socio-economic and environmental factors. Firstly, in the category of problems arising from individual factors, participants stated that their ideals of teaching did not match the current teaching routines. P18 emphasized feeling quite passive as a teacher in the current situation, thus experiencing a conflict between ideals and reality. On the contrary, some participants emphasized their negative attitudes towards the profession, stating that this was also an important problem for them. Regarding this issue, P4 expressed their attitude towards the profession, saying, *"Teaching was the last profession I wanted. I wanted to pursue professions such as engineering or architecture, but my parents said teaching was the most suitable profession for a woman, so I chose to teach."* On the other hand, participants also stated that the fear of failure, especially for novice teachers, was an important factor. P20 drew attention to a different point, arguing that if there is a failure, generally only the teacher is held responsible, which increases the fear and anxiety of novice teachers.

Second, in the category of problems caused by environmental factors, participants indicated that they could face difficulties in adapting to social life, culture, climate, etc., and differences in the regions where they work due to socioeconomic and environmental factors. In this regard, P3 expressed that women were pushed to the background in the region where she previously worked, and men were more prominent. Similarly, P4 emphasized that she could not establish a sense of belonging with the place she lived in due to the lack of social and cultural activities in her previous duty station. On the other hand, another point emphasized by participants was the difficulty of accessing

basic living needs in some regions. Participants expressed that they struggled to find housing in the region where they worked and frequently encountered situations such as power and water cuts. P9 shared his experience on this issue with the following words:

> When I first started my duty, I really thought I couldn't stay here. Because there is a certain standard of living that you get used to, and the scene I encountered was far from it. I had to rent a house even though it didn't feel right. There was no natural gas. Electricity and water often went out. After a while, you get used to it, but when you look back, you realize that it wasn't easy at all.

Theme 4. Education stakeholders

In this theme, the problems of novice teachers related to students, school administrators and colleagues, and parents are discussed. Teacher views on these sub-themes that make up the education stakeholders theme are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Problems of novice teachers regarding education stakeholders.

Problems Caused by School Administrators and Colleagues	Lack of advisor and colleague support
	Unable to get admin support
Problems Caused by Students	Inadequacies in students' readiness
	Adoption and behavior problems in students
	Problems arising from individual differences of students
	Students' indifference towards school and lessons
	Student attendance problem
Problems Caused by Parents	Problems in parent communication
	Parent indifference and unconsciousness
	Differences in socio-economic levels of parents
	Parents' sexist approaches

The findings indicate that the education stakeholders theme consists of three categories: problems arising from school administrators and colleagues, problems arising from students, and problems arising from parents. Firstly, participants reported that they did not receive the necessary mentor and peer support they needed during the career entry phase. P19 stated that the teacher assigned to him/her as a mentor had no impact and only filled out the necessary paperwork as a procedure when he/she first started the job. Similarly, participants emphasized that receiving the support of school administrators when starting their job was of critical importance but that it

depended on the personal understanding of the school administrators. P5 expressed her personal experience on this issue as follows:

> In my current institution, there are more team learning processes, so we do everything ourselves, but we do everything together and discuss. But the school principal never thinks of us. When you demand something, he can get out of the business very easily. You don't come across a question like how can I help you.

Secondly, the participants' views in the category of problems arising from students indicate that there are quite different problems experienced. Participants pointed out that students' readiness levels were not sufficient, there were significant differences among students, and this was quite challenging for them. Regarding students' adjustment and behavioral problems, participants focused particularly on students with special needs and immigrant students. Regarding this issue, P2 stated that immigrant students posed a challenge in the classroom due to language problems and social and cultural adaptation. P6, who holds a similar view, expressed her opinion as follows:

> For example, I had a problem with a student today while taking the written exam; he said that he did not know how to write. He can't express himself; he can't take his exams. I can say that we do not get along very well in class. These students are already lagging behind in class and homework. In terms of behavior, they are usually either too hesitant or too spoiled to suppress that sense of oppression. It is hard to find the middle.

On the other hand, the participants have stated that they attempt to provide individual support for inclusive students and students who experience learning difficulties in regard to problems arising from students' individual differences. However, they emphasized that their efforts sometimes exhaust them and that the underperformance of these students reduces their motivation. At a different point, the participants argued that students occasionally display indifferent attitudes towards certain courses or schools in general and that this can be attributed to parenting styles or the absence of any future planning regarding education on the part of the students. Participants identified school attendance as another problem among students. They believe that factors such as seasonal or permanent employment as well as early marriage during school age are influential in causing school attendance problems among students. P12 shared their experiences regarding the region where they served in the past as follows:

> Our school started in October and ended in April, as a significant portion of the students in Urfa worked as seasonal agricultural workers. After April, some of the students did not come to school anymore. Normally, only 15 students would come to school in a class of 20-25 people. Either the father of the girls would not send them to school, or some of them would have been married. These were things that really happened.

Thirdly, in the category of problems arising from parents, communication issues with parents have been emphasized by the participants as an important issue. The

participants stated that the high expectations of parents put pressure on them as newly appointed teachers. P17 provided an example of this situation, stating:

Due to the institution I work for, the parents rather than the students caused me to feel pressure. The administration and other teachers were as helpful as possible. But the expectations of the parents were very high; it was clear that they did not trust me as a new teacher. Until I got my parents to accept me or prove myself, this situation gave me trouble.

Another important point highlighted by the participants is parental neglect and unawareness. Regarding this issue, P2 shared their experiences at their previous workplace, stating, *"At my previous job, there was a profile of parents that we would visit. We would see a parent who did not appreciate or value their child and who was not interested in them."* Later in the conversation, P2 noted that the parental profile at their current workplace was better. As a different observation, the participants reported that parents' socio-economic levels sometimes manifest themselves in the class. P17 noted that students occasionally compare each other based on their possessions, such as the car they arrived in or the things they own, while P15 pointed out a different issue: *"We want to buy a book to solve common questions in class, but not everyone can afford it. When a student's notebook is finished, it takes a lot of time for a new one to arrive, and sometimes parents don't even care about it."* The participants also argued that parents exhibit sexist behavior by not considering female teachers in some regions. P20 clarified this situation, stating, *"In the east, parents do not pay much attention to female teachers. If you are even a female school administrator or a female teacher, they do not consider you. If there is a male school administrator nearby, they will first speak to him."*

Discussion

In this study, it has been found that novice teachers encounter problems in areas such as the learning-teaching process, educational structure and opportunities, educational stakeholders, and individual and environmental factors. According to the qualitative data obtained, a significant portion of novice teachers experiences problems in the implementation phase of the curriculum in the classroom. Implementing the curriculum requires more than transferring the content; it requires knowledge and skills. While achieving learning objectives, the curriculum also needs to be adapted to student's needs, interests, and abilities. It can be argued that novice teachers do not have enough experience or expertise to do this effectively, resulting in problems in implementing the program in the classroom. Indeed, in a study examining the problems encountered in implementing education programs in Türkiye, it is pointed out that the biggest problem with the program is the insufficient time for teaching the identified contents (Karacaoğlu & Acar, 2010). In the current study, it was found that novice teachers also experience problems when planning and implementing teaching

related to insufficient time, being unprepared for the lesson, and not having a sufficient command of the topic. The most significant problems encountered by new teachers in the profession are related to classroom management and discipline (Onafowora, 2005). In this context, it can be considered an acceptable situation for novice teachers to have relatively low classroom management skills since no new teacher can be expected to be fully prepared on the first days of school (Wayne, Youngs, and Fleischman, 2005). However, novice teachers also believe that the program content is incompatible with the classroom reality and daily life. This situation reveals a two-way theory and practices inconsistency. The first is related to the curriculum, which has been addressed in the program-related issues. The second is that the education received by the teacher during pre-service training is incompatible with the teacher's professional life. Alpaydın et al., (2018) study also found that the competencies gained in teacher training in Türkiye are not in line with the teaching profession in terms of both standards and quality.

According to the findings of this study, novice teachers associate some of their problems with macro-level problems in the education system. Issues related to the organization and resources of education were discussed in relation to the problems experienced in this regard. Novice teachers evaluate their own problems in connection with policy and implementation deficiencies related to the professional development of teachers. In addition, they perceive paperwork, which is a natural consequence of bureaucracy, as a burden while expressing that they are not provided with the necessary guidance and counseling to prepare these documents. It is understood that the orientation expected from administrators and experienced colleagues on this issue is not provided. In addition, the inadequacy of salaries, which can be considered as a macro problem of the education system, emerges as an important issue defined as a problem by novice teachers. According to Demir and Ercan (2013), one of the most important problems that teachers are concerned about is their low income. According to the findings of this study, the vast majority of teachers in the career entry stage find the salaries or wages they receive for their duties insufficient and think that they need to be improved. Darling-Hammond (2003) sees the salary issue as one of the fundamental factors that lead newly appointed teachers to develop positive feelings and thoughts towards their profession. Ryan (1986) has stated that novice teachers generally have difficulty finding appropriate materials for their lessons. In addition to this situation, which is consistent with the findings of the current study, it is observed that novice teachers define problems related to the physical infrastructure and resources of the school, such as inadequate school budgets, crowded classes, transportation difficulties, and the absence of guidance services.

According to the studies of Fantilli and McDougall (2009), novice teachers express feelings of failure, stress, experience-specific challenges in the classroom, and a sense of educational deficiency. It is predictable that these feelings will have an impact on the attitudes developed by the teacher toward their profession. Therefore, individual factors

such as emotional state and psychological well-being, particularly for novice teachers, are crucial at the start of their careers. In the context of this study, it has been observed that novice teachers face some individual problems that can be attributed to a lack of preparedness for the realities of the educational institution. These problems fall under the category of individual factors and are directly related to health issues and attitudes developed toward the profession. Additionally, fear of failure can also be categorized under this factor. As novice teachers' first experiences are viewed by teachers as a source of anxiety, stress, and even depression (Wayne, Youngs, & Fleischman, 2005), these situations can be evaluated as factors that cause various individual problems for novice teachers. Under the category of environmental factors, it has been revealed that some teachers who work in disadvantaged areas face difficulties in accessing basic needs. This finding is noteworthy, as it suggests that teachers assigned to remote and rural areas may also encounter these types of problems. The results show that in Türkiye, the sociological structure of the area in which a teacher works can sometimes be defined as a problem for novice teachers in terms of adapting to their profession. Korkmaz et al., (2004) stated in their study that adapting to the geographical and social environment is among the difficulties faced by novice teachers.

In the current study, it is observed that teachers in the early stages of their careers expect collaboration, assistance, and support, as well as positive relationships from their colleagues and administrators to solve problems related to their profession. However, it is understood that novice teachers do not receive enough support from their mentors or colleagues. Bakioğlu and İnandı (2001) also express in their research that administrators do not make sufficient efforts in the career development of teachers. Richter et al., (2013) state that mentorship would have positive effects during the entry process into the teaching profession. Considering that collaboration with experienced colleagues and mentorship relationships have a significant impact on the development of novice teachers, the emphasis made by Fantilli and McDougall (2009) on this issue is highly meaningful for solving problems. This is because novice teachers need significant support, understanding, encouragement, trust, and guidance during the entry stage of their careers (Katz, 1972). Finally, it is observed that the problems categorized as a student and parent-related in the current study are similar to the problems identified in the relevant literature. In the current study, novice teachers point out that the students' readiness levels are not sufficient, there are significant differences among the students, and this makes their job challenging. Some teachers complain about parents having high expectations, while others complain about parents being indifferent or ignorant. Meister and Melnick (2003) reached similar results in their study on novice teachers throughout the United States. It was revealed that teachers have three main concerns, namely managing students' behavior and various needs, coping with a heavy workload in limited time, and conflicts with parents. Britt's (1997) study found that teachers' perceptions of their initial experiences in the profession were not positive. The study indicates that novice teachers are disappointed in students and evaluate the profession as overwhelming due to behavioral problems they

encounter. In addition, it is reported that novice teachers are unable to communicate effectively with parents and complain about their lack of interest. Ryan (1986) states in his study that parents are a major source of discomfort for new teachers due for various reasons. Meister and Melnick (2003) also stated that novice teachers feel lacking communication skills when communicating with parents and other adults. The findings of this research also overlap with the results of the study by Korkmaz et al., (2004), which identified adaptation to the environment and communicating with parents as among the difficulties encountered by novice teachers.

Conclusion, Implications, and Limitations

The results of the study indicate that novice teachers in Türkiye experience problems such as disappointment and concerns about failure, mainly due to factors such as a lack of connection to university or pedagogical training, inadequacy in classroom management and discipline, inexperience, and encountering an environment with different characteristics than their ideal student, school, and parent profile. These findings are largely consistent with the results of similar studies conducted in different countries. The results suggest that novice teachers face various challenges that can hinder their success in the classroom and career paths. The difficulties encountered at the beginning of a teaching career are considered multifaceted, and it is evaluated that they can be solved through the action of all education stakeholders.

This research provides data-based justifications for a comprehensive review of teacher training programs in Türkiye in light of the difficulties experienced by novice teachers and for the establishment of mentorship programs that teachers can benefit from. In order to eliminate the various problems faced by novice teachers in Türkiye, the study recommends that the education given in teacher training programs should contain more components that are oriented towards practice and application. Universities should have their own practice schools to increase the opportunities for practical training, and the existing practice school process should be enhanced and operated more effectively. The quality of the outputs of teacher training programs can be improved by conducting practices considering the possible scenarios in educational environments during pre-service education and by diversifying the opportunities for practice. Mechanisms necessary for new teachers to collaborate more efficiently with their colleagues should be implemented, and the establishment of formal or informal, long-term interaction-based relationships such as mentoring should be encouraged. Finally, academic research and supportive policies (e.g., projects, practice workshops, workshops) focusing on how teachers cope with the problems they encounter and strategies that can be implemented in this regard can be developed by higher education institutions.

There are some limitations to be considered in this research. First of all, although the researchers have taken into account data saturation during the data collection stage, all participants are teachers currently working in Istanbul. Although this situation may not explain the problems encountered by novice teachers working in different regions of Türkiye, a significant portion of the participants have previously worked in different regions of Türkiye. Thirdly, although various measures were taken to increase the reliability of the research (e.g., maximum variation sampling, detailed reporting of the research process), qualitative findings have limitations in terms of generalizability.

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